

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Fidel Castro addresses Cuba during 1962 'missile' crisis

— PAGES 7-10

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Teamsters walk out for union rights at Overnite

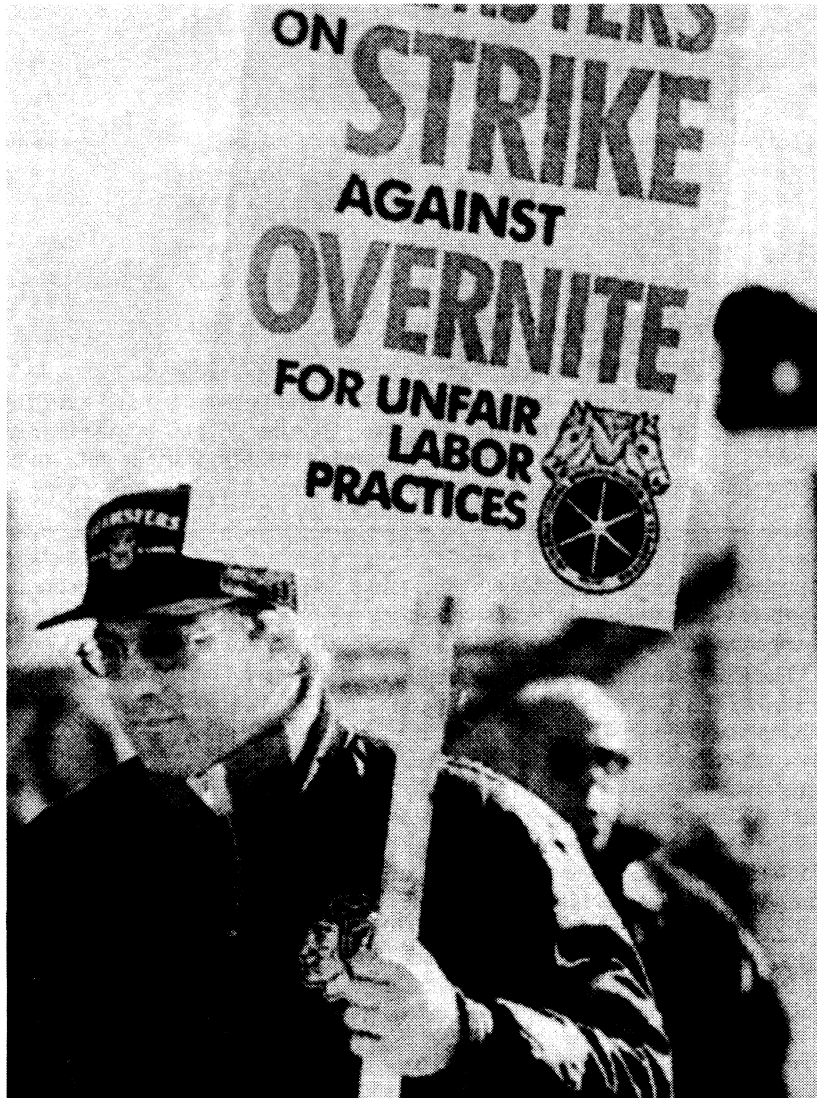
BY HARVEY MCARTHUR

CHICAGO — Teamster-organized workers at Overnite Transportation Co. terminals in Memphis, Tennessee, walked out the morning of October 24 in the latest step in a decades-long effort to win union recognition. The strike quickly spread across the country. By October 26, the union reported that workers at 109 Overnite terminals in 34 states had joined the strike.

Overnite is the sixth-largest trucking company, and the largest nonunion trucking outfit, in the country, with some 8,200 drivers and loading dock workers. It has a total of 165 terminals in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The latest Teamster drive to organize Overnite, a subsidiary of the rail giant Union Pacific Corp., began in 1994, though some terminals had voted for union representation as early as two decades ago. The union now reports it has been certified by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) at 26 terminals, representing 36 percent of the drivers and dock workers. The union is also waiting official certification at 11 more terminals with an additional 9 percent of the workforce following pro-union votes in re-

Continued on Page 11



Strikers picket Overnite Transportation in Bedford Park, Illinois. Drivers and dock workers walked out after years of fighting to unionize.

Thousands rally to protest Klan in New York City

BY BOBBINEGRÓN AND ROSEANA BERBEO

NEW YORK — More than 6,000 people filled the streets near the state Supreme Court here October 23 to protest a demonstration by 18 members of the Ku Klux Klan. The turnout and militant mood of the crowd gave a boost to the fight against the KKK and other ultrarightist, anti-working-class groups with a history of racist terror.

"I think the best way to express our opposition to the Klan is to be here," said Nermin Abdelwahab, 19, a student at Hunter College who came with two friends. Many carried handmade signs expressing opposition to the Klan and to racism.

"I didn't think so many people would come out here against racism," said Hans Arrieta, a 21-year-old meatpacker originally from Costa Rica. Arrieta said some of his coworkers told him the protest would be dangerous, but were glad he went.

The anti-Klan protest began two hours before the robed and hooded, but unmasked, racists emerged with a police escort onto the street from inside the courthouse, holding a Confederate flag. After an hour and 15 minutes of rallying silently, protected by at least 1,000 cops including rooftop snipers and

mounted cops, the Klansmen left. The cops then cleared out the counterdemonstrators.

Fourteen people were arrested, including three who had rushed at the Klan members. Three cops were slightly injured.

Two protests against the Klan were called, the main one initiated by several Democratic Party politicians, and a smaller one by the Partisan Defense

Committee, associated with the Spartacist League. Because of the turnout in the same area, the crowd tended to merge together.

In the name of "preventing violence," the New York Police Department had denied the Klan a permit to demonstrate, citing an 1845 state law prohibiting masked gatherings. KKK leaders said they were challenging that law to have it ruled unconstitutional.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani vocally supported the denial of the permit.

Citing the constitutional right to freedom of expression, a federal district court ruled the Klan could march and cover their faces, asserting that they could suffer physical or economic harm for expressing their views. An appellate court then overturned that decision and ruled that the city could enforce the 1845 state law. The New York Civil Liberties Union filed an emergency appeal on behalf of the Klan with the U.S. Supreme Court, but the petition to permit the masks was denied. The federal district court also denied a sound permit for the smaller counterdemonstration.

Whether or not the Klan had the right to march in New York and whether the government should bar the reactionary group was an ongoing debate among working people and in the big-business press.

"The KKK should never have been given a permit to have a rally, with masks or without," said Mordechai Levy, a leader of the Jewish Defense Organization, a right-wing Zionist group. Giuliani denounced the ruling as taking free speech too far, saying, "This is another example of the ideology extended from the '60s."

Democratic politician Alfred Sharpton and the *Amsterdam News*, the main weekly newspaper orienting to the Black community,

Continued on Page 14

Ultrarightist Buchanan launches Reform Party campaign

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Fascist-minded politician Patrick Buchanan announced his break with the Republican Party October 25 and officially declared his campaign to win the nomination of the Reform Party for the U.S. presidency.

This marks another step in Buchanan's longer-term goal, which is not to win opinion polls and the next election — as all the sophisticated pundits smugly assume — but to recruit cadres to a popular, ultrarightist street movement that can eventually storm to victory.

The day before, real estate billionaire Donald Trump proclaimed his membership in the Reform Party's New York affiliate and threatened to challenge Buchanan for the party's nomination. Taking a cue from Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, his main backer in the Reform Party, Trump is demagogically striving to repackage himself as an anti-Establishment "nonpolitician" who can "get things done."

In a speech titled "The New Patriotism," Buchanan made his announcement before a crowd of 300 partisans in Falls Church, Virginia, which included the majority of the Reform Party's state chairmen.

He accused the Democrats and Republicans of "betrayal," attacking them as "Beltway parties" who don't speak "for the forgotten Americans."

"Our vaunted two-party-system is a snare and a delusion," the ultrarightist stated. "Our two parties have become nothing but two wings of the same bird of prey."

Evoking the class warfare image of peasants with pitchforks storming the castle, as he had during his 1996 campaign, Buchanan

Continued on Page 12

Protesters determined to defy U.S. Navy in Vieques

BY RON RICHARDS

PLAYA ICACOS, VIEQUES, Puerto Rico — The protest camps established on the U.S. Navy bombing range here not only survived the threat of hurricane José but have since been reinforced with more volunteers and supplies.

Protests against the U.S. military's destructive presence on this small Puerto Rican island have not stopped since April 19, when a U.S. Navy plane on practice maneuvers went "off course" and dropped a 500-pound bomb that killed civilian guard David Sanes.

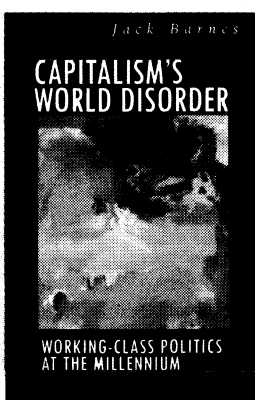
Fishermen, students, political activists, and others have set up several civil disobedience camps in defiance of Navy officials, who are threatening to arrest the protesters and clear the way for resuming their bombing prac-

Continued on Page 14

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UN troops set for Sierra Leone

The United Nations Security Council voted October 22 to send 6,000 troops to Sierra Leone, which has been engulfed in an eight-year civil war involving bourgeois forces battling for control over the country's diamond fields. Tens of thousands of people have been killed, thousands maimed, and 500,000 driven from their homes. In July the government of President Ahmad Kabbah and the Revolutionary United Front led by Foday Sankoh signed a peace agreement brokered by Washington.

During a week-long visit to several African nations in mid-October, U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright said Washington would write off Sierra Leone's \$65 million of debt owed to U.S. capitalist investors, provided the country followed the dictates of an International Monetary Fund economic program. The imperialist-brokered deal also includes Washington's input on who will control the country's diamond mines.

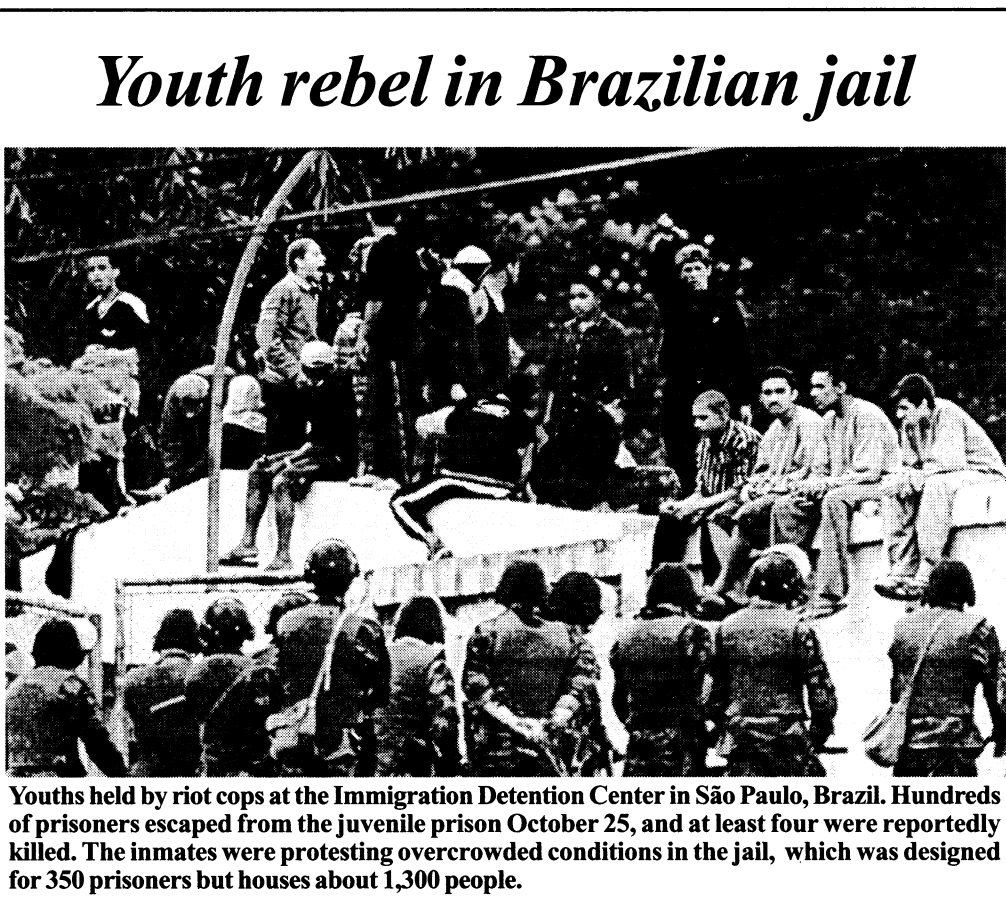
Rightists gain in Swiss elections

According to early election results released October 24, the rightist People's Party grabbed a stunning share of votes, some 23 percent, in Switzerland's parliamentary elections.

It is likely the People's Party, which waged an anti-immigrant, nationalist campaign, will fill 44 of the 200 seats in the lower house of Parliament. Its victory could shatter the country's coalition government, which has ruled since 1959. Two weeks earlier the right-wing Freedom Party of Austria won second place in that country's parliamentary elections.

Russian rockets strike Chechnya

Russian rockets pounded downtown Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, October 21, demolishing a market and killing more than 140 people as the Kremlin tightened its military ring around the region. Moscow initially denied its responsibility for the attack, trying to blame guerrilla forces fighting for Chechen independence. Officials in Grozny said more than 400 people were injured in the assault launched by Russian forces, which have moved to within eight miles of downtown Grozny.



Youths held by riot cops at the Immigration Detention Center in São Paulo, Brazil. Hundreds of prisoners escaped from the juvenile prison October 25, and at least four were reportedly killed. The inmates were protesting overcrowded conditions in the jail, which was designed for 350 prisoners but houses about 1,300 people.

Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov said northern Grozny was under intensive artillery bombardment.

The Clinton administration has begun to criticize the Kremlin's latest onslaught against the largely Islamic people of Chechnya, which has killed more than 2,000 civilians since the summer. The White House backed Russian president Boris Yeltsin's 1994-96 war against the Chechens. Expressing nervousness that Moscow's aggression could backfire, White House press secretary Joseph Lockhart asserted at an October 22 news conference, "We should not repeat the mistakes of 1994 and 1996," when Yeltsin was humiliated after a Russian invasion was defeated.

Unions protest cuts in Germany

Tens of thousands of teachers, public work-

ers, and others rallied in the streets of Berlin October 19 to protest the government's austerity program. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had proposed budget cuts of \$16.7 billion, a freeze on pensions and wages, and a ceiling on Social Security payments.

Schröder — whose Social Democratic Party was bruised in recent state and municipal elections — tried to head off the protest by declaring openness to consider reintroducing a wealth tax that was abolished in 1997. Germany's labor minister gave lip service to union demands to reduce the retirement age from 65 to 60.

China: 'ABM Treaty must stay'

Beijing joined the governments of Russia and Belarus in requesting the UN General Assembly demand the 1972 Antimissile Treaty between Moscow and Washington stay intact. The Clinton administration is pressing to change the accord in order to construct a new "battle management" radar system in Alaska and station 100 antimissile interceptors there by 2005. Another radar system and 100 interceptors would be placed in North Dakota by 2010. The missile system would abrogate the accord and would give Washington effective first strike nuclear capability for the first time since the development by the Soviet Union of a hydrogen bomb and intercontinental missiles.

Nissan to chop 21,000 jobs

Faced with intensified competition, years of mounting debts, and sagging profits, auto

bosses at Nissan Motor Co. announced a three-year "overhaul" plan October 18. Japan's third-largest automaker said it will eliminate 21,000 jobs and shut down three plants as part of a drive to regain lost world market share, which dropped to 4.9 percent from 6.6 percent in 1991.

Japan's capitalist rulers are counting on the unions to swallow the cutbacks without much resistance and hope to mount similar assaults on working people in other industries. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, Japan's leading financial daily, reported October 19 that Nippon Telegraph and Telephone presented plans to union officials to fire 20,000 workers, or 16 percent of its workforce. Sony Corp. plans to slash 17,000 jobs and bosses at NEC Corp. project dumping 15,000 workers on the streets by 2002. Japan in 1998-99 has been gripped by its worst recession since World War II.

Japan official dismissed for endorsing nuclear weapons

Shingo Nishimura, Japan's deputy vice minister of defense, was forced to resign October 20 for suggesting that Japan should scrap its nuclear-weapons ban. "Nuclear weapons equal deterrence," declared Nishimura. "If there were no punishments for rape, we would all be rapists. We do not become rapists because there is the deterrent of punishment."

Nishimura's comments and actions reflect growing pressures on Japan's capitalist rulers to use their armed forces to intervene abroad to defend their class interests. In 1997 Nishimura took part in an expedition to the Senkaku islands in the East China Sea to plant a Japanese flag. The islands are also claimed by the governments of China and Taiwan. "We must have the military power and the legal authority to act on it... We must even have the atomic bomb," he asserted during an interview with the *Washington Post* last August. In 1996 Japan had the world's third highest military budget at \$45 billion.

Arab man freed after 19 months in U.S. jail on 'secret evidence'

Mahmoud Kiarledeen, a Palestinian, walked out of the Hudson County Correctional Center in New Jersey October 26. He had been incarcerated for the past 19 months by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) based on "secret evidence" supposedly linking him to "terrorist activity." "[Kiarledeen] has never been charged with violation of any criminal laws," said U.S. District Judge William Walls, who charged that the INS case against Kiarledeen was "uncorroborated hearsay accusations."

The week before Wall's ruling an immigration panel dismissed the "secret evidence" and granted Kiarledeen permanent residency. Last April, a federal judge who reviewed the case ordered him released on bail. Kiarledeen is among some 20 people, most of them Arabs, imprisoned under similar circumstances.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

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Canadian rulers face instability, resistance to austerity drive

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — Delegates at the October 2-3 convention of the federal Conservative Party voted 95 percent to reject a proposal from the right-wing populist Reform Party led by Preston Manning to "unite the right." Former Prime Minister Joseph Clark spearheaded the Conservative Party rebuff to forming a United Alternative to challenge the Liberal government headed by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in the next federal election, due in a couple of years.

Underneath the failure of the United Alternative project is the nightmare facing Canada's ruling billionaire families — the refusal of millions of Quebecois to give up their fight against national oppression. A coalition including Reform, an openly chauvinist anti-Quebecois formation, had no perspective of becoming a national party with roots in Quebec and therefore a chance of forming a government in Ottawa.

Growing regional and national fragmentation of bourgeois politics on the federal level is compounded by instability on the provincial level, as capitalist governments of all stripes have come up against the continued resistance of workers and farmers to government slashing of their social wage and more legislation and court action to further restrict their ability to use union power to defend themselves.

No truly national bourgeois party

In response to the Conservative Party convention, the editorial writers for the *Globe and Mail*, which historically has supported the Conservatives, bemoaned the fact that "the most audacious political gamble in Canadian history has failed with the Conservative Party's rejection of any trade or truck with the Reform Party... There will be no United Alternative before the next federal election."

The Liberal editors of the *Toronto Star* opined that the Conservatives "even talked about winning the next election... That seems unlikely. But they could regain their lost role as the main alternative to the governing Liberals."

The concern by these bourgeois commentators over the fate of the Conservative party reflects the continued failure by Canada's capitalist rulers to re-stabilize their electoral system based on two major bourgeois parties — the Liberals and Conservatives — which was blown apart six years ago in the October 1993 federal election.

The results of the 1993 federal election represented the biggest shakeup in capitalist politics in Canada since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Liberals came to power in 1993 ousting the Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, which had earned the hatred of working people through a deepening austerity drive from one end of the country to the other.

The Conservatives were reduced from a majority of 155 seats to an insignificant minority of two. However, the Liberals only won 177 seats in the 295-seat parliament. The Reform Party, known for its anti-abortion stand, anti-immigrant and anti-Quebec chauvinism, and based mainly in the provinces to the west of Ontario, moved from one to 52 seats. Most significantly, the newly-formed Bloc Quebecois, running only in Quebec with close ties to the sovereigntist and bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois (PQ) that forms the Quebec government, became the official opposition with 54 seats. The social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP), which is linked to the unions outside of Quebec, was reduced from 44 to nine seats.

The election results left the ruling class without a national party — that is, without a party on the federal level with a strong organization in Quebec. The Quebec Liberal party, which is pro-federalist and the official opposition to the PQ government, is often at loggerheads with the federal Liberals over "constitutional issues" because of the pressure of the deep Quebecois nationalist sentiment.

These events were part of an international trend in a number of imperialist countries that took place in the wake of the failure of

the right-wing policies associated with the Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan governments in the United Kingdom and the United States. Their policies aimed to decisively weaken the trade unions and raise the profit rates of the ruling capitalist families in the context of sharpening inter-imperialist economic competition, growing depression-like and deflationary conditions worldwide, and unbroken resistance by toilers throughout the world.

In a number of countries bourgeois politics shifted to the left in the mid-1990s. The election of the Liberals in Ottawa took place in this context. The Liberal government then "largely borrowed the Conservative agenda from 1984 to 1993, rounded off a few rough edges, packaged it better and pushed it forward," wrote *Globe and Mail* columnist Jeffrey Simpson.

The government of Jean Chrétien carried out massive cuts in subsidies for health and education to the provinces, along with a full-scale assault against unemployment insurance. Today only 36 percent of unemployed workers receive benefits as compared to 74 percent in 1989. The trade union officialdom which viewed the Liberals as a lesser evil to the Conservatives, stood by and watched. But this failure of leadership has not prevented working people from resisting.

Ottawa is one of the weaker imperialist powers. Despite their efforts, Canada's ruling capitalist families have not matched the "productivity" gains of their main competitor in Washington and elsewhere. For more than three years Canada has remained in 10th position on an international scale of productivity in which the United States, Canada's main trading partner, is first. Ninety-five working hours per person are lost to strikes and lockouts in Canada annually compared to a global average of 31 hours. Between 1990 and 1996, Canada averaged 407 strikes a year compared to 306 in Britain, 191 in Japan and 38 in the United States.

In this context, the ruling class failed to regain in the 1997 federal election what it had lost in 1993. The situation became even more fragmented. After four years of austerity, the Liberal government barely kept its majority, winning only 155 seats. The Reform Party became the official opposition with 60 seats. The Bloc Quebecois dropped to 44, the NDP climbed to 21, and the Conservatives won 19.

Quebec at center of bourgeois politics

The 1993 election was followed by the October 1995 Parti Quebecois sovereignty referendum, which revealed the irrepressible march of the Quebecois toward taking control of their own destiny. This was best expressed in the chant, "We want a country" by thousands of Quebecois youth who took to the streets in the lead-up to the vote. The "Yes" side lost by barely one percentage point, although over 60 percent of the nationally oppressed Quebecois voted "yes." The PQ government led by Premier Lucien Bouchard, which is seeking a new arrangement of powers with Ottawa in the interest of a layer of Quebecois capitalists, has promised to hold another sovereignty referendum under "winning conditions." Last year the federal Supreme Court ruled on an initiative taken by Ottawa, declaring that unilateral secession by Quebec would be illegal.

The tension between the governments in Ottawa and Quebec — Canada's second most populated and industrialized province next to Ontario — broke into the open again at an October international conference organized by the federal government in Quebec to showcase the merits of federalism. Quebec's Premier Lucien Bouchard embarrassed Ottawa before the 600 delegates from 25 countries by attacking the federal system and laying out the injustices faced by Quebec within it. U.S. president William Clinton, attending the conference, felt compelled to give an extensive speech in defense of the Canadian federal system.

Deepening national oppression under the impact of the capitalist economic crisis and the resistance of Quebecois to it is what keeps



Militant/Grant Hargrave

Striking nurses on picket line at Sacre-Coeur Hospital in Quebec, July 22, 1999. Canadian rulers confront refusal of millions of Quebecois to give up their fight against national oppression, along with resistance to provincial governments' austerity drives.

the Quebecois struggle at the center of bourgeois politics. Quality of life comparisons among Canada's ten provinces put Quebec at the rank of eight. Its inferior health-care system is a major factor in this. Suicides, particularly among the youth are the highest in Canada, except among Native people. There is less job creation. The poverty rate in Montreal, Quebec's largest city, has risen in five years from 22 to 27 percent. Illiteracy is higher for French-speakers than English-speakers. And more English-speakers graduate from colleges and universities with degrees.

Growing instability on provincial level

Canada's rulers consciously decided not to take on the working class directly and nationally in its austerity and productivity drive to raise profit rates, by having the provincial governments of whichever party carry out the cuts in welfare, education, and health care and the legislative attacks on union rights.

The Ontario Conservative government headed by Premier Michael Harris, elected in 1995, became the spearhead of the austerity drive for the ruling class as a whole. Despite significant protests by union and community organizations, the Harris administration took draconian measures to slash welfare benefits, and cut education and health-care budgets. Its antilabor legislation weakened the right to organize unions, picket and strike in Canada's industrial heartland.

In the six provincial elections that have taken place across Canada this year, incumbent governments fared poorly. Only the Liberal government in Newfoundland and Conservatives in Ontario were returned with majorities. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Conservatives replaced the Liberals.

In the September 21 Manitoba provincial election, the NDP ended 11 years of Conservative Party rule in that province, winning 31 of 57 seats in the provincial election and 44.8 percent of the popular vote. The new government has promised to increase spending on health care, defend the family farm, and carry out modest tax cuts.

In Saskatchewan a week earlier, the NDP won a muted third term, forming a minority government with 29 of 58 seats and 38.7 percent of the vote. The right-wing Saskatchewan Party, a remake of the Conservative Party and Reform, made its electoral debut with 26 seats and 39.4 percent of the vote, mostly in rural areas. Many farmers faced with depression-like conditions voted against the NDP, which has traditionally gained their support.

During the summer thousands of Saskatchewan farmers blocked highways throughout the province demanding provincial and federal government aid in face of falling wheat prices, spring floods, and massive cuts by Ottawa in subsidies to small farmers. On September 29, Saskatchewan NDP Premier Roy Romanov announced the formation of an NDP-Liberal coalition government, the first coalition government in Saskatchewan in 70 years.

In British Columbia, the NDP government is in crisis. Former union official Glen Clarke resigned as provincial premier August 21 during his second term over a casino-licensing scandal whipped up by the media and the police.

Despite its claim to be the defender of the

national rights of the Quebecois, the popularity of the PQ government in Quebec is also dropping. Last summer nearly 48,000 nurses carried out a 23-day illegal strike against the government. Most recently, the PQ has been trying to head off the possibility of a November strike by more than 400,000 provincial government workers who want to break the 5 percent wage increase ceiling imposed on the nurses. Towards the end of October the Quebec government used the courts against thousands of independent truckers who had blocked highways in their fight to unionize.

Credibility of union officials weakened

Within Quebec the ferocious assault by the PQ government against the social wage and union rights of working people is undermining the credibility of the union officialdom's support for the PQ as a party "friendly to labor."

Outside of Quebec the impasse facing the New Democratic Party on the provincial and federal levels is being reflected by tensions within the NDP itself. Since the NDP's founding in 1961 by the Canadian Labor Congress and its affiliates, the main sectors of the union officialdom have tried to use it as a lever to get a hearing for their demands from the ruling class by putting pressure on the Liberals.

Except in Manitoba, the NDP did poorly in all the provincial elections of 1999. In the Ontario election last June, the NDP was devastated, losing official party status in the provincial legislature with nine seats out of the 12 required. The Ontario NDP government paved the way for the Conservative victory in 1995 by slashing the social wage of workers and attacking union rights under the guise of a "social contract" with public sector unions.

At the federal convention of the NDP that took place in Ottawa last August a sharp exchange took place on the floor of the convention between a number of trade union officials and the NDP federal leadership

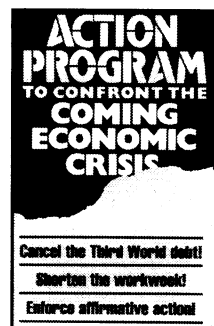
Continued on Page 15

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'What books do you have?' asks farmer

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"This book [*Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*] fits into the discussions that many workers and farmers are starting to have today. That's why the union fractions of the Socialist Workers Party have been organizing and leading a campaign to place it in stores and libraries, and to sell it to working people and young people," said Jean Luc Duval in a phone interview October 26.

"We want this to be a campaign jointly waged by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party," added Greg McCartan. Duval and McCartan are the organizers of the steering committees of SWP and YS members in the United Auto Workers and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees respectively. They participated in an October 23 phone conference — along with organizers of the steering committees for socialist workers in the United Food and Commercial Workers, United Transportation Union, International Association of Machinists, and United Steelworkers of America — to discuss how to advance the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* as an integral part of deepening their involvement in labor fights and the broader class struggle.

"Our steering committees need to turn our attention to organizing the national fractions to carry out this campaign on a weekly basis," said McCartan. "*Capitalism's World Disorder* is Pathfinder's most recent publication, and the speeches it contains take on directly the most pressing questions facing working people. Like other titles in Pathfinder's catalogue, it is a tool for those individuals who are part of union and farmers' struggles, or who have been affected and inspired by them."

Duval picked up the same theme. "Today's announcement by Patrick Buchanan — a rightist and a deadly enemy of the interests of working people — of his bid for the Reform Party presidential nomination is an example," he said. "*Capitalism's World Disorder* contains a number of sections on Buchanan and other rightist figures. The recent elections in Austria and Switzerland, where nationalist parties campaigning against immigrants dramatically increased their vote, show this is a feature of politics around the world today.

"Immigrants make the working class stronger in every country they go to," said Duval. "The book explains that, both in the speeches by Jack Barnes and in the photos."

"Our meeting discussed results from every part of the country where socialist workers are campaigning to sell to individuals, and beginning to get the book placed in different stores," said McCartan. "Socialist workers have used the book effectively in participating in picket lines when they organize to do this. In places like Charlotte, North Carolina, and at the Newport News shipyard in Virginia, trips to meet workers following the conclusion of hard-fought strikes have been valuable.

"Socialist workers recently went back to Natchez, Mississippi, to meet with steelworkers resisting attacks by Titan Tire. More than

20 were charged with trespassing after a peaceful rally and protest on September 11. Workers there helped us locate stores which they think might want to stock the book. This has happened everywhere we have put the time and effort into doing it. In many cases this collaboration with working people, which is what this campaign is all about, has been very fruitful."

"We want to do more of this in the two and a bit months remaining in the campaign until the end of the year," said McCartan. "The campaign needs to be more centralized. In the coming weeks," he said, "we will track our progress toward national goals in the *Militant* week by week.

"We are making this a campaign of the entire movement, of every socialist worker and member of the YS. We encourage YS members to be part of trips to areas where the socialist movement does not have an organized unit, to sell to farmers, workers, and youth, and to place this book and others in stores and libraries. And we want to work closely together to try to place it in bookstores that high school and college students go to.

"Between now and the end of the year," said McCartan, "we aim to place hundreds of copies of this book in stores and libraries around the country."

♦
A team spent three days in southern Ontario, promoting *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other Pathfinder titles, along with the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. These notes cover the first two days of the trip, which focused on discussions with working farmers. The third day participants spent several hours on the picket line at Intraforest, where members of the International Woodworkers of America are on strike (see page 15).

Saturday October 2

Tour started at a "Sales Barn" in St. Thomas, where farmers bring their animals for auction. We met some farmers, mostly older, some retired, some "hobby" or part-time farmers. Prices farmers receive are still way below production costs. Only two main buyers from meat processing plants (one was Maple

Socialist candidate reaches out to port drivers



Militant/Scott Breen

Socialist Workers Party candidate Chris Rayson for Port Commissioner (right), joins rally in support of port drivers in Seattle, Washington. Rayson is a railroad worker at Burlington Northern Santa Fe and a member of the United Transportation Union. See list of Socialist Workers candidates on page 14.

Leaf) were buying in quantity — no competition between them, kept prices low.

We then headed for the Kaiser Aluminum plant, where we have done several plant-gate sales in the last six months. We sold two copies of the *Militant*, talking to workers about the lockouts at Kaiser in the United States.

Speaking to friends, we found out something about the struggle of Natives of the Caldwell nation, who have been fighting to set up a reserve on land in the Chatham area. This area has some of the best soil in Ontario, mostly owned by very wealthy farmers. Although the federal government has earmarked funds for the Caldwells to buy back whatever land they can get, the wealthy farmers have refused to sell them land and have led a racist campaign against them, including vandalizing Native property.

Sunday October 3

The team set this day aside to meet farmers. We visited a hog farmer in the Sarnia area we have known for a couple of years who also grows corn and soybeans and runs a small seed distribution center. He farms with his two brothers, renting most of their land from their father. Although they do most of the work them-

selves, they employ some workers who are Mexican and who live in the area year-round, only for a short time to pick rocks out of the fields. His wife is a manager in a small rural bank. He says that at 39 he is the youngest farmer he knows of in the area.

This farmer renewed his *Militant* subscription for six months and after asking "what good books do you have for me today?" bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

We then headed off to visit a retired cash crop farmer who lives in the area. This man is considered a spokesperson for farmers in the area, and has traveled extensively across Canada and the United States to attend and speak at various labor and farm conferences.

As we started talking, it became clear that his perspective on how to solve the problems of farmers is to lobby for more restrictive trade policies to protect Canadian farmers. He didn't think revolutionary Cuba with its internationalist example was an alternative for farmers, because "capitalists and communists have too much in common." This farmer did not buy the book.

—Sylvie Charbin
member of International Association of Machinists Local 2113.

Concerted push in Capital Fund marks progress

BY NORTON SANDLER

Since the end of September, supporters of Pathfinder Press have been on a concerted drive to raise funds to meet the long-term capital needs of the printshop that produces Pathfinder books. The response has been tremendous. In a little over a month \$223,430 has been raised. This special effort, which is continuing, will make it possible to take the next steps in the transformation of the printshop.

Over the past year and a half the shop, located in the Pathfinder Building in New York, has undergone a major transformation. It has gone from a shop with a prepress department that used film and plates that had to be stripped — the very labor-intensive norm in the industry for decades — to a completely digital work flow.

This was made possible by Capital Fund contributions that paid for the installation of a new computer-to-plate system that allows the shop staff to take digital files and output them directly onto plates for the presses. Printing jobs that used to take hours or days for a prepress department to make ready for press now can often be prepared for the computer-to-plate machine in less than an hour. This dramatic technological change has enabled the shop staff to increase efficiency and productivity, while reducing the staff size from 47 in July 1998 to its current size of 32.

The computer-to-plate equipment makes it possible to keep all the books and pamphlets Pathfinder publishes or distributes — more than 350 titles — in print and ready to go back to press at any time as needed. This requires preparing each of these titles in digital form. More than 100 volunteers across the United States, and some also in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Cuba, have taken on this project. Their effort, combined with the advances being made by the

print shop staff in mastering the capacity of the new equipment, is resulting in a flow of high-quality books being printed in the shop. As this issue goes to press, the shop is reprinting the *History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky. This invaluable book, more than 1,300 pages long, has gone through many printings since it was originally translated into English in 1932, but this is the first time in all those years that the type has been reset. The new, more readable type makes the book a much improved tool for present and future generations to use.

A significant part of the current Capital Fund donations is being deferred to provide a bridge for the shop as it makes necessary changes and expansion of its commercial customer base so that it is fully sustainable as a digital shop. Because of this, the priority project of creating a single press room on the shop factory floor has had to be postponed a few months.

As the corner is turned, the Capital Fund contributions that have been deferred to cover other expenses will go into the new press room, which will help advance productivity on the presses by eliminating the wall that separates the two Heidelberg sheetfed presses — used to print the text and covers for Pathfinder books — and web press, used to print the *Militant*. The newly integrated press room will have a new air conditioning, humidity, and dust-control system installed, resulting in a big improvement in working conditions, as well as quality and productivity.

Contributions have come to the fund from individuals in several cities. The largest, a \$30,000 contribution, came from a trust fund. Other sources for contributions include inheritance and accident settlements.

Also, workers in several industries are receiving bonuses as a result of recent contract

settlements with their employers, and socialist workers across the country are contributing these bonuses to the Capital Fund. Employers try to pay bonuses instead of giving workers annual wage increases or as a way to reduce pay raises. Workers need annual pay hikes that keep up with inflation and that pensions and benefits are often pegged to. The scam of offering signing bonuses in lieu of wage hikes works to the benefit of the employers, who then start the next round of negotiations with the workers at a lower base pay level than if wage increases were paid.

Because of this fact, socialist workers view these so-called bonuses as "blood money," and contribute them to the Capital Fund so that the best use of them can be made in producing books that explain the lessons of the struggles of working people and the road forward to the creation of a workers and farmers government.

Seven workers at the large Boeing aircraft facilities in the Seattle area donated \$5,649.43 to the Capital Fund from ratification bonuses distributed by Boeing as part of the new contract approved by the International Association of Machinists September 2.

Aircraft cleaners at US Airways in both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are pledging their signing checks to the fund. A rail worker in Washington, D.C., has pledged his \$7,000 short-crew buyout.

Eight AMTRAK workers from both the East and West coasts are pledging their \$400 contract signing bonuses to the Capital Fund. They are also going to contribute a portion of the back pay that will come as part of the settlement. Other fund contributions are coming from auto workers and steelworkers who are receiving contract ratification checks.

For more information on how you can help, write the Capital Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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Young Socialists plan activities for fall

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and others fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. Email: INTERNET:105162.605@compuserve.com

BY AUTUMN KNOWLTON

CHICAGO — The Young Socialists National Committee convened an expanded YS leadership meeting here October 16-17 to chart a course for the Young Socialists in the coming months. YS members from 11 different cities in the United States and a representative of the YS in Canada took part in the meeting. Two representatives of the Socialist Workers Party were also seated as guests.

Cecilia Ortega of the outgoing National Executive Committee presented a report outlining the fall campaigns of the YS, to build on gains registered in the previous months. At the center of its work is the perspective of building chapters of three or more members through participating in the growing proletarian resistance in the cities and the countryside.

There was discussion about the examples set by YS members who took the initiative to organize regional educational conferences of the YS and SWP, which had recently taken place in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The Birmingham YS was in the midst of planning for a southern regional conference October 23-24 in Atlanta. The regional conferences have been central to YS recruitment work; both the New Jersey and Chicago chapters of the YS have recruited new members.

The YS decided to continue working with a regional perspective on political actions and fund-raising in order to deepen the national collaboration of the YS. As part of this per-

spective, the California YS decided to organize the YS members to participate in staffing the Pathfinder booth at the Guadalajara, Mexico, bookfair in November.

The YS is campaigning with the Socialist Workers Party, to get *Capitalism's World Disorder*, as well as other Pathfinder titles, placed in bookstores and libraries where workers and farmers buy their books. The YS aims to get a member on each regional team that visits bookstores, factory plant gates, mine portals, campuses, and working-class communities.

Jacob Perasso, the YS National Fund Drive Director, reported on the progress made by chapters and at-large members in the previous three weeks in organizing fund-raising events as part of raising money towards the goal that each city with YS members has established. As of October 17 just over \$2,000 had been turned in to the national office in San Francisco. Participants in the meeting voted to raise \$3,000 over the next two weeks in order to put the YS on course to make its national goal of \$8,000 by November 14. Fund-raising ideas raised in the discussion included political video showings and raffles.

The YS NEC will work with chapters to seek out the opportunities that exist to organize YS speaking events on campuses. This will be a chance for the YS to take advantage of the fact that YS members have returned from international reporting teams for the *Militant* to Cuba and Puerto Rico. These events can be important YS fund-raisers as well.

The leadership meeting also decided to produce a pamphlet that YS members can campaign with as a tool in recruiting new members. It will include the *Young Socialists Manifesto*; a document on recruitment; the aims and political principles, the organizer, and a selection of articles from the "YS Around the World" column from the *Militant* that reflect the activities, political perspectives, and in-

ternational character of the YS.

Coming out of the meeting, the YS projects a national convention early next year to register progress made in building a revolutionary youth organization, and to elect a new National Committee that reflects the broadening leadership in the organization.

The meeting also elected a new National Executive Committee to lead the work of the organization in the coming months.



BY SAMANTHA KERN

The Santa Cruz YS chapter will be hosting a weekend Socialist Educational Conference on the UC Santa Cruz campus November 6-7. The central theme of the conference will be the origins of women's oppression and the fight for women's liberation today from a Marxist perspective. The conference will also include a class on Buchananism and the culture war, and a panel of Young Socialists and vanguard workers involved in the increasing working-class resistance today.

This conference was initiated by a discussion held at the YS National Committee's expanded leadership meeting (see above) on the question of violence against women and the organizational norms of the Young Socialists. YS leaders discussed the fact that various forms of abuse are a reality women face living under capitalism.

The Young Socialists makes no pretense that the communist movement can be a utopia or a refuge for women, or that relations between men and women are perfect. But the Young Socialists follows proletarian norms, habits, and policies that stem from our political line, including the fight for women's lib-

Young Socialists Fund Drive

City	Goal	Collected	%
Philadelphia	400	259	65%
San Francisco	800	510	64%
Atlanta	250	150	60%
Chicago	1,200	657	55%
Newark	500	213	43%
Birmingham	550	220	40%
Detroit	350	140	40%
Seattle	400	145	36%
Minneapolis	500	107	21%
Santa Cruz	650	135	21%
New York	700	60	9%
Des Moines	130	10	8%
Los Angeles	500	25	5%
Pittsburgh	200	0	0%
Other	0	158	
Total	7,130	2,789	35%
Should be	8,000	6,000	75%

eration, which put women in the best position to lead and become capable, political equals.

Two examples that came up during the discussion were the longtime policies of the Socialist Workers Party and the YS to have separate rest room facilities for men and women at public gatherings, and organizing separate housing for men and women on regional teams. Both of these policies minimize the vulnerability of women to physical violence and fear of sexual abuse or attack, and create the best conditions for women to become political leaders of the communist movement.

The conference provides a perfect opportunity for the YS in California to clarify and discuss these important political questions, and attract fighters to the YS who are interested in a working-class perspective on the fight for women's rights. YS members from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Vancouver, and fighters throughout the west coast region are building the meeting.

Chicago forum: 'End death penalty'

BY JOHN VOTAVA

CHICAGO — A speak-out against the death penalty, sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum opened with applause October 16 when the chairperson, Joel Britton, announced news that 1,000 people demonstrated that day in Philadelphia demanding "Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal!" A busload of activists went to Philadelphia from Chicago on short notice after learning that Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge had signed a death warrant for Abu-Jamal.

The speak-out included the participation of members of the National Committee and other leaders of the Young Socialists who were meeting in Chicago.

The first panelist was Joann Patterson. Her son, Aaron, has spent 10 years on death row, locked up with 10 others sentenced to die because of convictions obtained through torture and brutality. "Is this justice to torture someone almost to death to get a conviction?" said Patterson, "No it's not."

Panelist Shawn Armbrust is involved in a project based on students and professors at Northwestern University that scrutinizes various capital case trial proceedings, some of which have led to the exoneration of nine death row inmates. She was part of the successful effort to free Anthony Porter, who at one point last year was less than 48 hours away from being executed. Armbrust said what was really unsettling to her was that Porter "was not railroaded by anyone acting with particular malice but just by the way the system works."

Mary Johnson, an activist against police brutality and member of the Coalition Against the Death Penalty, called for strengthening the fight in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Johnson explained she got involved in the struggle first by defending her own children against police brutality and frame up.

The final speaker was Jake Perasso, a packinghouse worker and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100A and the organizer of the Young Socialists in Chicago. One of Perasso's co-workers who had spent three years in maximum security co-worker commented to him, "There are a lot of innocent people in jail even if they confessed. You get less time if you confess, and everyone knows that, so you do it."

The increased use of the death penalty in recent years has gone hand in hand with the intensified attacks on working people, includ-

ing the labor movement, said Perasso. It was the civil rights and other struggles of the 50s and 60s that forced the capitalist class in this country to temporarily overturn the legality of the death penalty, he said. "This was a gain for the working class."

The discussion addressed the questions posed by the death sentences for the racist lynchers of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas. Young

Socialists leader Roberto Guerrero, who was living in Texas at the time Byrd was dragged to death, explained how many liberals there supported the use of capital punishment in this case, citing the horror of the crime, but that conscious workers stuck to their opposition to the capitalist rulers having and using this weapon.

Pathfinder books are tools for working-class fighters

BY PAT HUNTER

NEWARK, New Jersey — With three weeks to go in the international Pathfinder Fund, the total collected stands at \$68,524. Another \$18,825 is needed weekly for the remainder of the drive to meet the \$125,000 goal in full and on time by November 15.

That's a big job, but one that is clearly within reach. From Canada, more than \$1,200 was received this week. Participants at the Pathfinder Fund rally held in Atlanta during a regional educational conference hosted by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists raised \$2,430, putting Atlanta at the top of the chart. The following report from Des Moines, Iowa, shows how the drive can get on target.



DES MOINES — A fund-raising meeting to aid in the production and distribution of the titles printed and distributed by Pathfinder Press was held here October 23 at the Pathfinder bookstore. The featured speaker was Migdalia Jiménez, a member of the Young Socialists who participated in a reporting trip to Puerto Rico for the *Militant* newspaper in August. Her talk took up the nationalist and labor upsurge reflected in protests demanding the release of the independence fighters held in U.S. jails and that the U.S. Navy leave the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

"Many among the new generation of Puerto Ricans are being drawn to the idea of independence," Jiménez said. "The books that Pathfinder publishes are tools for these fighters." Pathfinder's newest title, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, takes up the increasing weight of

national liberation struggles in politics today, in the context of the deepening crisis of capitalism.

Also speaking on the panel were Margaret Trowe and Mark Weddleton. Trowe, a meatpacker and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers, has been part of the effort to make Pathfinder's titles more available to working-class fighters. "The heart of this campaign is to participate in the resistance to the crisis of capitalism with fighting workers and farmers and enlist their aid in getting books like *Capitalism's World Disorder* placed in the stores and libraries where they go to search out new ideas," she explained.

Weddleton, a volunteer in the project to prepare Pathfinder books to be reprinted, said, "All the titles that Pathfinder keeps in print are completely relevant to what's happening in the world today." He illustrated this with quotes from some 20 different titles he's proofread as part of the Pathfinder Reprint Project.

— Tim Mailhot



To find out more about the fund, to get involved or to make a contribution, you can contact the nearest Pathfinder bookstore listed on page 12. Please make all checks and money orders out to Pathfinder, earmarked Pathfinder Fund, and send to: Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

PATHFINDER FUND			
Raise \$125,000 to help produce the books workers and farmers need now			
Area	Goal	Paid	Percent
New Zealand	2,550	2,126	83%
Canada	3,650	2,129	58%
Australia	950	531	56%
United States			
Atlanta	3,500	2,811	80%
Philadelphia	3,600	2,753	76%
New York	13,000	8,766	67%
Chicago	8,000	4,975	62%
Pittsburgh	4,500	2,655	59%
Boston	4,100	2,370	58%
Newark	9,000	5,043	56%
San Francisco	12,500	7,000	56%
Detroit	4,500	2,450	54%
Chippewa Falls	400	200	50%
St. Louis	1,300	625	48%
Cleveland	4,000	1,895	47%
Miami	3,500	1,595	46%
Houston	6,500	2,945	45%
Twin Cities	10,000	4,359	44%
Los Angeles	8,000	3,060	38%
Seattle	11,000	4,115	37%
Des Moines	1,800	668	37%
Washington, D.C.	6,000	2,195	37%
Birmingham	3,000	775	26%
Cape Girardeau	250	40	16%
Ft. Collins	475	60	13%
Other U.S.	2,312	2,092	90%
U.S. Total	121,237	63,447	52%
France	500	250	50%
United Kingdom	950	40	4%
Sweden	700	0	0%
Totals	\$130,537	\$68,523	55%
Should be	\$125,000	\$93,750	75%

UK rail crash highlights bosses' deadly safety cuts

BY DEBRA JACOBS

MANCHESTER, England — At least 30 people were killed and more than 100 injured when a local Thames train hit a Great Western Express Train October 5 at Paddington in London. Two years ago six people were killed on the same line when a Great Western Express hit a freight train.

The big-business press alleged that the driver of the Thames train, Michael Hodder, passed through a red signal, SN 109, into the path of the other train. This signal, which is hard to see because a pylon restricts its view, has been passed at least seven times at red within the last year.

Union officials representing 14,000 train drivers recently announced a "go-slow" near 22 high-risk signals across the rail network that have been regularly passed at red.

The disaster spotlights the refusal of the government and rail bosses to introduce the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system on all trains. This system uses radio beacons to warn if a train is approaching a danger signal and will apply the brakes if the driver misses the warning. The Great Western Express train that crashed on October 5 was fitted with ATP, but it is not known if it was switched on.

An inquiry conducted after the London Clapham rail crash in 1988, which killed 35 people, recommended the introduction of the

ATP. Successive governments have opposed it, saying it costs too much. Instead, the government has announced that a far cheaper system, the Train Protection Warning System (TPWS), should be fitted on smaller lines by the year 2004. But this system only works at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour.

Another safety device that could have prevented the deadly crash, a sand drag, was removed from the line the Thames train was on when it was still part of British Rail in 1993. If the bunker-like drag had been in place, the train would have come to a stop rather than continuing on a line that converged with the main line.

Many working people are discussing how and why this happened. A rail worker at Manchester Piccadilly Station, who did not want to be named because of restrictive rules the bosses impose on rail workers about speaking out in public, said, "Railtrack is to blame; this is about profit." There has been a lot of discussion about re-nationalizing the railway, which is today split up among at least 25 rail companies.

Another rail worker at Piccadilly commented, "The companies should work together and put safety first."

The drive for profit has led to cuts in safety,



Collision of two trains in London October 5 killed 26 people and injured 177 others

job losses and longer hours of work. Train drivers work up to 10 hours a day and 50 hours a week.

Train guards (conductors) who are members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union, have called a strike for October 29. The issue in the strike ballot, taken before the crash at Paddington, was safety, in particular the duties and responsibilities of a guard

after an accident. Guards in 18 rail companies backed the strike. Results from the ballot for two other companies, Scotrail and Midland mainline, will be announced next week. They are expected to vote for the strike.

Debra Jacobs is a member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers union in Manchester.

Bus drivers resist longer hours in New Zealand

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Picket lines went up at 5 a.m. at four of Auckland's seven bus depots October 7, as drivers protested the contract proposed by their employer, Stagecoach.

Around 600 workers have already signed the contract, which includes a NZ\$500 signing bonus (NZ\$1=US\$0.52). The remaining 300 refused to sign, citing as their main concern the working hours in the contract. Stagecoach wants to extend the current unpaid three-hour break between "broken" morning and afternoon shifts to six hours for full-time drivers and more for part-time drivers. In addition, tea and meal breaks may occur at irregular times of the day and may be taken on the road, away from canteen and toilet facilities and without shelter or security. Drivers could also be forced to drive for more than five-and-a-half hours without

a break, which they describe as a public safety risk.

The workers are also not happy with the 2 percent pay rise offered over each of three years, and the company's increasing use of part-time drivers, who are promised full-time jobs that never eventuate.

The new contract would bring conditions for drivers previously employed by the Yellow Bus Company — bought by Stagecoach one year ago — into line with the poorer conditions already worked by drivers for Stagecoach subsidiary Cityline. Already the company's cost-cutting has resulted in layoffs of maintenance staff and plans being made to contract out much of this work.

The October 7 picket lines, which were planned to run over the morning traffic peak, were almost entirely respected by drivers who had already signed the contract. They reported for work, but refused to drive their

buses out for the rest of the day. More picket lines were set up in the afternoon, sending Stagecoach again scrambling to try to cover the evening peak. The company had faced similar problems the previous afternoon, when 300 drivers unexpectedly walked out after a union meeting where they had voted unanimously to reject the contract.

In an attempt to deflect the anger of passengers away from itself and towards the union, Stagecoach began taking out quarter-page newspaper advertisements, giving people a free phone number to call. Union members produced an informational poster which they pasted up around town. Two main unions represent the drivers, the Tramways Union and the Bus Enterprise Employees Society. The *New Zealand Herald* pitched in to try to stir resentment against the drivers with an editorial calling the Tramways Union "anachronistic." It accused them

of "holding commuters to ransom" and "driving commuters back to their cars." Echoing the concerns expressed by many big business voices about a likely Labour Party victory in the November general elections, it said the drivers' action "bodes ill for the Labour Party's plan to replace the Employment Contracts Act with a new law that will strengthen the position of trade unions. All too quickly, that muscle could threaten economic growth and jobs."

Drivers are continuing to press their demands, with further picket lines set up in the afternoon of October 15, after union delegates (shop stewards) walked out of talks with the company that day. An earlier offer from the unions to call in an industrial mediator was rejected by the company.

Other labor battles

A couple of weeks earlier, on September 17, some 60 workers employed by United Cleaning Services, who wash airline food trays, organized a picket at the Auckland international air terminal. They were protesting having to reapply for their jobs with the airline catering firm Caterair because it had not renewed its contract with the cleaning company.

Meanwhile, firefighters won a major victory October 12, when the Court of Appeal upheld an Employment Court ruling preventing their employer, the Fire Service Commission, from axing 300 jobs and cutting fire-engine crews from four to three. The ruling followed an 18-month campaign waged by firefighters which won broad support from other unionists and working people. Responding to the news in an interview on Television One's evening news bulletin October 12, one firefighter said, "It's a good victory for the firefighters, but more importantly, it's a victory for the average worker of New Zealand."

In another dispute, pilots employed by domestic air carrier Ansett New Zealand began voting October 15 on a proposal by their organization, the Airline Pilots' Association (ALPA), to sign the company's proposed contract. The proposal calls for laying off 35 pilots and increased flying hours for the remainder. The pilots held four 24-hour strikes through August and September, before being locked out September 16 for refusing to sign this contract. ALPA officials said their recommendation was based on information that Ansett had recruited 20 pilots to act as strikebreakers. Nine pilots had already signed the contract and have been operating during the lockout, together with a handful of management pilots.

Conference in Greece debates Palestinian struggle

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Close to 90 delegates from 15 different countries attended the International Conference of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, for their Right to Self-Determination and Independence, held here September 23-24. The conference was called by the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) and was hosted by the Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity.

Participants included representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and various other Palestinian committees from the West Bank, Syria, and Lebanon.

Also taking part were members of the World Federation of Trade Unions, World Peace Council, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, the MPLA of Angola, the Communist Party of Cuba, Socialist Party of Cyprus, the Coalition of the Left and Progress and the Communist Party in Greece, and the Front for Peace and Equality in Israel.

The call for the conference issued by OSPAAAL secretary general Ramón Pez Ferro said, "The fundamental objective of the conference is to contribute to the mobilization of public opinion in defense of the just cause of the Palestinian people, and to adopt an International Action Plan that will actively and effectively support the creation

of an Independent Palestinian State."

Abdallah Abdallah, PLO Ambassador to Greece, prepared the discussion on a final declaration by stating, "The purpose of the conference must be to call on the international community to pressure the government of Israel to implement the agreed upon resolutions and agreements. We have to be in line with what is going on the ground."

Naim Ashhab of the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment in Jerusalem had said in the panel on the implementation of the agreements, "The Palestinians have accepted the borders of 1967, this is our historic concession in order to make peace."

Ilan Pappé of the Front for Peace and Equality in Israel argued against the framework of separate Palestinian and Israeli states that has been accepted in recent years by the leadership of the PLO and most other Palestinian organizations.

"At best they [the ruling Israeli Labor Party and opposition Likud] want to set up a Palestinian bantustan where Israeli and U.S. capitalists in collaboration with Palestinian capitalists can superexploit cheap Palestinian labor in industrial zones along the border," he stated. "Even with a truly two-state solution, the refugee problem will not be resolved. They should be allowed to return to their homes. This of course means the establishment of a unitary democratic state."

Ashhab responded, "Raising a unitary demo-

cratic Palestine confuses the immediate goal before us."

A debate also broke out on the final draft's inclusion of supporting the implementation of U.N. "Resolution 194 which gives the right to Palestinian Refugees to return to their homes or choose to require compensation." Thorayia ElAyian of the Organization of Palestinian Working Women, from Lebanon, stressed the "inalienable right of 4.9 million refugees to return to their homeland." The compensation clause was kept.

The final declaration states "The participants agreed that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict requires the implementation of all United Nations resolutions... which demand the Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem and Golan heights, as well as Res. 425 referring to South Lebanon." The declaration also calls for the release of all Palestinian prisoners detained in Israeli jails.

The Action Plan proposes "...to urge their governments to recognize the Palestinian state as soon as it is proclaimed and to grant diplomatic recognition to the offices of the PLO..." No proposals for mobilizations were introduced. The conference also passed resolutions demanding an immediate lifting of the U.S.-led sanctions on Iraq, and ending Washington's embargo on Cuba.

Natasha Terlexis contributed to this article.

'The imperialists today are not the all-powerful masters of the world'

Fidel Castro addresses Cuba during 'Missile Crisis' on October 23, 1962

Thirty-seven years ago this October, Washington brought the world to the brink of nuclear war in what the U.S. rulers, for self-serving reasons, call the Cuban "missile" crisis.

In the face of escalating preparations by U.S. imperialism for an invasion of Cuba in the spring and summer of 1962, the Cuban government signed a mutual defense treaty with the Soviet Union. Following the signing of that pact, Soviet nuclear missiles were installed in Cuba.

For more than a year, Washington had been demonstratively preparing for an air and land war aimed at doing the job the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 had failed to accomplish. In November 1961 the Kennedy administration launched a covert action program code-named Operation Mongoose with the goal of crushing Cuba's socialist revolution. Its guidelines explicitly included "decisive U.S. military intervention."

On Oct. 16, 1962, U.S. President John Kennedy was informed that spy flights over Cuba had photographed nuclear missiles on the island.

The Cuban government—viewing deployment of the missiles as an international duty, especially in the face of U.S. nuclear bases in Turkey and other countries ringing the USSR—had accepted a Soviet proposal to install the weapons. At Moscow's insistence, and over the Cuban government's objections, the deployment had remained secret.

Washington seized on the missiles as the pretext to step up its attacks on Cuba. On Oct. 22, 1962, in a nationally televised address, Kennedy announced measures aimed at paving the way for the overthrow of the workers and farmers government in Cuba.

A naval blockade (euphemistically called a "quarantine") was placed around the island. Troops on U.S. warships would forcibly stop, board, and inspect all vessels en route to Cuba, turning back those they deemed to be carrying "offensive weapons." The U.S. president announced plans to reinforce the U.S. military base at Guantánamo, Yankee imperialism's occupied beachhead in southeastern Cuba.

Printed here are major excerpts from a televised address Cuban prime minister Fidel Castro gave on Oct. 23, 1962, in response to Washington's war moves.

Faced with the rapid and determined mobilizations of Cuba's workers and farmers to defend their revolution, the U.S. administration began to back off. U.S. military leaders told Kennedy to expect more than 18,000 U.S. casualties in the first 10 days of an invasion — nearly 4,500 in the first 24 hours alone.

On October 28 the Soviet government — without consultation with Cuba — accepted Kennedy's offer to withdraw the missiles in exchange for a secret understanding that the U.S. government would withdraw its missiles from Turkey. The Cuban government, upon learning of the agreement over the radio, announced a five-point list of demands that included an end to the U.S. economic blockade; the halting of all counterrevolutionary operations carried out from U.S. territory; an end to violations of Cuban sea and airspace; and U.S. withdrawal from Guantánamo.

Commenting on the outcome of the October Crisis in a 1992 NBC television interview with Maria Shriver, Castro said, "Naturally we did not want war. We wanted a solution, but an honorable solution.... We didn't know that the crisis was on its way to being resolved on the basis of the almost unconditional concessions made by Khrushchev. They left everything the way it was. They left the blockade. They left a dirty war. They left



Cuban milita members with "Cuatro Bocas" (four barrels) anti-aircraft guns in front of the Hotel Riviera in Havana, during the October 1962 crisis. It was the determination of the Cuban workers and farmers to defend their revolution that pushed back the Kennedy administration's war preparations against Cuba. U.S. military predicted loss of over 18,000 U.S. troops just in the first 10 days after an invasion, 4,500 in the first 24 hours.

Guantánamo Naval Base."

Castro's Oct. 23, 1962, speech will appear in the first volume of a collection of his speeches from the early years of the revolution to be published by Pathfinder. The translation is copyright © by Pathfinder Press and reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

—Sara Lobman

BY FIDEL CASTRO

All these events are really the culmination of a policy pursued by the United States—not the United States, but the imperialists, the warmongers, and the most reactionary circles of the United States—against our country since the triumph of the revolution.

None of these measures surprise us. Measures of this type, and others we have had to endure, are things that were to be expected from a government as reactionary and as disrespectful of the rights of other peoples and other nations as is the U.S. government.

All the people are familiar with this history. Ever since day one, since the very day of triumph, a triumph that cost our people so many sacrifices, our people could begin seeing what U.S. government policy toward us was going to be. This is apart from the fact that our people, or part of our people—that part with the greatest amount of political awareness—clearly knew the history of relations between the United States and Cuba going back to the end of the last century. Our progress, our independence, and our sovereignty were always undercut by the policy of the Yankee governments, that is, intervention for imperialist purposes. Going back to the Platt Amendment¹; the successive interventions; the seizure of our country's wealth; the support they gave to the worst, most reactionary, and most thieving governments. And finally, the support

¹ The Platt Amendment, named after U.S. Sen. Orville Platt, was a provision imposed on the Cuban government that was established during the U.S. military occupation following 1898. Under the terms of that amendment—incorporated in Cuba's new constitution—Washington was given the "right" to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time and to establish military bases on Cuban soil. These provisions were eliminated from the Cuban constitution in the wake of the 1933–34 revolutionary upsurge there.

given to Batista. For we cannot forget, nor shall we ever forget, that all the bombs they dropped on us, and on the people in the Sierra Maestra, were U.S.-made.

Our people are familiar with the whole process up to the present.

What is the current situation? The current situation is that this whole struggle has been a useless battle by an empire against a small country. It has been a useless, sterile, and failed struggle by an empire against a revolutionary government and against a revolution that is occurring in a small, underdeveloped country, a country that until recently was exploited.

Why has the situation been sharpened? Why has it reached critical proportions? Simply because the United States has failed in all the attempts it has made against us up until now. In short, they have been defeated....

U.S. aggression in Latin America

U.S. governments are accustomed to solving the problems of Latin America by very simple procedures: above all, by coup d'états carried out by reactionary military cliques controlled by its embassies—that is, whenever the embassies could not solve the problems by simple orders through their ambassadors. Other procedures include promoting rebellions, revolutions, interventions, and all these things. The interventions in our continent are also well known—the intervention in Haiti, in Santo Domingo, in Nicaragua, in Mexico²—from which they wrested the part richest in minerals and oil, which the Yankees pirated. The history of Mexico is the history of a country filled with heroism. A good part of that heroism was expended in fighting for its independence against U.S. invasions. This history is well known.

The tactics they used to solve the problem of Guatemala was that of a Playa Girón-type invasion.³ They also employed propaganda campaigns and promoted subversion. In other words, there was no government in Latin America that was able to withstand the oppo-

² U.S. military forces had occupied Nicaragua from 1912–25, and again from 1926–33; a portion of northern Mexico from 1916–17; Haiti from 1914–34; and the Dominican Republic from 1916–24.

³ Seeking to crush political and social struggles in Guatemala that accompanied a limited land reform initiated by the regime of Jacobo Arbenz, mercenary forces backed by the CIA invaded the

situation of the U.S. government.

Things occurred exactly this way up until the triumph of the Cuban revolution. When the Cuban revolution triumphed, they began to try out all their procedures against us: They began with slander campaigns, attempts to divide the people, to weaken the revolution through division, encouraged by that whole tremendous campaign launched inside and outside our country. They began with those useless campaigns. They continued with maneuvers of a political type in the OAS, in all those countries.⁴ Useless. They continued with economic aggression. Suffice it to say that this type of aggression—which was one of the weapons I failed to mention: economic aggression as a weapon of pressure to control the situation in a given country.

They continued with economic aggression—with oil, sugar—until they came to a total embargo. But economic aggression also failed.⁵

They organized a Guatemala-type invasion: the invasion at Playa Girón. That failed too. They organized new maneuvers in the OAS, the breaking of dip-

lomatic relations with Cuba, the Punta del Este agreements. Because everything that has happened in Latin America since the triumph of the Cuban revolution is connected precisely to the Cuban revolution....

Simultaneously with this policy came more economic aggression, a total blockade. Useless. By blockade I mean a complete ban on the purchase of Cuban products and the sale of products to Cuba, despite the fact that all our factories and transportation required spare parts made in the United States.

That was not enough for them. All that was useless. They then began an even more aggressive policy. It was no longer a matter of banning the sale of our products in the United States, but of pursuing our products all over the world, and, at the same time, of attempting to prevent all the capitalist countries from

country in 1954. Arbenz refused to arm the people and resigned, and a right-wing dictatorship led by Col. Carlos Castillo de Armas took over.

On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The counterrevolutionaries, organized and financed by Washington, aimed to declare a provisional government to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. The invaders, however, were defeated within seventy-two hours by Cuba's militia and its Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the name Cubans use to designate the battle.

⁴ At a meeting in San José, Costa Rica, in August 1960, the Organization of American States (OAS) approved a declaration attacking the Cuban revolution. In August 1961 at a meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, the OAS approved the U.S.-sponsored Alliance for Progress, which allocated \$20 billion in loans to Latin American governments in exchange for their compliance in lining up against Cuba. In January 1962 Cuba was expelled from the OAS and other governments in the hemisphere were urged to cut economic ties and diplomatic relations with Cuba.

⁵ In June 1960, U.S. refineries in Cuba began refusing to process crude oil that Cuba had purchased from the Soviet Union. The revolutionary government responded by taking over the management of the Texaco, Esso, and Shell refineries. A few weeks later, in early July, Washington reduced by 95 percent Cuba's sugar quota, which was the amount of Cuban sugar Washington agreed to purchase for the U.S. market. In response, the revolutionary government authorized the nationalization of the holdings of the principal U.S. companies in Cuba. On Oct. 19, 1960, Washington declared a partial embargo on trade with Cuba. A total embargo was imposed in February 1962.

selling to us....

They threaten these countries, the ships of these countries, that they won't be permitted to enter U.S. ports, that they'll be boycotted. That they'll be ruined. Useless attempts, useless. Because it can be said that they have tried every weapon, and every weapon, one after the other, has failed.

They began with *La Coubre*, in an attempt to prevent us from preparing ourselves.⁶ With the explosion of the ship *La Coubre*. The purpose of this was to prevent us from acquiring weapons from Belgium. Later they exerted pressure on Belgium.

They wanted us to be without weapons, at their mercy — naturally so that they could attack us whenever they wanted to. They thought that if we were disarmed, then a little-bitty invasion of the Playa Girón type would resolve everything for them.

This effort culminates now with a new adventure, which is truly dangerous to world peace. They are even trying to prevent us from arming ourselves with the assistance of the socialist camp.

To sum up, this has been the story of an uninterrupted chain of failures leading imperialism—which has not resigned itself and will never resign itself, despite the fact that it has no choice but to resign itself—to a series of steps that are more and more adventurous, more and more aggressive, with the single aim of destroying the Cuban revolution.

But in four years of vigorous and healthy life of the Cuban revolution, they have not been able to make a dent in it. If one analyzes the situation of our country and our people, it's clear that the revolution is stronger than ever at this moment. Failure in their aim of destroying the Cuban revolution is what has led them to this latest step.

What is this latest step? It is an adven-

ture, undoubtedly the most reckless and most dangerous adventure for world peace that has appeared since the last world war.

The people were informed of the declaration Mr. Kennedy made yesterday. During the day we had been receiving a series of reports about unusual meetings, about unusual goings-on in Washington concerning meetings with an officer from the Pentagon, meetings with political leaders of both parties, and meetings of their Security Council, with plane movements, ship movements, a whole series of reports. We knew that it had something to do with us. We knew because of everything that had come before in their policy since the revolution, the warmongering campaign, the hysteria, the Joint Resolution,⁷ all those things.

We then realized that anything could occur from one moment to the next. As for us, they will never catch us unprepared and by surprise. They have not caught us by surprise up to now, nor will they ever catch us by surprise. When Girón occurred, they did not catch us by surprise, nor at any moment will they catch us unprepared and by surprise. When we realized that a series of movements were occurring and that some sort of action was imminent—we did not know

⁷ On Oct. 3, 1962, a resolution was approved by both houses of Congress "to prevent by whatever means may be necessary, including the use of arms" the spreading of the example of the Cuban revolution.



"The nation is on a war footing," read headline of *Revolución*, paper of the July 26 Movement, in Havana, Oct. 23, 1962. "Against that policy of provocation and violence is our firm and calm position of defending ourselves," declared Castro.



Courtesy José Ramón Fernández

Mercenaries captured after the defeat of Playa Girón invasion in April 1961. José Ramón Fernández, left, today brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, escorts the prisoners. "Failure in their aim of destroying the Cuban revolution is what has led them to this latest step," said Castro.

concretely what it was going to be or from where it would come—then we came to the conclusion, after discussing the situation with the compañeros, to put our forces on alert.

That is why yesterday, at 5:40 p.m., the order was given sounding the combat alarm. The combat alarm is the highest degree of alert and readiness in the armed forces.

We wanted to avoid having to take this measure unless we were facing a very clear danger, because naturally all our efforts, the efforts of our country, have for many months been devoted almost exclusively to increasing production and solving problems of an economic character. And our country really had progressed and is advancing very much

in this field.

Naturally, every time a mobilization of this type is made, it implies sacrifices in the field of production, no matter how much one tries to reconcile one thing with the other. And even though we have much more organization and much more experience, it of course affects us in any case. In face of

Series marks key steps by Cuban revolution

BY MIKE TABER

This is the 10th piece in a series appearing in the *Militant* each month throughout 1999 celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Cuban revolution. The series features speeches by central leaders of the revolution marking turning points and accomplishments as the workers and farmers of Cuba pressed ahead in the opening years of the revolution, defending their interests against the capitalists, landlords, and imperialist rulers in the United States.

The revolutionary struggle that toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959, was led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro. These organizations mobilized Cuba's toilers to bring down the bloody regime, throw off the yoke of Yankee economic and political domination, and initiate radical land reform. Also opposing Batista were substantial bourgeois forces, most of whom did little to bring down the dictatorship but were energetic in seeking to block the Rebel Army's victory.

When it became clear this could not be prevented, these forces — in league with Washington — set their hopes on buying off and corrupting the revolutionary leadership. They confidently expected to engineer the sequence of events often seen elsewhere in Latin America throughout the 20th century: that the July 26 Movement's program would remain only a piece of paper, while in practice the interests of Washington and of Cuba's landlords and capitalists would be secure. Eventually, they anticipated, the situation would "stabilize" enough so that the bearded rebels could be discarded altogether and more reliable political and military forces reinstated.

They were wrong. From the beginning, Washington and its Cuban bourgeois soul mates underestimated the political caliber, class firmness, and repeated bold initiatives of the leadership forged by the Rebel Army, and the determination of Cuba's workers and farmers to defend their interests.

The first government that came to power in January 1959 was a coalition of the revolutionary forces led by the July 26 Movement and bourgeois opposition figures, among them the new president, Manuel Urrutia. Fidel Castro remained commander-in-chief of the Rebel Army. He had no position in the new government.

The July 26 Movement and Rebel Army forces under Castro's leadership, both inside and outside the government, continued to mobilize the toilers to carry out the program they had fought for. As the revolution deepened, Fidel Castro became prime minister in mid-February. Among the measures decreed by the government in early 1959 and implemented in practice by the Rebel Army at the head of the workers and farmers vanguard were the dismantling of the military and police forces of the Batista regime; the eradication of the extremely profitable U.S.-dominated gambling and prostitution operations; the outlawing of racist discrimination in hiring and social services; and the slashing of rents and prices for other basic goods and services, such as telephone and utility rates, that consume most workers' income.

Most decisively, in May 1959 an agrarian reform law was implemented. Millions of acres of large landed estates held by U.S. and Cuban ruling-class families were confiscated, and hundreds of thousands of peasants received title to the land they worked. To implement the land reform, the new government established the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and Castro was named INRA's president.

These measures provoked a sharpening class polarization inside Cuba, including within the coalition government. During the summer and fall of 1959, as the land reform advanced, Washington's economic and military hostility escalated. As Cuban workers and peasants responded, they deepened their determination to defend their gains and realize their dreams. Under popular pressure, the representatives of capitalist forces resigned from the government one after the other. These included Urrutia, who was replaced as president by Osvaldo Dorticós, a

prominent lawyer with ample credentials as an anti-imperialist and anti-Batista fighter and a member of the July 26 Movement.

The July 26 Movement as well as other groups that participated in the fight against Batista were profoundly affected as procapitalist forces split away. More than a few joined armed counterrevolutionary organizations.

By November 1959, the last of the bourgeois forces had left the government. Washington launched a full-scale political, economic, and military campaign to overthrow the workers and farmers government.

From August to October 1960, in direct response to the escalating U.S. attacks, Cuba's working people mobilized by the millions to support and implement government decrees nationalizing the factories, refineries, mills, and other holdings of U.S.- and Cuban-owned corporations. The domination of capital was broken and the foundations laid for beginning a transition to socialism. In April 1961, the day after U.S.-organized bombing assaults on Cuban airfields and on the eve of the landing of U.S.-trained and -financed mercenary troops at the Bay of Pigs, the socialist character of the revolution was proclaimed. The invaders at the Bay of Pigs were defeated in 72 hours.

The standoff between the two irreconcilable forces represented by Havana and Washington, which continues to this day, has marked much of world politics throughout the last 40 years.

Most of the speeches that will be included in this series will appear in books that Pathfinder is preparing for publication. These include two volumes of speeches by Fidel Castro from the first decade of the revolution, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and a new edition of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*.

Some of the speeches planned for this series have never before appeared in English. Others have been out of print for many years. *Militant* readers who are interested in helping with the translation are invited to contact Pathfinder Press at (212) 741-0690. Messages can also be sent to pathfinderpress@compuserve.com or mailed

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this situation, the order was decreed, and naturally all instructions related to the combat alarm were carried out, in anticipation of an aggression and against the danger of a surprise attack. At this moment, therefore, they cannot catch us by surprise.

And since we must always distrust these gentlemen, the same thing might occur here, we felt, in line with the movements they have been carrying out. That is, the military landing maneuver—supposedly a maneuver—on the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico, might be redirected against Cuba, we felt, as in fact was done.⁸ They suspended the maneuvers, and we were on alert, because one of the methods they can utilize is to simulate a maneuver and launch an attack, to try to obtain their proposed objectives through surprise.

The maneuvers were in progress, and in anticipation that something might occur, such as a sudden surprise attack, the combat alarm order was given. Later, Kennedy's statement [of October 22] was published, which simply confirmed and justified the measures we had taken. Why was this? Simply because an imperialist adventure of this type implies such dangers that it is necessary to be in a complete state of alert....

Kennedy issues declaration of a pirate

To me and to our people, [Kennedy's statement] is not the declaration of a statesman, but of a pirate. There is the following fact to be considered: The measure he is taking as a result of all this is a complete violation of international law. No state can do that. No state can stop the ships of another state on the high seas. No state can blockade another state. It is as if we were to send our ships with the following aim: "The United States cannot send such-and-such arms to Guatemala or Venezuela." Or as if any country were to place its warships around another country and blockade it. That goes against every international law, and it also goes against the ethics of international relations, against the most basic right of the peoples....

The governments that have let themselves be dragged along by that policy are undoubtedly committing the greatest act of betrayal any government of Latin America could commit. To lend oneself to an aggression like that against our country, to serve as puppet of the imperialists to commit this crime against a sister Latin American country, is the greatest act of betrayal that a government could commit.

This is a betrayal that the peoples will never commit. The imperialists want Latin American soldiers to come along with them to fight their Cuban brothers, to fight men who have the same problems, the same traditions, the same culture, and the same language. The imperialists do not want to come alone. In their adventure they want to make cannon fodder of the peoples of Latin America—peoples who will never be in agreement with this aggression.

It will not be we alone—we will defend ourselves on our shores—it will be the peoples who will be charged with punishing the traitors. Because by doing so these traitors only bring closer the hour of revolution in Latin America. With the aggression against Cuba, by serving as puppets of the imperialists against Cuba, the only thing they are doing is bringing closer the day when their respective peoples will settle accounts with them. And the revolution arrives when one least expects it. That's especially the case the more abject, the more servile, and the more sell-out a government may be. So this is what they try.

They also ask the United Nations that we disarm ourselves—with the sending of observers, of course. With regard to this problem, there is something very curious. The imperialists have now invented the terms "offensive" weapons and "defensive" weapons. Which are offensive weapons and which

⁸ The U.S. Navy took over the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico, at the beginning of World War II to use as a military base. On Oct. 21, 1962, the *Washington Post* ran a front page story reporting that the mobilization of U.S. troops, planes, and ships south of Florida, allegedly for training exercises in waters around Vieques, was really aimed at Cuba.



Picket line organized by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee outside United Nations in New York denounces Washington's preparations for an invasion of Cuba, Oct. 27, 1962. Richard Garza, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York, is being interviewed by reporter.

are defensive weapons? The rifles that came to Playa Girón were offensive weapons; the bazookas, the grenades, the mortars, the bullets, the knives they landed at Playa Girón were offensive weapons. But our rifles, mortars, and tanks were defensive weapons. Our tanks were defensive, while the Sherman tanks they landed were offensive.

Because what determines the offensive or defensive character of the weapons is not their shape but their use, their employment. And since our weapons were used to defend ourselves, then our rifles, our cannons, our tanks were defensive. And the rifles, the weapons, the tanks they brought were offensive. That cannot be debated anywhere. Nevertheless, the imperialists have now invented the category of "offensive weapons" and "defensive weapons." That is a pure invention of theirs, with the aim of keeping the people disarmed....

Do we not have the rights that international norms, laws, and principles recognize for every sovereign state in any part of the world? What part of the world and what country is denied the right to arm itself? What part of the world and what country is asked to give an accounting for the weapons it arms itself with? What part of the world and what country? What makes the imperialists think that we are the only such country, in the only such part of the world? Why, when we are a sovereign state, just as sovereign as they are—and even more so, because we are not the slaves of exploitation, nor of imperialism, nor of the war-making policy they follow! [Applause]

We are sovereign by our own right

We are not sovereign by the grace of the Yankees, but by our own right. And we are not just sovereign in words, we are sovereign in deeds. And we are true to our status as a sovereign state, so to take away our sovereignty it will be necessary to wipe us off the face of the earth! [Applause]

Our declaration in reply to the Joint Resolution went on to state: "We have not abdicated and we do not intend to abdicate any of our sovereign prerogatives to the Congress of the United States. If the U.S. government did not harbor aggressive intentions toward our country, it would not be interested in the quantity, quality, or type of our weapons. If the United States could give Cuba effective and satisfactory guarantees with respect to our territorial integrity and would cease its subversive and counterrevolutionary activities against our people, Cuba would not need to strengthen its defenses. Cuba would not even need an army, and all the resources this implies we would happily invest in the economic and cultural development of the nation." Is this clear enough? Who are the ones who forced us to arm ourselves?...

Our people will never forget that "friend" Kennedy⁹ gave the orders for the attack [on Playa Girón], an attack that cost our people

so many lives, that left so many widows and so many orphans. It did not cost tens, or perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives, of course, because it was rapidly defeated.

Attacks by 'friend' Kennedy

But what would have happened had they seized the [Zapata] Swamp, that piece of our territory that could be reached only by two narrow roads through marshland? What would have happened had they begun to operate their bombers from there, attacking our cities, our transportation lines, and our factories every night? How much misery, how much destruction, how much killing, how many problems would this have created for the country?

Because all that was the intention of "friend" Kennedy, like his intention in everything else: to deprive our country of food, of trade, of spare parts, of raw materials. There was the economic blockade. There was the subversion. There were the thousands of weapons dropped into the mountains of our country to organize bands of mercenaries, counterrevolutionary bands.¹⁰ There were the pirate attacks they made of all types, beginning with the planes that in

⁹ In his speech, Kennedy had stated to the Cuban people, "I speak to you as a friend."

¹⁰ In the early 1960s small bands of counterrevolutionaries armed and financed by Washington—popularly known in Cuba as the bandits—based themselves in the Escambray mountains in south-central Cuba. The bandits carried out sabotage and other operations against the revolution. By the mid-1960s they had been eliminated by a popular mobilization of militia units supporting operations of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

the first days of the revolution came here to burn our sugar plantations, to drop incendiary bombs upon our canefields, up to the attack on Havana in the middle of the afternoon during the first year of the revolution, an attack that cost dozens of victims.

Then came attacks like the one on the oil refinery in Santiago de Cuba prior to the invasion of Girón. The treacherous Pearl Harbor-type bombing carried out on April 15,¹¹ two days before the invasion, during which women and children were hurt and there were all kinds of victims.

When you watch the documentaries of those days, you can see the bodies of women murdered by the homicidal bullets of our "friend" Kennedy's bombers.

There were the pirate attacks, of which there were many, such as the last one, in which a small unarmed launch was attacked by one of the U.S.-armed PT boats. And not only was it attacked, but it was sunk, and two of the crew members were captured and taken to the United States.¹² These were revolutionaries, from revolutionary families, and they had them there, kidnapped, in a cynical and shameless way. These are all the acts and all the crimes that the imperialists have constantly been committing since the triumph of the revolution, long before we began arming ourselves.

When the CIA agents blew up the ship *La Coubre*, which was carrying weapons, costing us close to eighty lives, we did not even have relations with the Soviet Union. And we were arming ourselves, because after the agrarian reform law they began to prepare the expedition in Guatemala. When was this? Ever since the first year of the revolution, five months after the triumph of the revolution, simply because the revolution had decreed an agrarian law. For this sole reason they began to prepare the expedition, and they began their war on us.

What were the intentions? To destroy the revolution, to condemn the people once again to the miseries and injustices of the past. Those are the objectives they have been pursuing since the first moment.

What did we do? Defend ourselves. What did we do but defend ourselves exclusively? Or did the imperialists think that after their first attack on us, after their first action they would have a people on their knees, a government on its knees, and a legion of revolutionaries carrying a white flag?

Did they think that we revolutionaries would surrender, that the people of Cuba would surrender? Was that what they were expecting? That apparently is what they were expecting. So what we did was defend ourselves. And for each measure they took against us, we took others. They were the ones who decreed this policy of aggression, of enmity toward us, of breaking relations

¹¹ As a prelude to the Bay of Pigs invasion, planes attacked Santiago de Cuba and Havana on April 15, 1961, killing seven and wounding fifty-three.

¹² On Oct. 13, 1962, counterrevolutionaries aboard a PT boat opened fire on an small unarmed pleasure craft with four Cuban civilians aboard. Two of the Cubans, who were wounded, were taken to Miami.

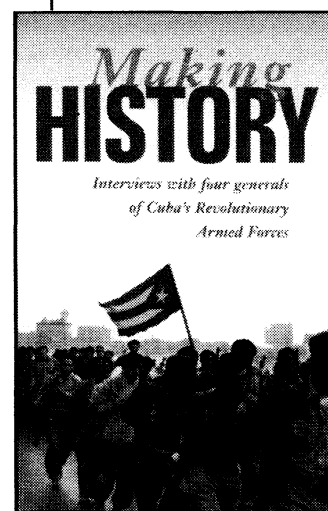
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with our country. They were the ones.

If they failed, the blame is theirs, not ours. They were the ones who time and again rejected the proposals by the Cuban revolution, the words of friendship of the Cuban revolution, the repeated offers to negotiate, from the beginning up until the time of the *compañero* president's appearance at the United Nations.¹³ Of course, they could not reply to these words. Why don't they want to negotiate? Why did they not respond to the call for negotiations made by the government of Cuba, presented there before the representatives of all the countries of the world?...

We can clearly state that all countries can rest easy, every country in Latin America, every country of America—the United States—because we shall never be the aggressors. We shall never be the ones to take the offensive.

But in the same way as we declare this clearly and honestly, we also declare that neither shall we be easy victims of any aggression. And we also declare, with the same determination and the same certainty, that we will know how to defend ourselves and we will repel any aggressor. That is what our weapons are for.

That is precisely what I said on July 26 in Santiago de Cuba: That we knew the intentions of our enemies, their plans, and that we had to take the appropriate measures, not only to resist, but to repel them. That is simply what has happened: We have taken the appropriate measures to resist and—listen carefully—to repel any direct aggression by the United States. [Applause]

Cuba will not be inspected by anyone

We reject definitively any attempt at monitoring, any attempt at inspection of our country. Our country will not be inspected by anyone. No one will be able to come and inspect our country, because we will never give authorization for that to anyone. We will never renounce our sovereign prerogatives. Within our borders, we are the ones who rule, and we are the ones who do the inspecting. That is all there is to it. We therefore reject definitively any attempt to investigate our country in any way, no matter where it comes from.

Cuba is not the Congo. Imperialist forces went to the Congo flying the banner of the United Nations. They assassinated the leader of the Congo. They divided it, they muzzled it, and they killed the independent spirit of that nation.¹⁴

Cuba is not the Congo. No one can come under that banner or any other one to inspect our country. We know what we are doing, and we know how we must defend our integrity and our sovereignty. [Applause] Anyone who tries to come and in-



Marines reinforcements arrive at U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, Cuba, October 1962. "The combat alarm order was given.... Why was this? Simply because an imperialist adventure of this type implies such dangers that it is necessary to be in a complete state of alert."

spect Cuba should know that he will have to come ready for battle! That is our definitive answer to the illusions and to the proposals for carrying out inspections in our territory....

What is our principled position regarding the arms buildup or regarding disarmament? We are decidedly in favor of disarmament. What is our policy on military bases? We are decidedly in favor of dismantling all military bases. What is our policy on the presence of troops in various countries? We are in favor of a peace policy. We maintain there should be no troops or military personnel from one country in the territory of another country. That is our principled position. If the United States desires disarmament, that is magnificent. Let us all disarm. Magnificent! Let us all support a policy for the dismantling of bases, of troops throughout the world. Magnificent! We are in agreement with that policy.

But we are not in agreement with a policy that calls for disarming us in the face of the aggressors. That is so stupid, so ridiculous, and so absurd, that it is not worth wasting any more time thinking about such idiocy. [Applause]...

We will resist any blockade

Very well, this is the situation at the moment: the threats, and the threats of taking measures. Let us look at what these are and how they are to be taken, and what is to happen. Because it is not the same to be surrounded by little ships in the water—there are none as yet—as it is to try and impose those things here in our territory. Threats of new measures. It would not be strange that what they say here in the first part in this gentleman's speech: "This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers." It would not be strange if they tried to extend it at a given moment to other types of cargo, including food and everything. In other words, a total blockade.

We can state that if there is a total blockade, we will be able to resist it.

All these things simply serve to reduce that country in stature, and to magnify in stature the grandeur of our homeland. At this moment a wave of repudiation is sweeping the world, despite the reactionary press and the attempts at appearances. It is clear that they have tried to dress up the doll, but the doll is losing its clothing, leaving only the skeleton.

There are already a few U.S. embassies that have been attacked, among them the one in London. A demonstration of 2,000 persons broke through a cordon of 100 police and penetrated the embassy in London.

In other words, this action has provoked world repudiation—and it will do so more and more. If they add other articles to the blockade and try to starve our people into submission, that repudiation will multiply, and we will see who withstands the most—their shame or our honor, their cowardice or our courage.

If they blockade us, they will magnify the grandeur of our homeland, because our homeland will be able to resist. There is no doubt that we will resist any cowardly blockade. What might happen—a total blockade or a direct aggression? Those are the alternatives. They have already established what they call a quarantine. They are

so shameless that they themselves say they are calling it a quarantine even though it is actually a blockade.

The alternatives are a total blockade or aggression. In the face of that, what can we tell the people? We will adopt in a timely manner the necessary measures, and if a total blockade comes about, we will be able to resist it. That will simply sink imperialism into the deepest abyss of discredit, while elevating our country to unimagined heights of heroism and grandeur. We will not die of hunger. If it comes to direct attack, we will repel it! That is what I can tell you. If there is a direct attack we will repel it. I think that is sufficient. The people should know the following: we have the means with which to repel a direct attack. This is clear as clear can be. [Applause]

Threat of nuclear attacks

So they threaten us with being the target of nuclear attacks? They don't scare us. I would like to know if the senators, the imperialists, the Yankee millionaires possess the frame of mind of our people, the calmness of our people. Because it is not the same thing to be fully convinced you are defending a just cause as it is being a pirate. And they are pirates.

I would like to know if at the present time they are as calm and serene in facing this as we are. We are not intimidated. We are calmed somewhat by knowing that the aggressors will not go unpunished. We are calmed by knowing that the aggressors will be exterminated. Knowing that makes us calm.

We are running risks that we have no choice but to run. They are the risks run by humanity. And we, who are part of humanity — and a very worthy part to be sure — know how to run these risks calmly. We have the consolation of knowing that in a thermonuclear war, the aggressors, those who unleash a thermonuclear war, will be exterminated. I believe there are no ambiguities of any kind.

Humanity must face this danger. It must fight for peace. It is not for nothing that peace is a basic aspiration of humanity. That is why humanity must mobilize itself against those who promote war and aggression, against those who place the world on the brink of war, against those who follow this policy of playing with fire, the fire of war and nuclear war, which would cause such frightening harm to all humanity.

We, as part of humanity, run those risks, but we are not afraid. We must know how to live in the era that has fallen to us, and with the dignity required.

Who are the ones who make threats? These gentlemen. But whom do they threaten? Those who cannot be intimidated. It is possible that those who threaten, these gentlemen who threaten us, are victims of fear. What a sad truth it is, incredibly. It turns out now that in their obsession the imperialists have ended up inventing and creating a kind of fear of Cuba. The shark is frightened, and it is calling the other little sardines to try to devour the ex-sardine, Cuba.¹⁵

¹⁵ This analogy comes from the book, *The Fable of the Shark and the Sardines: The Strangulation of Latin America*, by Juan José Arévalo, president of Guatemala from 1945 to 1951.

And the others go scurrying. Some governments go and give support. So much more shame and infamy for them, and so much more glory for our people, for our revolution, and for us all. When our country decided to be free and to make a revolution, it knew that it had to face the consequences, to confront many enemies. We were no longer the puppet, no longer the flock of sheep; the sheep following along behind, obedient to the voice and the whip of the master. Not us. And when the reactionaries of this continent unite together against our glorious revolution and our heroic people, this only serves to ennoble our people, to raise the merit, the prestige, and the heroism of our people, who are confronting the reactionaries alone on this continent.

Those agreements do not worry us. We know how they are obtained, how they are demanded, how they are extracted. And we know the infinite amount of mud it involves, mud of which we are clean. These are meaningless agreements, furthermore, since to crush the revolution they would have to come destroy it by force, and they cannot destroy it by force. All the rest is just verbiage.

Against that policy of provocation and violence is our firm and calm position of defending ourselves. What is the position of the Soviet Union? A calm, exemplary position. The Soviet response has been a real lesson to imperialism: Firm, calm, full of arguments, full of reason, which strip the aggressive policy of Mr. Kennedy to its skeleton. History will note this all down, the position of one camp and of the other, the position of the imperialists and of the defenders of peace, of those who fight to prevent for the world the tragedy of a war. History will have to note this down.

No longer the lords and masters

Humanity must struggle with the hope of peace. That hope is based precisely on the fact that the imperialists today are not the all-powerful lords and masters of the world. The imperialists cannot launch a war without suffering the consequences of the war they provoke, which is extermination. That is what may stop them. Since they are no longer lords and masters, humanity must maintain the hope that there will be peace. With firmness, with resolution, and with a policy of principles.

That policy of principles gains more sympathizers in the world every day. And that policy of provocation and war, of piracy and arbitrary acts, is repudiated more and more in the world every day. History will note the responsibility falling to each and everyone.

If the imperialists, against the most basic interest of humanity, force things to the point of unleashing a war—an exceedingly painful war for humanity—the historic responsibility will be theirs. And on their shoulders—or better said, on their ashes—they will have to bear the tremendous and staggering responsibility of the harm they may cause the world.

Our policy is one of respect for principles, of respect for international norms, and of peace. We can say this because it is true; we can speak in this way without any ulterior motive. We can speak in this way because we are convinced of the cause we defend, we are convinced that justice and right are on our side, and because we know that our people are running these risks not because we are a corrupt, vile, abject people, or a people who live in the muck of injustice and exploitation.

Our people have unfurled a banner of justice. Our people have freed themselves of vice, of depravity, of exploitation, and of the moral and material poverty of the past. And our people are convinced of what they are doing. This is the source of our people's strength. They are convinced of the historic role they are playing, convinced of the prestige they enjoy, of the faith that other peoples of the world have placed in them. And because they are convinced of this, they are able to look ahead calmly.

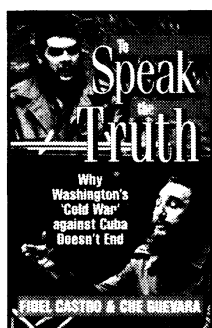
All of us, men and women, young and old, are united in this hour of danger. And our fate, the fate of all revolutionaries and patriots, will be shared by all of us together. And victory, too, will be shared by all of us together!

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death]
¡Venceremos! [We will win]
[Ovation]

¹³ Cuban president Osvaldo Dorticós addressed the UN General Assembly on Oct. 8, 1962.

¹⁴ The Congo won its independence from Belgium in 1960. Patrice Lumumba, principal leader of the independence movement and the Congo's first prime minister, was ousted in a U.S.-backed coup led by army chief of staff Joseph Mobutu in September of that year. In January 1961 Lumumba, while under the "protection" of UN troops, was captured and then murdered by imperialist-backed forces.

FROM PATHFINDER



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Truck drivers strike Overnite to win union recognition

Continued from front page
cent elections.

Overnite bosses have bitterly resisted attempts by workers to win union contracts and refused to negotiate contracts, even when the National Labor Relations Board upheld Teamster victories. It has waged unsuccessful campaigns to decertify the union at 12 terminals. The union has filed more than 1,000 unfair labor practice charges against the company since 1994, and won several NLRB rulings ordering the bosses to bargain for a contract. The NLRB found that Overnite had withheld pay increases from workers who joined the union, laid off workers and closed some terminals to block union organizing drives, and carried out unlawful harassment, discrimination, and surveillance against workers backing the union.

Overnite bosses have vowed to keep operations running despite the strike and have already organized strikebreakers, including at terminals in Chicago, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Memphis, and Miami. At the Bensalem terminal near Philadelphia, the company got an injunction October 26 restricting picketing to two people at a time, and allowing none at the gate actually used by the strikebreakers.

Workers at the five Chicago-area Overnite terminals are on strike. At Bedford Park, pickets report 53 of the 60 local drivers

walked out and some 30 were on the picket lines there the afternoon of October 25. Most road drivers and dock workers at the terminal were working, however, they said, and trucks sporadically entered and left the terminal.

Strikers said local deliveries had been severely disrupted. They noted that Overnite had put inexperienced drivers on the road, and said one had already had an accident a few miles away.

Teamsters Local 705 steward Jim Smith explained that the union had won an election to represent the drivers in 1983, but the bosses refused to recognize the union or negotiate a contract.

"Overnite treats us like we don't exist," Smith said. "We say they have to deal with us. We can't let them walk over organized labor."

Hope, a driver with 14 months at Overnite, said she wanted to win a union contract to force the company to pay overtime after 40 hours, instead of the current practice of paying it only after 45 hours. "And they often work us right up to 44 hours, then send us home so we don't get the extra pay." She also said the workers needed a grievance procedure and guarantees for their pensions and benefits, so the company can't change them any time the bosses want to.

Overnite managers held meetings with the workers here to pressure them not to strike,



Teamsters in St. Louis, Missouri, at Local 600 walk the picket line October 26.

said Hope, who asked that her last name not be used. "They said they would take care of us, that we'd have a secure future if we stuck with the company," she explained. "I got up and told them if they're making as much money as they say, why can't they pay us our overtime? They had no answer to that."

A striker with a powerful bullhorn called on workers still in the terminal to join the strike. "You want what we want!" he said. "If you don't respect the picket line you're working against your own sons and daughters

who will have to start the fight all over again. If you're afraid of the boss now, you'll be afraid forever!"

One dock worker leaving the terminal stopped to talk with several strikers, who tried to convince him to join the walkout. "If I was a driver, I'd be on strike with you," he said, "but if I walk out now they'll fire me."

"They can't just fire you," a striker replied. "Join us and we'll fight together." The dock worker was unconvinced, however, and drove off shaking his head.

Strikers at Overnite's Miami terminal said 33 of the 43 drivers there are honoring the picket line. They voted to join Teamsters Local 390 in 1995 and have waged one-day strikes every year since to put pressure on the company to sign a contract. The company has hired extra security and brought a dozen scabs from the Orlando area to replace strikers, but had not used them so far according to workers on the picket line October 26.

In Atlanta, strikers report a big majority of the 300 drivers and dock workers joined the walkout. Workers there also voted for the Teamsters union in 1995.

Joe Reeves, a driver with 27 years seniority, said the organizing drive began after Overnite forced loading dock workers to work part-time, cut their pay from \$14 to \$10 an hour and reduced benefits.

Tom, another Atlanta road driver with 26 years seniority, pointed to the importance of uniting all Overnite workers behind the union fight. "For a long time they kept the road and city drivers divided by catering to the road drivers," he said. "In 1978 we lost a system-wide [union election] vote, partly because most road drivers didn't go for it."

Atlanta strikers have begun to reach out for broader support. A Labor Solidarity and Community Rally for Justice at Overnite will be held October 28 at 4:00 PM at the Moreland Avenue terminal in Atlanta.

Harvey McArthur is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100A in Chicago. Floyd Fowler and Mike Italie in Atlanta, Connie Allen in Philadelphia, and Rollande Girard in Miami contributed to this article.

Miners respond to attack on union

BY ALYSON KENNEDY
AND ELYSE HATHAWAY

MASCOUTAH, Illinois — With less than one month to go before the closing of its Marissa mine, the Peabody Coal Co. announced its intention to merge the seniority lists of the two United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) locals at the mine. In response, members of UMWA Local 1148 at the preparation plant took sick days and shut down the facility for five days.

"They don't want it. We don't want it. None of the union people [want it]," said a roof bolter who is a member of UMWA Local 2412, referring to the merger of his local, whose members are underground miners, with that of the preparation plant.

Members of Local 2412 began to talk about joining the preparation plant workers by taking their sick days also. On October 10 Peabody officials canceled an arbitration hearing that was to take up the dispute and said they were not going to merge the locals at this time. Preparation plant workers returned to work soon after.

Another underground miner, who asked that his name not be used, said coal production suffered for a couple of weeks after they made this announcement, dropping from 16,000 tons per shift to 4,000 per shift. "They are trying to tear the union down. The company has been saying they want concessions," he said. The same miner added that "when the workers and the union stood up to the company, the company pulled back."

Miners told *Militant* correspondents that

Peabody plans to reopen two units of the underground mine at the beginning of next year with approximately 45 miners, about 11 percent of the current workforce. This will be to cover spot market deals.

The miners believe Peabody wants to mine the coal until enough is stockpiled, then run the preparation plant to wash the coal. With only one seniority list, the company could move underground miners to the preparation plant, needing less workers.

The Marissa mine lost its biggest customer, the Illinois Power Co., which cited the high sulfur contained in the coal as the reason. The power company refused to install scrubbers at its Baldwin and Hennepin, Illinois, power plants that burned the coal from Marissa. Scrubbers remove the polluting sulfur dioxide emissions from the coal. Peabody said it would be providing low-sulfur coal to the power company from another

mine in Wyoming.

There are 350 members of UMWA Local 2412 at the underground mine and 50 members of Local 1148 at the preparation plant. The Marissa mine was opened in 1979 and today is the last Peabody mine in Illinois organized by the United Mine Workers.

Peabody has been closing UMWA-organized mines and acquiring a majority control in the Black Beauty mining operation. All but one Black Beauty mine in southeastern Illinois and southern Indiana are nonunion.

The one union mine is organized by the Boilermakers union. Many miners speculate that the company will try to reopen the Marissa mine nonunion under the Black Beauty name in a year or so.

Alyson Kennedy is a garment worker in St. Louis.

Mumia Abu-Jamal wins stay of execution in Philadelphia

BY NANCY COLE

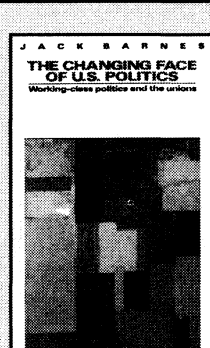
PHILADELPHIA — Thirteen days after Pennsylvania Gov. Thomas Ridge signed a death warrant for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a federal judge granted a stay of execution October 26 that will last until the end of proceedings around his case in federal district court. "It is our hope that for the first time

in 17 years we will have the opportunity to present the facts concerning this case in a neutral and fair courtroom," said Leonard Weinglass, Abu-Jamal's lead attorney.

Abu-Jamal, a well-known Black journalist and activist, was railroaded to prison in 1982, accused of killing of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner. Protests around the world have demanded that he be granted a new trial where he could make the case for his freedom.

U.S. District Judge William Yohn Jr. will decide whether to narrowly restrict hearings to newly discovered evidence or violations of a newly defined constitutional right. But Yohn also raised the possibility that he might clear the way for Abu-Jamal to testify, which he has never done. "I can tell you this: We would like to see Mumia testify before this judge from that witness stand," said Weinglass after the hearing.

Also on October 26, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that 150 protesters greeted Ridge in Beverly Hills, California, where he spoke to a conservative group. "Stop Tom Ridge Before He Kills Again," their signs said, and they chanted, "No justice, no peace, till Mumia is released." Two protesters inside the meeting — who were removed by cops and arrested — forced Ridge to address the issue of Abu-Jamal's case.



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and rally**
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at Armco (now AK Steel). Spon-
sored by United Steel Workers Local
169 in Mansfield, Ohio.

Why fall of Berlin Wall was big blow to imperialism

The following selections are from a presentation and question-and-answer periods by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, at regional socialist educational conferences in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Des Moines, Iowa in April 1993. The talk, titled "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder," reported the decisions of a meeting of the SWP National Committee, youth leaders of the SWP, and leaders of communist leagues in several other countries. It is published in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

In 1990, we discussed the developments taking place in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and drew broader conclusions about world politics.

The United States ruling class has lost the Cold War, we said. What the bourgeois press and spokespeople were initially hailing as

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

the U.S. victory in the Cold War was in fact ordained to become an enormous new burden for world capitalism. The capitalists in Germany and some other European countries who were greedily investing in Central and Eastern Europe and in Russia, in order to consolidate their supposed great victory, were "live ones," we said. They were suckers — nothing like the salvation they

¹Imperialist investment in Russia, minuscule relative to capital flows to Asia and Latin America throughout the 1990s, virtually collapsed following the Yeltsin government's default in August 1998 on some \$40 billion in domestic debt. Coming on top of the credit and currency crisis in Asia, Moscow's default sent shockwaves through the holders of some \$150 billion in Russia's foreign debt. Apparently in hopes of buffering a panic ever more costly to imperialist creditors, Standard and Poor's — one of the Wall Street firms that assigns ratings of creditworthiness to various countries and corporations — invented a new category in February 1999 just for Russia: "Selective Default!"

Between 1991 and 1997, \$9 billion in foreign investment in plant and equipment flowed into Russia, compared to \$160 billion to Latin America over that same period, and \$181 billion to China alone. Overall foreign direct investment into the Central and Eastern European workers states (including Russia) during these same years totaled a little more than \$50 billion. At the same time, there was an estimated \$150 billion in capital flight from

were reaching for would come out of this profit-seeking lurch to the east.¹

The imperialist rulers face an enormous problem in attempting to reestablish the capitalist system in the former Soviet Union and other workers states, we said. There is no capitalist class in these states, and it takes a long time for historic classes to be created. It takes a long time for a bourgeoisie to consolidate ownership of banking, industrial, and landed capital, and for bourgeois values, legal systems, and money and credit networks to become dominant, let alone stable. A rising exploiting class can only accomplish this through accumulating capital, entrenching its own power, and imposing on a propertyless proletariat the social relations that go along with that power. But every serious step in this direction involves massive assaults on the working class that will meet resistance and threaten social stability, we explained.

Every other political current, not only in the world bourgeoisie but throughout the workers movement, said that the fall of the east German Stalinist regime would lead to a great economic burst forward for German capitalism. We said no. German finance capital would become a dysfunctional boia constrictor: the west would swallow the east whole but would find the indigestion worse than the meal. Unemployment and social differentiation would increase in the west. Class tensions and political polarization would increase in Germany, and the myth of a coming conflictless "united Europe" would be further undermined.²

Moreover, what was opening up as a result of the collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was the possibility, for the first time in half a century or more, of collaboration between workers in these countries and workers facing similar assaults on their rights and living conditions in other countries. About a week ago, I watched on the TV news a mass demonstration in Germany of metalworkers and their supporters from other unions. All the workers there — from the western and eastern parts of Germany, from Sweden and other countries who had come to show their solidarity — were above

Russia between 1991 and the end of 1998.

The world capitalist crisis whose manifestations spread from Asia in 1997 to Latin America and beyond resulted in a sharp decline of more than \$100 billion in imperialist capital flows to the Third World and European workers states as a whole in 1998.

²As of the end of 1998, the German imperialist government had poured some \$625 billion into the eastern half of the country since 1990. With two-thirds of industrial workers in eastern Germany having been turned out of their jobs over that period, most of Bonn's funding goes to social transfer payments, not investment in infrastructure or plant and equipment. In early 1999, the official unemployment rate in the eastern half of Germany was still nearly 20 percent, and over 11 percent for Germany as a whole — the highest level since the early 1930s — and living standards in the east remained well below the national average.

By 1998 large-scale discontent coming out of rising class tensions was propelling a leftward shift in bourgeois politics in Germany, as in most of Europe and North America, resulting in the election in September of a Social Democratic Party-Green Party coalition government, with Gerhard Schröder as the new chancellor. The Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union (CDU-CSU) coalition, headed by Helmut Kohl — the self-proclaimed "father" of German unification — was swept from office for the first time in sixteen years.

At the same time, the accelerating social crisis fueled ongoing political polarization, as registered by the CDU's successful state election campaign in Hesse in February 1999 on a rightist platform targeting the rights of Germany's 7 million immigrants. Only hours after this electoral setback, the Social Democrats said they were reconsidering proposed legislation granting dual citizenship rights for the first time to some immigrants. The Greens followed suit, saying they too were ready to compromise further on immigrants' rights; the Greens had previously watered down their call for shutting down nuclear power plants in Germany. In addition, the government coalition has announced its readiness to dispatch 2,000 combat troops to Kosova in Yugoslavia as part of any NATO "peacekeeping" force.



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Shipyard workers on strike at Kvaerne Warnow - Wer in East Germany, May 1993.

all protesting one thing: the decision by the German government and employers to renege on the public promises to bring together the living standards, wages, and working conditions of workers in the two parts of the country. That kind of Germany-wide working-class action could now begin to happen again, after more than sixty years. It will take time, but it is now possible.

All this sounds less surprising today. But just two years ago when we insisted on this perspective, it sounded wild to almost everybody else. Even other fighters we knew — capable, committed revolutionists and communists from Cuba, South Africa, and elsewhere — thought this view was literally nonsense. What will become today's common sense among a growing layer was then still seen as outrageous.

Attempts by imperialism and national bourgeoisies to strengthen the domination of capital in each part of the world are deepening the crisis in all of them. If you want to watch this process unfold in a single country, watch Germany. It is like a boia constrictor that has swallowed a massive animal that it cannot digest. The German rulers will not be able to restore their prior, more stable conditions without struggles that have unforeseen consequences for them. And the workers, east and west, now have much better conditions to uproot capitalism in Germany as a whole — something much more difficult so long as Stalinism was able to disorient so many in both halves of the country.

The decades are now behind us when Stalinism alone guaranteed that the odds against any revolutionary workers struggle succeeding were very high — or, that if it did succeed, from the outset the odds were high that it would be corroded from within and ultimately overthrown. The working class still confronts a multitude of challenges. But the enormous obstacle of Stalinism as we know it is behind us, even though

its political legacy and miseducation are not.

For most of this century, the word *communist* has been used primarily by those who largely monopolized speaking for the workers movement and who put an equal sign between communism and Stalinism. The Stalinists portrayed the bureaucratic caste of Mother Russia as the wave of the future and the salvation of humanity. They used the vocabulary of communism to cast the red glow of the history of revolutionary workers struggles on themselves and their lodestar.

Others in the workers movement — the social democrats, anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, various centrist currents and sects — also identified Stalinism with communism, in order to cover up their own collaboration with the capitalists, with the imperialists, at home and abroad....

Now, workers in countries where the road to communism was seemingly blocked for so long by mammoth statues of Lenin and Marx, and by giant mausoleums with mummies under glass, have the chance to discover communism as they gain class-struggle experience and meet embattled workers from other countries. And as they find their way back to the unvarnished Lenin, Marx, and Engels, they will need neither embalmed bodies nor grotesque statuary.

Some workers in eastern Germany will find out the truth about the *German* revolution of 1918-19 for the first time at a demonstration in Berlin, where they will meet workers from Britain who have brought with them the Pathfinder book in *English* that tells the story.³ Things like that, seemingly paradoxical but delightful to revolutionists, become possible now, and they will happen more and more in coming years.

³*The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power: Documents, 1918-1919* (New York: Pathfinder, 1986). Part of Pathfinder's series, *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

November 15, 1974

HOUSTON — In an ominous escalation of the drive against undocumented workers, U.S. Attorney General William Saxbe has called for the deportation to Mexico next year of one million "illegal aliens."

He charged that undocumented workers hold millions of jobs, draw social services ranging from schooling to welfare, and drain funds from the nation's economy by sending "large amounts" of money home.

Speaking in the Texas border city of Brownsville Oct. 30, Saxbe said he had recommended to the president that the Immigration and Naturalization Service budget be increased by \$50-million and that 2,200 employees — mostly border patrolmen — be added to the department.

Saxbe said he was encouraged that President Ford and Mexican President Luis Echeverría had agreed during their recent border meeting to undertake joint study and planning on the problem.

During the past several years a movement has developed in the barrios against the victimization of the undocumented workers. In the face of this sinister new drive it becomes especially urgent that a broad, effec-

tive movement be built around the demand "Stop the deportations!"

THE MILITANT
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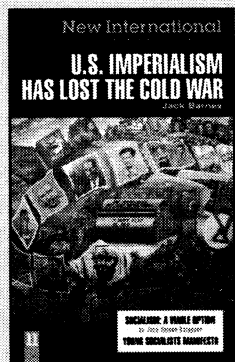
BULLETIN, Nov. 9 — The United Mine Workers Policy Committee, meeting in Chicago today, passed a resolution instructing the soft-coal miners to return to work until Nov. 30, on the basis of the old contract that expired last July. This is believed to be a move to forestall government intervention that was being prepared against the mine strike.

Nov. 8 — The mine strike has become the main center of union struggle now that settlements have been made with the tough Little Steel corporations, headed by Bethlehem, Republic and Jones and Laughlin. U.S. Steel remains the major steel holdout.

The Supreme Court has in effect set the seal of approval on government strikebreaking by means of injunctions with a decision on Nov. 7 upholding the 1948 "contempt" fine of \$1,410,000 levied against the United Mine Workers. Asked by reporters to comment on this ruling John L. Lewis replied: "What can one say about a Supreme Court decision?"

FOR FURTHER READING
**U.S. Imperialism Has Lost
the Cold War**

IN NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11



The disintegration of the bureaucratic castes, abandoning all pretense to speak for communism or represent the interests of the working class and its allies internationally,

has removed an enormous roadblock that for decades stood in the way of revolutionary fighters finding their way to Marxism. \$14

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.

Support miners' struggles

The beginnings of a new social movement are visible in the coalfields. There is a growing mood of anger among coal miners, union and nonunion, retirees, and others in mining communities toward the coal bosses' attempt to gut lifetime health-care benefits for miners and their families, an entitlement that union miners won and have maintained through decades of struggle.

Workers are also reacting to the slashing of workers' compensation and the denial of applications for relief by miners suffering from black lung, a preventable disease that remains the top killer of miners. As miners' benefits are eroded, medical clinics in the coalfields are forced to cut staff or close their doors, affecting entire communities. At the same time many farmers in these rural areas are facing the squeeze of dropping commodity prices and lack of government relief for natural disasters. These are all factors in the shifting mood in the mining regions.

One of the clearest sign of the bubbling resistance is the round of five rallies in September in which thousands of retired and working miners, organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), turned out to defend lifetime health care. These meetings were a response to several federal court decisions siding with coal companies that have stopped paying into the 1992 Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act (Coal Act) — rulings that threaten the coverage of some 70,000 retired miners and their families.

In the last year, miners have struck against Jeddo in the eastern Pennsylvania anthracite region, Freeman United in central Illinois, and Deserado in Rangle, Colorado. A central issue in all three fights was lifetime health care and pensions paid by the coal bosses. On September 28, miners at the Maple Creek Mine in Footedale, Pennsylvania walked off the job in a two-day strike, following months of tensions underground over unsafe working conditions, including dangerously high levels of explosive coal dust. In April, the bosses at the Green Pond No. 9 mine in western Kentucky announced they were eliminating medical insurance, prompting the 36 miners there to carry out a successful UMWA organizing drive.

Through hard-fought strike battles in the 1940s, the

UMWA laid the basis for what are among the most comprehensive health benefits in U.S. industry.

In 1969, tens of thousands of miners struck to demand safer working conditions and compensation for black lung disease. This marked the beginning of the Miners for Democracy movement, in which miners confronted the UMWA's corrupt leadership gang around union president Anthony Boyle and made substantial gains in democratizing the union. Miners pushed back attempts to cut into health benefits through the 111-day national coal strike in 1977-78 and the strike against Pittston Coal Group a decade ago. At each turning point, tens of thousands of miners mobilized through strikes and rallies, drawing in broader layers of workers and others to push back the bosses' attacks.

The coal operators have succeeded in weakening the UMWA over the last decade through successive giveback contracts and shifting production to nonunion mines where conditions are often worse and they are able to squeeze more out of the workers. The assault by the mine owners is part of a broader offensive by the capitalist employers and their government against health and safety, unionization, and the very humanity of the working class.

Universal cradle-to-grave health care is an important social issue for all working people. The fight beginning to brew in the coalfields to defend this gain is a life-and-death question for the UMWA. The union officials are under pressure to wage a fight to maintain this conquest. So far their campaign has centered on lobbying capitalist politicians in government. But it will take more than lobbying to stop the coal bosses' drive to break the miners' union. Cecil Roberts, president of the UMWA, spoke at each of the rallies in defense of the Coal Act, threatening to call a mass demonstration in Washington, D.C., early next year to defend lifetime health coverage. Many retirees, survivors, and active miners would wholeheartedly support such a call.

The stakes in this fight affect all working people, and the labor movement should go all out to respond to the initiatives taken by coal miners to defend the important gains they have conquered.

Vote Socialist Workers

The Militant urges our readers to vote for the following Socialist Workers candidates (or candidates endorsed by the Socialist Workers Party in "non-partisan" races) in the November 2 elections. These candidates offer a working-class alternative to all the capitalist parties — Democratic, Republican, Reform — and have been using their campaigns to advance a program to unite working people internationally.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Andrea Morell for city council at-large, member of the United Transportation Union

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Laura Garza for mayor,* member of the International Association of Machinists

Dave Ferguson for city council district E

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

Kari Sachs for state assembly, member of the United Auto Workers

Brock Satter for state assembly, member of the United Food and Commercial Workers

Eleanor Garcia for state senate in the 29th district*, member of the United Transportation Union

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Connie Allen for mayor,* member of the United Auto Workers

John Staggs for city council,* member of the United Steelworkers of America

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Chris Rayson for King County port commissioner (position 5), member of the United Transportation Union

* designates write-in candidate

Buchanan campaign

Continued from Page 12

means Israel," accusing Saffire of putting "Israel a little bit ahead of his own country."

Meanwhile, Ventura has stirred controversy over an interview in the November issue of *Playboy*. His comments reveal the reactionary thrust of his political course, despite his admirers among the "left" who point to his supposedly progressive positions on a range of social issues such as capital punishment, the military draft, and the right to abortion.

In the interview, Ventura opposes capital punishment but pointedly adds that he is for eliminating parole. "Life should be life. And there should be no three strikes. Should be one strike," he declares. Similarly, Ventura criticizes the draft because "only the poor were getting drafted" in the Vietnam war, but adds that "if you're going to have a draft then there should be no deferments."

On abortion, far from defending women's rights, he lumps it with prostitution and drug use as an unavoidable evil that should be decriminalized. He also dismisses the 1991 Tailhook scandal of sexual abuse of women in the Navy as "much ado about nothing."

Possibly worried that Trump may be no match for Buchanan and his cadre of supporters, who rumble that the billionaire is trying to "buy" the nomination, Ventura hinted he might consider joining the presidential race himself rather than finish his term as he had previously said. Buchanan responded to a possible Ventura challenge with a taunt: "I'd say, 'Jesse, come on in. The water's fine.'"

Rally protests KKK

Continued from front page

had reacted to the city's denial of the permit to the Klan by filing legal papers supporting its right to demonstrate. "We believe . . . that if we did not stand up for the Klan's right, we had no right to stand up for anybody else's rights," said Elinor Tatum, publisher of the paper.

An editorial in the liberal *Daily News* compared the Klan rally to the Million Youth March, a pro-Black rights rally that City Hall had unsuccessfully tried to prevent, and advised readers to "ignore them" rather than protest.

A number of people who went to the anti-Klan protest said that, as despicable as they are, the Klan had "the right to freedom of expression."

"I hate to defend the KKK, but I strongly believe in the First Amendment," said Katrin Kark, 21, a student at Barnard College. Kark had come to join a contingent of members of the National Organization for Women, which recently protested an antiabortion group that picketed a women's clinic in Brooklyn.

Members of the Young Socialists and of the Socialist Workers Party built and took part in the anti-KKK protest. They argued against calls on the capitalist government to ban the Klan rally because such legal restrictions will then be used against the working class and the oppressed. They likewise opposed defending the terror group's "right" to demonstrate. Instead, the socialists pointed to demonstrations such as the October 23 action as the road to mobilize working people, youth, and others in the fight against racist thugs.

Puerto Ricans demand Navy leave Vieques

Continued from front page

tice. Grisel Surillo, 20, a humanities student at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) in San Juan and member of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI), is one of the dozen people who remained in the camps during the hurricane threat. She has been in the Navy's restricted zone for the past three weeks and off and on for six months.

Underscoring why she was there, Surillo pointed to the ecological damage the Navy has wrought and how Washington has used Vieques to train for invasions of other countries including Yugoslavia and several Latin American nations. In August she had attended an international student conference in Cuba.

On October 23, after the hurricane dissipated, a delegation organized by the Puerto Rican Association of University Professors (APPU) visited the island. The delegation included Jorge Colón, president of the association, which represents teachers at the UPR; Student Council president Kevin Rivera; a trade unionist at the telephone company; an environmentalist; and this reporter.

A visit to the camps

The delegation first dropped off some equipment at the camp set up by several unions. "This camp is a joint project of the four union federations, the cooperative movement, and religious groups," said Federico Torres, president of the Puerto Rican Workers Federation (CPT). The four labor groups are the CPT, the General Workers Council (CGT), the Unity Federation, and the Federation of Labor, which is part of the U.S.-based AFL-CIO.

The next stop was the teachers camp, where some new tarps donated by members of the telephone workers union were installed. A short walk down the beach is a modest schoolhouse built by the Hostos National Congress (CNH), a leading pro-independence group. On duty as a volunteer doctor there was CNH leader Héctor Pesquera.

Nearby is a small chapel built by protesters. Some of the young people, such as Surillo, have their camp in the abandoned bunkers up the hill.

Another camp, staffed by fishermen and other Vieques residents, is at Cayo Yayí, a small island several hundred yards offshore. Unionists have built a pier there to make it easier for people to get on and off the boats.

On any given weekend, 50-100 people are at the five camps on the north side of Vieques. At a recent pig roast on Cayo Yayí, 400 people were on the beach and there were lines of boats.

On the south side there are two camps. One, organized by Vieques residents, was christened Mount David in honor of David Sanes. The other is organized by the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), whose president, Rubén Berrios, has been living here for months.

Since they were set up six months ago, thousands of people have visited the camps to express their solidarity with the fight against the U.S. Navy.

The live impact zone is one square mile of hell. Airplanes, tanks, and artillery are scattered across an open plain. The airplanes look like Swiss cheese with hundreds of bullet holes. This area also has the highest concentration of unexploded ordnance. The northern strip where camps are located was used for amphibious landings. Although not used intentionally for bombing practice, bombs that missed their targets are visible sticking out of the sand.

Two members of the visiting delegation, Colón and Rivera, set out on foot to the southern camps to discuss with protesters what can be done at the UPR to organize solidarity. The visitors were told they could help raise money for a system to improve communications between the camps.

Collision course

The U.S. Navy and the majority in Puerto Rico who oppose the U.S. military there are on a collision course. Few political issues have united the people of this U.S. colony more than this struggle, especially among working people. This has compelled even the two ruling colonial parties to call for the immediate departure of the U.S. Navy from Vieques.

The Pentagon is stepping up its propaganda war, arguing that if the battle group that includes the aircraft carrier *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* isn't allowed to use the bombing range by December 1, it will be deployed to the Middle East with inadequate training and endanger the lives of U.S. soldiers. Some U.S. officials have called for the protesters to be arrested. Puerto Rican government officials say they refuse to take part in any such arrests, which would be a highly unpopular move.

Hundreds of people, including leaders of a range of political and social organizations have said they will try to travel to Vieques to replace those who are arrested.

Meanwhile, in Vieques, the vegetation is returning to the live impact area. In the absence of bombs and helped by heavy rains, the earth is green again. With the flowering plants, the butterflies are returning in large numbers.

INS forced to free hotel workers in organizing drive

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines

spirited protest outside the Holiday Inn in downtown Minneapolis. Members from many unions participated and Bernard Bremmer, president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, spoke, as did representatives from the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union; and the Holy Rosary Church. Students from the University of Min-

ON THE PICKET LINE

about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota — Unionists won an important victory here October 19 when six hotel workers involved in a union organizing drive were released from custody hours before they were to be deported to Mexico. They were among eight workers seized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) on October 13 after the hotel management told the immigration cops that the workers may not have legal documents. The other two housekeepers arrested were released right away because they have children.

The release came the day after some 200 unionists and others held a

protest outside the Holiday Inn in Morris, located in western Minnesota, and Macalester College in St. Paul also participated.

The arrested workers had signed cards authorizing an August 26 election that made Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 17 the representative of 23 Holiday Inn workers. Local 17 organizes hotel and restaurant workers in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Following the arrests the union filed an unfair labor practices charge with the National Labor Relations Board on October 15.

The charge argued that federal law doesn't distinguish between workers with and without documents in labor disputes, and that the hotel bosses' action was a move to try to halt union organization. The newly formed union and the hotel are scheduled to begin negotiations for a contract next month. The negotiating committee

Canadian rulers face instability

Continued from Page 3

headed by Alexa McDonough on whether or not the convention should model NDP policy after the rightward shift of "New Labor" in the United Kingdom under the leadership of Prime Minister Anthony Blair.

McDonough argued that the NDP needs to present itself as the party of "fiscal responsibility" along the lines of the Saskatchewan NDP government, which was the first provincial government to balance its budget in the context of the two decades-long austerity drive of the ruling class.

Canadian Auto Workers union president Basil Hargrove, presenting himself as the defender of the NDP's claim to be the party which supports an expanding social wage for working people, threatened to end his union's support for the NDP if it adopted McDonough's policies. In the end the delegates, including the NDP leadership, officially rejected "Blairism" in favor of a policy of "balanced" tax cuts and social spending.

Several weeks later one of the two NDP members of Parliament from New Brunswick announced her decision to join the Conservative Party, which has made "fiscal responsibility" and tax cuts one of its trade marks.

The strains in the NDP surfaced again at the September meeting of the Ontario NDP provincial council. A motion was placed on the floor proposing the expulsion of Hargrove from the NDP for advocating, along with a number of other union officials, a policy of so-called "strategic voting" in the June Ontario provincial election.

The CAW along with officials from a number of public sector unions urged workers to vote for either Liberal or NDP candidates — whoever had the best chance of winning — in order to defeat the Conservative government. (At the time, Communist League candidate Rosemary Ray, a member of the Steelworkers union, explained that this further weakened the independence of the unions from the ruling class and urged workers who could not vote

Carpenters rally for union in California



Militant/Samantha Kern

Carpenters from across northern California protested October 23 in Brentwood, 50 miles northeast of San Francisco. The 125 unionists were demanding pay hikes, benefits, and improved working conditions for carpenters employed by Innovative Steel, a large nonunion home-building company.

for the workers at Holiday Inn includes some of the arrested workers.

Following the workers' release scores of supporters gathered at Holy Rosary Church for a celebration and news conference and to hear the workers' accounts of their detention. Reyna Albino, one of the arrested workers, said they wanted a union in order to get higher pay and more rights. But the arrests "made us feel like criminals, like bad people, that we did something wrong, when all we were doing was working."

In releasing the workers, Curtis Aljets, director of the INS's St. Paul

district reflected the pressure the immigration agency was getting. He said that he will be more careful in the future to make sure the INS doesn't get involved in labor disputes. "Obviously we got caught up in more than we bargained for," he said.

Hawaii dock workers press fight for contract

SAN FRANCISCO — Dock workers on Hawaii's ports are stepping up their effort to win a new union contract from the shipping companies' Hawaii Employers Council. The 500 members of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 142 have been working under an extension of their old contract, which had expired along with the West Coast ILWU contracts on June 30. Local 142 is demanding a contract similar to the one signed by the West Coast shipowners in July.

[A tentative contract was announced October 25. No vote has been set, and ILWU Local 142 members remain on the job. No details of the contract had been made public at press time.]

Workers on the islands of Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii authorized strike action. Union officials announced that the contract extension would end October 25, after a federal judge ordered the ILWU to end a work slowdown that was said to have delayed unloading of shipments of everything from fresh food to cars.

Newspapers and television report that panic buying of food and supplies has swept Hawaii in the face of the possibility of a strike on the docks. Stores such as Wal-Mart have limited customer purchases. Hawaii receives some 90 percent of its goods via ship.

Although there has not been a great deal of improvement in Hawaii's

economy, profits are up for the shipping companies there. Cargo traffic increased by 7 percent over 1998. Shipping giant Matson Navigation Co. announced a 35 percent increase in profits for the third quarter of 1999, raking in \$21.9 million.

Over the past year, Matson has enjoyed a monopoly on shipments of cars to the islands, which also contributed to its increased revenues. Nevertheless, Matson's owners explain that they wanted to downplay these figures as talks continued with the ILWU.

Ontario woodworkers reject contract proposal

The 380 members of Local 500 of the Industrial Wood & Allied Workers Union on strike against Interforest Ltd, a specialty veneer plant in Durham, Ontario, have just rejected a new contract offer by a vote of 263-218. This is despite new Ontario labor legislation that granted the 172 nonunionized scabs who are working in the plant the right to vote on the offer.

The day after the vote results were announced, the company fired 35 strikers. One of the fired workers, Ryan McCubbin, told the *Militant*, "These firings only show that the company is hurting. They have already backfired on the company, because we're more determined than ever to stand firm and to protect our union. After four months on strike, the fight has really only started now."

Doug Jenness, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in St. Paul, Minnesota; Jim Altenberg, a member of the United Transportation Union in San Francisco; and Sylvie Charbin, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Toronto, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Boss caused strike violence

I was glad to see the front-page article on the Wyoming soda ash miners who rejected the contract offer from General Chemical. Wyoming has some of the largest energy and mineral resources, including trona, the ore from which soda ash is produced. Soda ash is the main ingredient in glass and baking soda. I was living in Salt Lake City during the last strike of United Steelworkers of America Local 15320 in the winter of 1993, and participated in several picket lines and strike solidarity rallies.

However, the last paragraph of the article that says "several miners described the strike as a militant, sometimes violent struggle" is misleading. Defending the union became a

central issue of the strike. They learned through struggle why it's important for the unions to maintain a defensive position, while at the same time refuse to stand down from the fight. This is what made it possible for them to win broad support, and defeat the combined attempts by the company, cops, and media to discredit their fight.

The strike was marked by violent attacks on the strike and provocations by the company and the local, state, and federal police agencies. On October 9, some 150 pickets held a "stand-in" to block trucks from entering and leaving. In no time, the Highway Patrol was there roughing up strikers, including a woman who had just had bypass surgery and a striker who had lost one of his legs in

a mining accident. They arrested a 62-year old, wrestling him to the ground and proudly displayed his concealed weapon, a pocket knife.

The company called in FBI agents, who cruised back and forth across the picket line. One striker was arrested by the local cops for "stalking" and released only after he could prove that he had "legitimate" business on U.S. Route 80.

The Salt Lake City TV stations and the local paper, the *Rocket Miner* joined in the campaign to discredit the strike. In response, strikers came to Salt Lake City to tell the truth about their fight and win support from the labor movement.

Thirty-four strikers were fired by the company for "misconduct" during the strike. The USWA members

decided they would stay on strike until all the union members were reinstated. Frequent mass rallies helped maintain high morale. They were attended by members of the USWA from the nearby FMC mine, as well as the United Mine Workers of America in Kemmerer, Wyoming. Not one miner crossed the picket lines. They won their demand.

No doubt miners remember the battles that took place during the four-month strike of 1993. What's equally important to remember is that the company was responsible for the violence.

Ilona Gersh
New York, New York

Editors' note:

We agree with Gersh. It was wrong to

refer to 'strike violence' without explaining the real story, as she does here.

Please send 'Militant'

I would love to receive your newspaper. There is a never-ending supply of rightist material circulating in these institutions. It will be a breath of fresh air to see sane philosophy.

A prisoner
Marian, North Carolina

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.

Instability marks new Indonesian gov't

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Against a backdrop of economic crisis and political instability a new Indonesian government has been formed. On October 20 the People's Consultative Assembly elected Abdurrahman Wahid president. The following day the assembly chose Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) who had sought the presidency herself, as vice president. Wahid, commonly known in Indonesia as Gus Dur, announced his cabinet October 26.

Washington and other imperialist powers with stakes in Indonesia, unable to rely on the old method of openly repressive rule and social control, find this Wahid-Megawati government acceptable. At the same time they view with concern the irrepressible political ferment in the country.

The *Wall St Journal*, referring in an editorial to Wahid's "inclusive government," commented that this "may be useful for Indonesia now. By reducing the number of people on the outside, you reduce the number of people who will be tempted to use the blunt instrument of riots to advance their own political agenda."

The editorial writer had in mind the 50,000 who protested in the capital Jakarta after Wahid defeated Megawati in the assembly poll for the presidency, and the ongoing demonstrations and labor and peasant actions in the country.

Mark Baird, the representative of the World Bank in Jakarta, commented that "This is the first time you've had a government in Indonesia with such a broad base of support." The *New York Times* summarized reaction among "foreign investors" to the new Indonesian government as "positive."

The interests of the U.S., Australian, and other imperialist powers were defended in Indonesia for many decades by the government of the strongman Suharto — a regime with a heavily military character. But in May 1998 Washington pressured Suharto to resign in the midst of mass protests against his austerity policies and Vice President B.J. Habibie took over the presidency. Widely hated for his links to Suharto, Habibie called parliamentary elections for June 1999.

Struggles for rights, against austerity

In the year and a half since Suharto's resignation, workers, farmers and young people in this country of 210 million people have organized street demonstrations, work stoppages, and land occupations for their rights. Recently students have led mass street protests that forced the government to delay proposed security legislation.

These actions for *reformasi* (reform) are driven by the restricted democratic rights and the desperate living conditions that the vast majority of Indonesians face. The *Washington Post* reports that "Economically the country has not recovered from the meltdown of 1997-98. The budget is \$10 billion short and repayment of principal on foreign debt is scheduled to skyrocket to \$5 billion next year and \$9 billion in 2001."

Political ferment threatened to explode anew as the campaigning for governmental posts accelerated in the last weeks. Millions of Indonesians expected the PDI-P's Megawati to win the presidency in the assembly elections. Her party received one-third of the votes cast in the general election held in June — 12 percent more than the second-placed Golkar party, led by Habibie, who during much of the ensuing horse-trading was considered her most serious rival.

Wahid's National Awakening Party (PKB) came in a distant fourth in the elections. The discredited Habibie withdrew from the race, however, and Golkar threw its votes behind Wahid.

Megawati's pro-capitalist policies are no different from the other contenders, but Indonesia's rulers and their imperialist backers did not want the aroused expectations among working people that would have accompanied her presidency. She claims the mantle of her father, Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia following the defeat of



Protesters opposed interim president B.J. Habibie as he spoke before People's Consultative Assembly on October 14. New government headed by Abdurrahman Wahid will not be able to quell popular struggles for rights and against impact of economic crisis.

Dutch colonial rule in 1949. Sukarno led an unstable bourgeois nationalist government that for years tried to balance between support from layers in the military, Muslim organizations, and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), which claimed the allegiance of millions of workers and peasants.

Sukarno was shoved aside in 1965 when military officers around Suharto organized a massive bloodletting of the PKI and other workers and peasants' organizations. The military and right-wing gangs massacred hundreds of thousands of working people. The PKI, whose leadership had repeatedly demobilized and held back the toilers in their struggles against the employers and landowners in the name of "national unity," was crushed. The New Order regime installed by Suharto ruled uncontested for more than 30 years.

With Megawati's appointment as vice-president, Wahid aimed to forestall angry demonstrations by working people and students, many of whom see her as a symbol of the fight against Suharto's dictatorship. Suharto had deposed Megawati as leader of one of the two officially-sanctioned opposition parties in 1996.

In many cities people turned out by the thousands for Megawati's election campaign rallies, turning them into anti-Golkar demonstrations. Golkar's political machine, strongly linked to the military officer corps and to layers in the exploiting classes, had been the instrument of Suharto's rule for decades.

The frail, elderly Wahid has been a prominent figure in Indonesian politics for a long time, as the chairman of the 30 million-strong Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). While in recent years he criticized aspects of Suharto's rule, his political history includes a major role in one of the youth groups that organized pro-army actions during the 1965-66 massacre.

The appointment of Megawati as Wahid's

deputy and her willing acceptance of that post quietened pro-Megawati protests in the new government's first days, at the price of heightened expectations. Working people hope the regime will take some action to ease the weight of the crisis from their backs.

Willing to comply with imperialists

Wahid's new 34-member "National Unity Cabinet" includes many figures from the world of business and the military. All four front-running parties from the election are represented. This includes several representatives of Golkar, one of whom is the chairman of the Indonesian Workers Association (SPSI). This pro-government outfit was the only "union" permitted in many workplaces under Suharto. Among workers struggling to organize real unions today, it is held in universal contempt.

"Foreign investment are key words," said Wahid on October 24 to an audience of "foreign businesspeople, diplomats and academics at an international conference," according to the *Jakarta Post*. Appearing at his side was the former U.S. envoy to Indonesia Paul Wolfowitz. "We are not able to make it on our own without capital from outside" said Wahid. "... We have to live with a free, open international trade system where companies are motivated by profits."

Two days later Wahid further signaled the willingness of the Indonesian rulers to cooperate with imperialist demands, by issuing a permit for the detention of a government official and businessman allegedly involved in the "Bank Bali scandal" where bank funds were diverted into Golkar campaign accounts. The International Monetary Fund suspended payment of installments of its \$43 billion loan to Indonesia after the scandal unfolded.

"Our final aim is really the American investors," said the new foreign minister, Alwi Shihab, in proposing closer ties with Israel.

Natchez tire strikers win acquittal

BY CLAY DENNISON

NATCHEZ, Mississippi — Sixteen strikers and one supporter were acquitted on charges of criminal trespass here October 25. The sixteen are members of United Steelworkers of America Local 303L, on strike against Titan Tire. Pointing to the fact that all but two of those charged were Black, James White, one of the defendants, said, "They were trying to put us against one another. But we're union — we're not going to fight one another."

The charges were brought after a number of strikers and supporters attending a rally at the gates of the tire plant conducted a spirited march through part of the factory on September 11. None of the defendants disputed that they had been part of the im-

promptu demonstration, but argued on several grounds that they had not violated any trespassing laws.

At several points during cross examination, the defense attorney asked prosecution witnesses if they had overheard Bill James, a former Natchez cop and present "project manager" for Vance Security at the struck plant, invite participants to enter the gates, which he had left unlocked. Vance Security is a notorious union-busting outfit that supplies well-armed "guards" for companies during strikes and is known for provocative behavior around picket lines.

The defense never presented its case. After the prosecution called 15 witnesses, mostly plant management and James, the Vance boss, the judge ruled that Titan Tire

The local stock market rose more than 6 percent in heavy trading on the news of Wahid's selection as president.

Wahid also recognized the results of the August 30 independence referendum on East Timor, which resulted in a landslide vote for independence from Indonesia, and announced he would meet with East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao. East Timor is now occupied by thousands of imperialist troops.

Many commentators have stated that the new Cabinet illustrates the "waning influence of the army" as the *Financial Times* put it, citing the switch of General Wiranto from head of the armed forces to the "lesser role of security and political coordinating minister."

The Indonesian rulers and their imperialist overseers who ultimately call the shots have decided the military should reduce its profile at this time.

Wiranto himself, a close ally of both Suharto and Habibie in the past, told 12,000 soldiers and riot police at a rally on October 25 that "we ask for forgiveness from people who feel we did wrong, from the victims, from the students.... We must safeguard the reform process, the constitution and the law."

Nevertheless the cabinet includes six active or retired generals, the same number as the previous government.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that for the first time in 40 years the country has a civilian defense minister, Juwono Sudarsono. In truth, Juwono served under Suharto and Habibie in roles that included participation in an army "think tank."

In addition to their role of dealing out violence to working people, military officers in Indonesia are tied closely to business in town and country, and to politics at all levels. Wahid has been forced to order an investigation of one October 20 incident. As described in the *Jakarta Post*, a Jakarta hospital "was turned into a war zone [at] midnight when frustrated military officers ran amok, searching for suspected militant students hiding on the premises."

Another *Jakarta Post* article reported that on hearing news of the new government, "university students vowed to continue with their street demonstrations...." One student activist said that "we respect Gus Dur and Mega. But if they make mistakes — such as establishing a new Cabinet which still accommodates elements of the New Order — we will stage protests in the streets."

Jakarta's weakness continues to spark regional protests and struggles for national rights. Wahid has appointed himself responsible for Aceh, where a fight for independence and against military occupation is still raging. He has said he will give Megawati responsibility for resolving the conflicts on West Papua — scene of an independence struggle — and Ambon, where inequalities have fueled protests and communal violence. Recently 10,000 people marched on the island of Sulawesi demanding independence. Wahid has spoken abstractly in favor of "federalism" and at the same time has declared "territorial integrity" to be a priority.

and their security agents had legal standing to bring charges, but that the union members' and supporters' behavior did not violate the law in this specific instance. He delivered a directed verdict of not guilty for all 17 defendants. The prosecutor, who had spent hours making a case against the workers, called the verdict "fair," and explained that the union members "didn't damage property and left peacefully when asked to leave."

Willie Evans, an activist member of the Steelworkers local said, "The union stood its ground. We stood for what we think is right — the plant doesn't belong to the scabs, it belongs to us. It was a victory," he continued. "We stood our ground and stuck together."