

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Illinois governor backs trade with Cuba, attacks revolution

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 40 NOVEMBER 15, 1999

## Puerto Rico students call strike to say: U.S. Navy leave Vieques

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—A student strike at all the campuses of the University of Puerto Rico has been called in the event that anti-Navy protesters are arrested in the island of Vieques. The National Student Board, which represents student councils throughout the UPR system, approved a call for the strike. A student assembly will be held November 10 at the largest campus, Río Piedras, to ratify the strike vote.

Tensions have sharpened in recent weeks between U.S. Navy officials, intent on resuming their bombing practice on Vieques, and the majority in Puerto Rico that has rallied around the fight to get the U.S. military out of this Puerto Rican territory.

The U.S. Navy has occupied two-thirds of Vieques—a small island off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico with a population of 9,000—since the 1940s, sparking recur-

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## \$40,000 is needed in final stretch of Pathfinder Fund drive

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Vegetable farmer Karl Butts believes Pathfinder books are vital political weapons.

The central Florida farmer has been seeking answers to why there is hunger in a world of plenty, and how farmers and workers can end this problem.

"I became convinced that the government had no interest in eradicating hunger, and I was desperate for information," he said. "Pathfinder has given me the answers finally. It's a liberating experience."

Butts was speaking to an audience in Miami to raise contributions to the Pathfinder Fund. His remarks underlined why the \$125,000 fund is needed now to keep publishing, and keep reprinting, the books

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# Support the Teamsters on strike at Overnite!

Truck drivers and dock workers at Overnite Transportation Corp. have launched a determined struggle for union recognition and a contract. They are up against a vicious antiunion boss, who has pledged the company will not tolerate a union, and has backed this up with firings, a large-scale scab operation at struck termi-

## EDITORIAL

nals, and refusal to negotiate with the Teamsters union. As one striker told the *Militant*, "You can't just give dictatorial power to your boss, which is what no union means."

After nearly two decades of fighting for recognition of the Teamsters union, some 2,000 workers are into the second week of what is shaping up to be a hard-fought battle. Many Overnite terminals have not been struck; at a lot of the struck terminals many workers have yet to be won to the union struggle. The strikers demonstrate a new militancy and resistance in face of the employers' assaults, explaining their determination to stand up, unite, and win union organization as a means to defend them-

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Overnite strikers and supporters from other unions rally October 28 in Atlanta

## Truckers expand walkout to win union rights

BY MIKE ITALIE

ATLANTA — The Teamsters union strike at Overnite Transportation is growing stronger, as more workers join the picket lines. The fight at Overnite is one of the largest union organizing drives in the United States today.

Other unionists are helping picket the trucking company. In St. Louis, 40-year-

Teamster Sam Grosbauer emphasized, "I may be retired, but I'm not dead. I am trying to help the strikers at Overnite, picketing from six to eight hours every day." Grosbauer worked for Holland Motor Express. He pointed out, "You could tell with the UPS strike [in 1997] that people are getting tired of what the companies are doing. If we give up now, we are done."

The Overnite strike began when unionists walked off the job the morning of October 24 in Memphis, Tennessee. The union reports that more than 2,000 workers are now on strike at 140 worksites. The company claims the number of strikers are less than 1,000, and that deliveries are unaffected. But by its own figures shipping has

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## Air crash shows bosses' disregard of safety

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

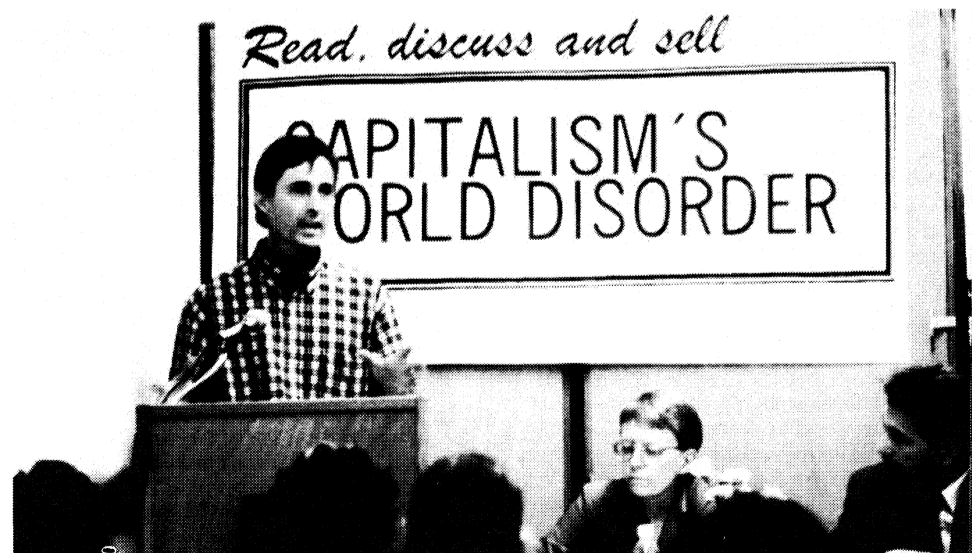
NEW YORK — The October 31 crash of EgyptAir's Flight 990 from New York's JFK airport to Cairo, which killed all 217 passengers and crew members, has highlighted once again the disregard of the airline bosses and aerospace manufacturers to safety in the air.

The crash has also provoked a spate of completely unsubstantiated news coverage speculating about terrorism in skies or possible sabotage by workers who constructed the Boeing 767 EgyptAir plane in 1989.

The radar tracking of Flight 990's progress and transponder recordings from the flight minutes before the crash indicate the aircraft went into a precipitous dive, dropping from its 33,000-foot cruising altitude to 19,100 feet in just 36 seconds, before crashing into the Atlantic Ocean some

60 miles off Nantucket Island about half an hour after take off. Although the recovery effort has been hampered by weather and the bulk of the aircraft remains on the ocean floor under some 250 feet of water, some initial crash debris has been recovered, in-

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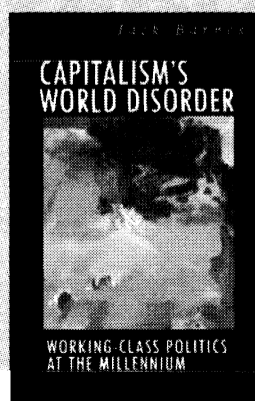


Karl Butts from central Florida speaks at Pathfinder Fund meeting in Miami

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**Armenian prime minister killed**

Gunmen burst into the Armenian parliament on October 27, killing Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and several other leading officials and wounding several others. The next day the attackers surrendered. The gunmen reportedly strongly oppose any possible concessions by the government in negotiations over the hotly disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, whose population is majority Armenian.

Nagorno-Karabakh is enclosed in the territory of Armenia's neighbor, Azerbaijan. In 1991, in the midst of fighting between the two republics, Nagorno-Karabakh declared its independence, and its Armenia-backed militia forces established the "Lachin" corridor connecting it with Armenia. Washington's deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, has been in Armenia pushing for a settlement. The *Washington Post* notes that "U.S. policy is aimed at creating greater economic and political stability in the former Soviet republics along Russia's oil-rich southern rim."

**Antigovernment forces in Iraq get U.S. training**

For the first time the administration of President William Clinton has begun open military training of forces with the intention of overthrowing the government of Iraq. Two of the four unnamed Iraqis tagged to attend a regular Air Force course for officers from Arab and Central Asian countries are former Iraqi officers. The U.S. Congress voted last year to give \$97 million to dissident forces in Iraq.

Meanwhile, U.S. jets continue to bomb Iraq. Two people died and seven were wounded in an attack reported October 26. Between December and October 3, say U.S. officials, the U.S. and British military have flown 27,000 sorties and dropped more than 1,650 bombs against some 380 targets. Iraqi spokespeople say 200 have died in these murderous attacks.

**Palestinians protest killing of street vendor by Israeli soldiers**

Israeli soldiers fired plastic bullets and tear gas at Palestinians protesting the October 25 killing of a street vendor at the entrance to the West Bank town of Bethlehem. A dozen Palestinians suffered injuries in the clashes, which lasted for several days.

The protests began after the funeral of Abu



**Palestinians in the West Bank town of Bethlehem demonstrate October 27 against the shooting of a street vendor by an Israeli soldier two days earlier.**

Hilayel, in which hundreds marched. The soldier had demanded Hilayel's identification card and then shot him as he reached for it. Tensions are rising in Bethlehem, which comes under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, over Israeli plans to open a new checkpoint specifically for Palestinians.

**W. Bank-Gaza corridor opened**

Tel Aviv opened a 34-mile corridor through Israel between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip October 25, after years of forbidding most Palestinian travel between the two territories. To make the trip, Palestinians are still required to hold a special card; so far Israeli authorities have granted these yearlong permits to only 2,000 of the 10,000 Gaza residents who have applied for them. Workers in this impoverished area hope that the West Bank will offer better job prospects.

Travellers cannot stop inside Israel and have to submit their belongings to be X-rayed by Israeli and Palestinian security officers. Others whom the Israelis consider a "security risk" are placed on buses escorted by soldiers and are only permitted to travel on Mondays and Wednesdays.

**India: truckers strike vs. fuel cost**

Truck drivers in India entered their sixth day of strike on October 26. They are demanding a reduction in the price of diesel fuel. "The agitation is still strengthening," said a representative of the All India Motor Transport Congress. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has refused the drivers demands.

**Roma demand rights in Czech Republic**

Roma people are protesting attacks by racist authorities in the Czech Republic. The mayor of Usti nad Labem, a depressed industrial city where unemployments stands at 8 percent, has budgeted nearly \$11,000 to erect a wall four meters high down Maticni St. to divide "decent from non-decent" residents. Roma, also known as Gypsies, are the intended targets of a fenced-in compound planned for the outskirts of the southern city of Plzen.

Roma in Usti nad Labem explain that in 1994 local authorities herded them into two tenements on Maticni St. The residents live in chronic poverty, like many Roma throughout Eastern Europe, who have been among the hardest hit by the attempts to integrate these nationalized economies into the world capitalist market. The Roma people are also

scapegoated by reactionary politicians like Miroslav Sladek of the Republican Party in the Czech Republic, who has built a following with anti-Romany, anti-German, and anti-NATO propaganda.

**Murdering cops freed in Brazil**

A furor has broken out in Brazil over the August acquittal of 147 cops tried for the murder of 19 landless peasants on a highway in the southeastern Amazon three years ago. Television film caught the cops opening fire in front of 1,500 witnesses. Autopsies indicate that most of those killed were actually executed in custody after the confrontation. The Minister of Agrarian Reform was forced to admit that state police are often at the service of large landowners.

A neighbor of one of the victims' widows remarked, "In Brazil, there is justice only for those who have money." Farm workers continue to occupy many farms in the area, demanding land. In one case 600 families are squatting on the land of a single landowner.

**U.S. pushes interests in Nigeria**

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo travelled to Washington in late October, following a series of visits to African countries by high-ranking White House officials to aggressively promote the interests of U.S. imperialism on the African continent. U.S. president William Clinton has sponsored the African Growth and Opportunity Act, designed to open up African countries' markets to U.S. capitalist trade and investment.

Obasanjo, who has received a glowing report card from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright appealed for the forgiveness, reduction, or rescheduling of the country's \$30 billion foreign debt. Last month Clinton trumpeted a so-called debt relief package for poor nations. Nigeria's large oil reserves would disqualify it for debt cancellation under this scheme.

**Senate tries abortion ban again**

The U.S. Senate aimed a blow at women's right to choose abortion on October 21 by voting 63 to 34 to ban a procedure used in some late-term abortions. President Clinton has vetoed similar measures twice in the past. Similar bans have been struck down or limited in the federal courts in two-thirds of the 30 states where they have been adopted.

**Ford faces sex harassment suit**

A U.S. District Court judge ruled that 850 women who worked at Ford Motor Co.'s Chicago assembly plant and a nearby stamping plant since late 1993 could file a class action suit charging the auto giant with sexual harassment and discrimination. Ford tried to resolve the case with the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), setting up a \$7.5 million fund for individuals who could prove they were sexually harassed. But the court rejected Ford claims that the EEOC settlement should halt several suits that had already been filed.

— PATRICK O'NEILL

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**The Militant**

Vol. 63/No. 40

Closing news date: November 4, 1999

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

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: TheMilitant

Internet: TheMilitant@compuserve.com

The Militant website can be accessed on the internet at: www.themilitant.com

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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

**Latin America, Caribbean:** for one-year sub-

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

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# Imperialist troops fire on Indonesian forces, deepen occupation in East Timor

BY BOBAIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Around 3,000 troops, the core of a multinational intervention in East Timor led by Australian imperialism, are being concentrated in districts along the border with Indonesian West Timor. Australian and Indonesian troops exchanged fire near the border town of Motaain October 10 with one Indonesian soldier reported killed and three wounded. Skirmishes between Australian troops and "militias" organized by the Indonesian army are continuing with three militiamen reported killed in an October 16 shoot-out in Marko, a village in East Timor some nine miles from the border.

Altogether 16 countries are now providing forces for the intervention, which was mandated by the UN Security Council. It began September 20. While the majority—3,600 out of 6,000 personnel—are provided by Australia, New Zealand soldiers and British Army Gurkha troops from Nepal are also playing a prominent role, along with forces from France. Troops from Thailand and South Korea have also arrived, joining soldiers from the Philippines.

The *USS Belleau Wood*, an amphibious assault ship with 1,800 U.S. sailors and marines and four CH 53 Sea Stallion heavy lift helicopters, is stationed five miles off the coast of East Timor.

East Timor, formerly a Portuguese colony, had been under Indonesian military occupation since 1975 when Jakarta invaded with imperialist backing to prevent the East Timorese from consolidating their newly won independence. East Timorese resistance to this brutal occupation remained undefeated, and deepened as struggles against the Indonesian regime began to open up in Indonesia itself.

A UN-organized referendum on August 30 saw a landslide vote in favor of independence despite a reign of terror by the Indonesian military and the "militia" death squads organized by the military. Following the announcement of the poll result September 4, a wave of killing, burning, looting and forced deportation was unleashed against the population. This provided the pretext for Washington, the Australian government in Canberra, and other imperialist powers to mount their intervention, which is dubbed "Operation Stabilize."

Xanana Gusmao, the leader of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), the pro-independence umbrella group formed last year, declared in Melbourne October 11, "We will start very quickly a provisional administration, a local, regional administration, waiting for the time to form an East Timorese authority under the supervision of the United Nations." The CNRT and the pro-independence guerrilla army Falantil have de facto authority over large areas, especially in the east of East Timor.

The population of Dili, the capital—which is described in the Australian press as a "virtual armed camp"—has risen to

50,000, about half the former total. Out of a population of 890,000 people up to 300,000 East Timorese remain camped out in the mountains and bush, while about 150,000 people of Indonesian origin are estimated to have returned to Indonesia.

Some 260,000 East Timorese are still in camps in West Timor where they were forced to go by the Indonesian army and the rightist paramilitary gangs it organizes. Around 2,100 had returned to East Timor as of October 19 in specially organized charter flights following Indonesian government agreement. More were expected to return rapidly, but 10 days later that had not happened.

The UN Security Council voted October 25 to put together an 11,000-strong "peacekeeping" force to replace the current Australian-led "Operation Stabilize." The Malaysian government had stated in mid-October it was ready to take command of this UN peacekeeping force, which is projected to last two or three years.

Responding to this CNRT leader Jose Ramos Horta denounced Malaysia and other southeast Asian governments as "accomplices of Indonesia." He declared, "We can accept Australian command. We can accept New Zealand command. We can accept Fiji command."

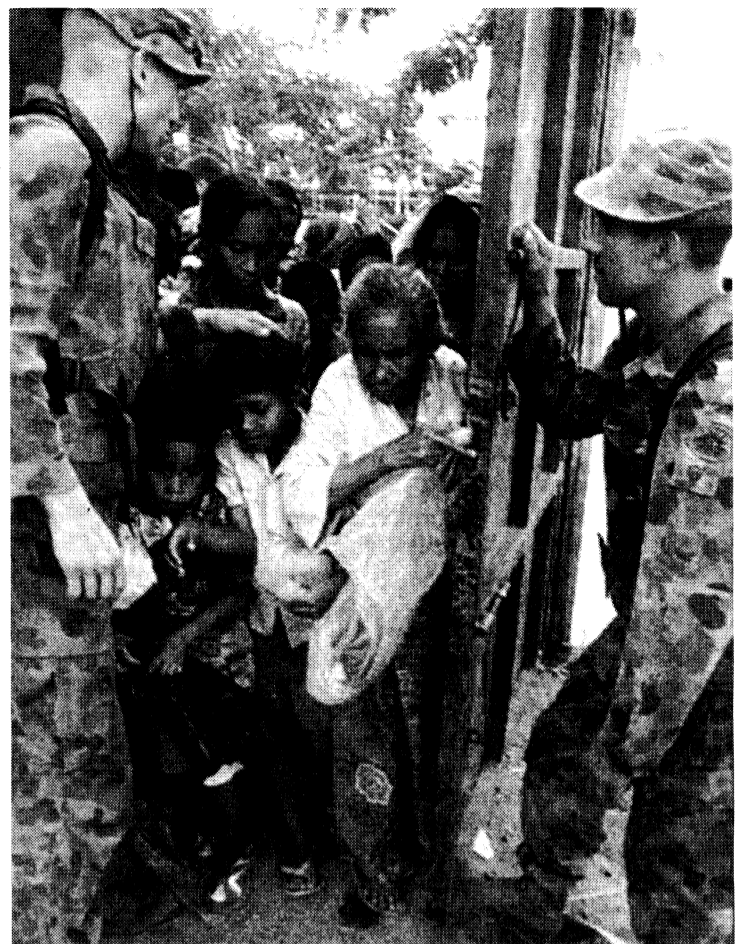
UN secretary general Kofi Annan told reporters October 25 it was undecided what government would head up the UN force.

Meanwhile, UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson is pressing ahead with an inquiry into human rights abuses in East Timor, aiming to report to the UN Security Council by December 31.

The imperialist powers pushed through an emergency session of the Commission which voted 32-12 for the inquiry September 27.

An estimate of the number of people killed by the Indonesian military and the death squads they organized in the period immediately before and after the August 30 referendum is yet to be released, but dozens of bodies are being discovered in shallow graves or washed up on beaches.

The inquiry will investigate these atrocities as part of efforts by the imperialist powers to place their stamp on political life in East Timor, and to win backing for their intervention, while papering over imperialism's complicity in the 24 year Indonesian occupation of East Timor.



Imperialist troops in East Timor with refugees who fled violence from Indonesian militia forces after a vote for independence on August 30. Washington, the Australian government, and other imperialist powers have imposed a military occupation that will be used against the East Timorese struggle for self-determination.

## 4,000 protest racist killings in Greece

BY HENRIEMENYE AND GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — More than 4,000 people marched on the Greek parliament here October 26 protesting racist shootings of nine immigrants between October 19 and 21. The racist killed a Kurdish worker and a Georgian. Two Kurdish immigrants and five others from Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Egypt were injured.

Police have apprehended Pandelis Kazakos, a security guard at the state-owned television company, and Apostolos Apostolou, a sailor, and charged them with the murders. Kazakos reportedly told the Athens Daily *Ta Nea*, "I do not regret what I did. I believe that I offered a service to the homeland. The foreigners have gone too far."

"He walked up to a group who were just returning from work in the downtown area and asked them where they were from," said Abu Ali, president of the Kurdish Refugees from Iraqi Kurdistan. "When they responded, 'We are Kurds,' he opened fire and simply walked away." Abu Ali, who was one of the organizers of the march, continued, "The po-

lice and press have presented this as the act of an isolated mad man. This is not true, this was an organized act. Kazakos is a known supporter of the fascist group Chrysi Avgi [Golden Dawn]."

The demonstration was called on three days' notice and drew immigrants from many countries. One of the largest contingents was about 200 people Nigeria. A few hundred Kurds participated, and banners indicated marchers originally from Bangladesh, Albania, and elsewhere. Contingents from Greek antiracist organizations and parties were also present. Notably absent was the Communist Party of Greece.

"No more shootings, no more killings!"; "No to the phony legalization, we want real legalization!"; and "Equality for all!" were among the spirited chants. Riot police blocked the march from reaching the steps of parliament. This was seen as an act of provocation by many demonstrators, who chanted slogans against the cops.

Placing the blame on government policies, Samsideen Iddrisu president of the Greek Branch of the European Union's Immigrant

Forum and an organizer of the protest, stated, "The police organize the sweeps. They board the buses to take those who are not Greeks."

David Fazlul, president of the Bangladeshi Cultural Association and also a march organizer, told the *Militant*, "They have arrested someone. But this character took his direction from the government. It is the government that organizes the mass arrests and deportations of immigrants. It is the government and mass media that blame us for crime. So, these men decided to take things into their own hands. One day such men will become a problem for their own society. Yes, they must be prosecuted and kept in jail, but the government must also stop its anti-immigrant policies."

In a victory for those fighting for the rights of immigrants Fazlul was released from prison on August 25 while pending trial. He had been arrested on frame-up charges more than a month earlier.

## Thousands rally against murder of unionist

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democratic organizations — regardless of which ones they happen to be."

Officials of the local of the Metal Workers Union at the Scania auto plant in Södertälje, south of Stockholm, issued a bulletin reading, "We don't accept that these antidemocratic violent groups are allowed to run free in our country and threaten, assault, abuse, and murder. It's time for our society to get tough on them. The laws must be applied harder and the police must have day-and-night surveillance of these gangs and their inner core.... We urge the government to speedily place before parliament proposals that give society greater and better authorities to deal with the nazi and racist gangs who defame our fine country."

The officials are members of the Social Democratic and the left parties.

Superintendent Margareta Linderöth at the Security Police announced that the cops will increase their surveillance of syndicalist offices around the country.

Whether to prohibit fascist organizations

was a topic of discussion among participants in the rally in Stockholm.

Opinions differed. Frank Pharose a worker from France in his mid-20s, said, "I didn't think things like these happened here. The ultraright is gaining ground all over Europe and I wanted to be part of the protest. But I was surprised when I learned that nazi organizations are not prohibited here. They are in France. I know it doesn't solve the problem. But it makes it a little more difficult for them."

Maria Winsnes was more hesitant, "Maybe you could outlaw nazi organizations, but the question is if others won't be outlawed too."

Moshen Kersch, a student now living in Sweden, but originally from Palestinian lands, was decidedly opposed. "Some politicians give legitimacy to the fascists. They gain ground. Politicians scare people and then introduce police laws. I come from a police state, so I know. They give less space for democracy and make it more difficult for ordinary people. They force us out."

At a Militant Labor Forum October 19 Johan Nilsson spoke on behalf of the Young Socialists. "The Young Socialists and the Communist League are opposed to any attempts by the government to outlaw any organizations," he said. "Neither do we want to put in its hands the right to criminalize membership in what they claim to be 'criminal' organizations. Both would be used against striking workers, militant unions, workers' parties, and organizations of social protest."

The next antifascist mobilization takes place November 9. This is in commemoration of Kristallnacht, when the Nazis in Germany attacked Jewish stores and properties in 1939. A literature table put up by the Young Socialists and the Communist League at the rally had posters announcing the event that were in great demand. The stack of them soon ran out.

Anita Östling is a member of the Transport Workers Union. Daniel Ahl, Birgitta Isacson, and Maxi Ortiz contributed to this article.

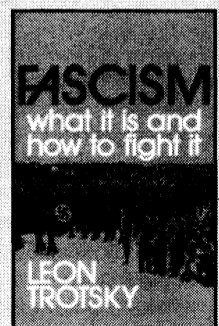
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# 'We need this book in Spanish and French'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"Driving home to Chicago from visiting the strikers at the Auburn Foundry in Auburn, Indiana, I swung through several towns with large meatpacking plants," reports Harvey McArthur in a note to the *Militant*. "No bookstores. But I spoke to the proprietor of one grocery store that carries other items, including products from Mexico. She immediately decided to order six Pathfinder titles, 11 books in all, all in Spanish. She also said to send her *Capitalism's World Disorder* when it is available in Spanish.

"Pathfinder supporters also scored successes with Spanish-language titles at a store in Chicago," McArthur continues. "Again, orders for *Capitalism's World Disorder* may have to wait for a Spanish edition. But we placed a total of 35 books in several stores. Titles by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara aroused particular interest."

Nat London and Thierry Bernard report from Paris that two demonstrators at an October 16 march by 50,000 workers demanding jobs and an end to layoffs "filled out order forms for a French-language edition of the book."

"Early next year," said Michael Baumann of Pathfinder Press, when asked about the publication schedule for the Spanish and French translations of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

This will come as welcome news to the socialist workers and youth in a number of different countries who have joined the campaign to place this book in stores and libraries. The working class is increasingly multilingual, and not just in the United States. "The growing internationalization of the working class... is unprecedented" in every imperialist country, says Jack Barnes in one of the speeches published in *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Barnes' remarks about Germany apply to many other countries as well: "Immigrants... bring new experiences and give new power

to struggles by workers."

In 500 pages of text and photographs, this book gives an up-to-date picture of those struggles and the world of "capitalist disorder" in which they are unfolding.

The accompanying chart, sent to the *Militant* by Nan Bailey for the Socialist Workers Party's Trade Union Committee, shows the results socialist workers in the industrial unions have had in placing the book in bookstores and libraries and in selling copies to individual co-workers and others.



## Discussions with Spokane workers

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE — A team of two socialist workers traveled to Spokane, Washington, over the October 23-24 weekend, joining the picket lines of locked-out steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum, meeting with steelworkers and farmers, and visiting bookstores to promote *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

We got a good response from all the stores we visited. At one, which carries books, CDs, and videotapes, the book buyer spent more than 20 minutes going over the catalog and the selection of books we'd brought, and discussing politics in the area. She ordered three copies of the book, and circled 14 other Pathfinder titles she planned to order the next day. They included *To Speak the Truth* by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and *Notebook of an Agitator* by James P. Cannon.

At another store in the area the buyer said he thought that interest in unions and the history of working people's struggles is increasing. He decided to order two copies each of three Pathfinder titles, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, and



Worker at October 28 Overnite Teamsters rally in Atlanta checks out the *Militant*

*Teamster Rebellion*.

We had a wide-ranging discussion at the home of another locked-out steelworker who is already reading *Capitalism's World Disorder*. He had bought it at a Pathfinder table two weeks earlier, at a Spokane rally and march celebrating one year of the Kaiser steelworkers' resistance. He was interested in the steps we are taking to distribute Pathfinder's titles more widely.

A farmer who is also a locked-out steelworker invited us to his farm Sunday morning. Over coffee, sitting by their wood-burning stove, he and his wife talked about the fight they had gone through to save their dairy farm. He had bought a copy of Pathfinder's pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* at the one-year anniversary rally in Spokane, and this time decided to get a copy

of *New International* no. 4 on the fight for a workers and farmers government. He was very interested in the idea of an alliance of workers and farmers when team members raised it. "How can we organize such a thing?" he wanted to know.

Scott Breen is a member of the International Association of Machinists.



## Store orders 50 Pathfinder books

BY JANE HARRIS

JERSEY CITY, New Jersey — We placed 10 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and 40 other Pathfinder books at a store in a town in a working-class area where many Cubans and Puerto Ricans live. The store sells antiques and used books, but the owner decided to kick off the new book section with some Pathfinder titles.

The visited followed two weeks' successful efforts in the area. A visit to a library in another northern New Jersey town netted the placement of six Pathfinder titles, including *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Socialist rail workers visited one other store in New Jersey that co-workers frequent to browse, sip coffee, and buy books. The store manager became convinced to take three copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* after we showed her the photos, discussed the rightist politician Patrick Buchanan, and suggested that it could her go in the stores "millennium" section. She purchased 28 titles in total — a broad selection from *Art and Revolution* by Leon Trotsky to Spanish language titles by and about Che Guevara.

In the last two weeks socialist rail workers at Amtrak have been building solidarity with the Domino Sugar strike among their co-workers, two of whom visited the picket line for the first time. During this time a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* was sold to a yard conductor.

Jane Harris is a member of the United Transportation Union.

# Pathfinder scanning project on schedule

BY TOM TOMASKO

OAKLAND, California — October was a good month in the effort to keep in print lessons of the modern working-class movement. The Reprint Project is an effort by about 100 volunteers in eight countries to convert all of Pathfinder Press's titles to a digital form, thereby driving down the cost and time of printing them.

There has been a steady increase in the pace of work. The scanning of all books and pamphlets is on schedule to be completed by New Year's Day, 2000. In October 16 titles

were scanned, leaving 34 books and 3 pamphlets to finish. Once the scanning volunteers are done with this aspect of the work, they can turn their attention to proofreading, formatting, graphics, and creating new indexes. This will give a further impulse to the pace of work.

Since scanning does not perfectly reproduce the text in digital form, every book must be proofread twice to insure the digital form is true to the author's writings and of the highest quality possible. The first proofreading of books has gone so well it is about two months

ahead of second reading.

Formatting a book into a more readable style than the previous book is the next step. Volunteer formatters prepared seven titles in October, increasing their work flow by 94 percent in October compared to an average of the previous three months.

Another positive sign of progress is the creeping move downstream of the inevitable production bottlenecks. The project is a very complicated effort, requiring volunteers to acquire new skills, even when their regular jobs are completely different. Since the project began, we have confronted and solved many problems at all stages of production.

Today the bottlenecks are concentrated in two of the last steps: indexing and the final editorial check performed by the Pathfinder staff on the text and graphics of each title. The staff at Pathfinder will find ways to conquer the increasing amount of work sent to them. As for the project volunteers, we need more people to involve themselves in helping to create new indexes.

When a book is reformatted, the page numbers often change. That means the index—an important political tool—needs to be accurately reworked to correspond to the new book. This is one of the last steps in production and fast turnaround is important. With more volunteers working on more indexes and smaller parts of the indexes at the same time, we can get the books completed on time. Volunteers who are involved in the first proofreading stage are especially encouraged to join this effort, as they are far ahead in their work.

In October, the Reprint Project delivered five titles on compact disks to Pathfinder Press. They are *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, *Fascism: What It Is & How to Fight It* by Leon Trotsky, *Reform or Revolution* by Rosa Luxemburg, and *From Lenin to Stalin* by Victor Serge, and the Education for Socialists publication *From Mississippi to Boston: The Demand for Troops to Enforce Civil Rights*.

Tom Tomasko is a member of the Reprint Project steering committee and International Association of Machinists Local 1784.

## Report from bookfair in Sweden

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON AND JOHAN NILSSON

GOTHENBURG, Sweden — *Capitalism's World Disorder* was at the center of the Pathfinder booth at the September 15-19 bookfair here. Displays of the cover were prominent, and we cut out a number of the "From the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder*" columns from the *Militant* to be able to direct visitors more visibly to the political richness of the book. Over the four days of the fair we sold five copies.

One of the buyers was a longtime *Militant* subscriber in Gothenburg who came by especially to get the book. The index in the back was our main tool. A young woman asked if we had anything on India. Through the index we pointed her to the section on the differences between India and China. The team spent a lot of time discussing how best to present the book and made adjustments every day. The presence of a team member from the United Kingdom was important, since the campaign to sell the book has gone further there.

This was the eighth consecutive year that Pathfinder has participated in the

Gothenburg bookfair. The overwhelming number of visitors at the Pathfinder booth were young. Bestselling titles were *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara and *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, both translated into Swedish. We sold 27 and 8 copies respectively.

Young women, many in their late teens, explained that they had started to take an interest in women's role in society and the origin of women's oppression. We sold four copies of *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* and a couple of other titles on the same topic. Titles by Malcolm X were also popular.

One young plumber and explained that he was going to travel in Asia for five months, including Indonesia and Thailand. He wanted to prepare himself politically and asked what we could offer. He chose a copy of *Ny International* no. 1, featuring "Opening Guns of World War III" — the translation of issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

There are now a couple of people in Gothenburg who are interested both in Pathfinder books and the Young Socialists.

### 'Capitalism's World Disorder' sold by socialist workers

|               | Copies placed in stores | Copies sold to individuals |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| IAM           | 30                      | 18                         |
| UAW           | 10                      | 7                          |
| UFCW          | 6                       | 5                          |
| UNITE         | 3                       | 8                          |
| USWA          | 10                      | 12                         |
| UTU           | 32                      | 22                         |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>91</b>               | <b>72</b>                  |

# Atlanta socialist conference strengthens YS

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: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY ROMINA GREEN AND PAUL CORNISH

ATLANTA — The Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party successfully organized a Southern Regional Educational Conference here October 23-24. Sixty-three people attended including several youth who were at their first socialist conference. Participants came from Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Washington, D.C., Florida, and across Georgia.

This event focused on important political questions for fighting workers, farmers, and youth today. Participants also discussed the central campaign of the YS, SWP, and supporters of the communist movement to place the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes in bookstores and libraries as a

byproduct of deepening involvement in struggles of working people.

In the first class of the conference, titled "Patrick Buchanan: the culture war and the rise of an incipient fascist movement in the U.S.," Laura Garza spoke about how the capitalist system in crisis today gives rise to ultrarightist demagogues like Buchanan, and the threat this poses to workers and farmers. "The working-class in this country has the capacity to put up a fight" that can defeat fascism and overturn capitalist rule, she emphasized.

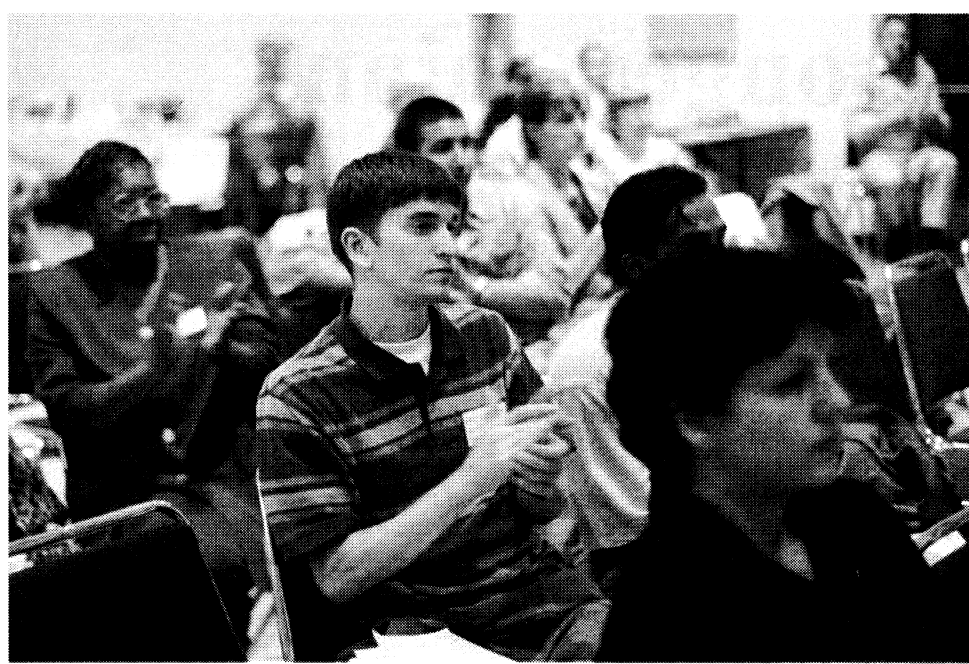
The second class was on "The fight for Puerto Rican independence today." It was given by Cindy Jaquith, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, and Romina Green, a garment worker and YS member. Jaquith spoke of the history and struggle of the Puerto Rican people fighting colonialism. She explained how imperialism changed an island of small farmers to industrial workers, and how Washington uses youth as cannon fodder for its wars.

Green recently attended the celebration of *Grito de Lares* — marking the opening of the struggle against Spanish colonial rule — in Puerto Rico. She spoke about her trip and the history of struggle against imperialist domination that Puerto Rico and Cuba share.

That evening the Pathfinder Fund rally was held, entitled "Cuba — forty years of workers and farmers in power." The program was a panel of youth, workers, and farmers who have helped place *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Michael Martínez from Miami spoke of how he encountered the Pathfinder title *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara at a bookstore, which led him to find out about the Pathfinder bookstore in Miami. He later told conference participants that he wants to join the Young Socialists and help build a chapter in Miami.

Miguel Rodríguez, a construction worker from Atlanta, spoke about how he helped place Pathfinder books.

Gladys Williams is a farm cooperative member from southern Georgia and an activist in an organization called the People's Tribunal which opposes police brutality and is fighting to jail the cops who brutalized Willie Williams, a Black resident in the area. She spoke about how she helped place books in the region and



Session at the Southern Regional Education conference, held in Atlanta October 23-24.

her plans to visit farmers in Cuba.

Brian Taylor, a *Militant* staff writer and the featured speaker of the evening, spoke about the first and second agrarian reforms led by the revolutionary government in Cuba in 1959 and 1963, and how they strengthened the revolution.

A fund pitch was given by Socialist Workers Party member Tom Leonard. "Printing literature and raising money to make it possible has been a cornerstone of the political activity of communists since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848." He added, "These are truly textbooks for vanguard workers, farmers, and rebellious youth, which can arm them to be more effective in their struggle." The rally raised a total of \$2,456.

The Young Socialists organized a party and raffle that collected about \$300 from the door donations and raffle tickets, which will be split between the Atlanta and Birmingham Young Socialists for the fund drive, boosting the YS national fund drive.

James Harris gave the final class, "Building an alliance of workers and farmers." He used the agitational pamphlet by V.I. Lenin *To the Rural Poor*, written in 1903, and related it to the struggles of small farmers in the United States and internationally. During the dis-

cussion Gladys Williams said, "In our area there are a lot of foreclosures... every year is a struggle. We want to see the agrarian land reform [in Cuba] and do it here in America."

David Klier, a youth from Valdosta, Georgia, participated in discussions all weekend. He, like Williams, is a member of the People's Tribunal, fighting cases of police brutality. Klier urged the YS to join the protest at the School of the Americas November 18-21 in Fort Benning, Georgia.

Martínez, the student from Miami, was asked his thoughts on the conference. "The class I liked the most was on Puerto Rico," he replied. "Some of the things that were talked about are so important for the working class and youth."

Thirteen-year-old Sonja Swanson from Miami noted, "The classes on Buchananism and Puerto Rico were the most educational. I came here to get educated and I got what I wanted. I will definitely come to more."

Robert Guerrero, a textile worker and YS member, contributed to this article.

## Young Socialists Fund Drive

| City             | Goal         | Collected    | %          |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| San Francisco    | 800          | 567          | 71%        |
| Chicago          | 1,200        | 807          | 67%        |
| Philadelphia     | 400          | 259          | 65%        |
| Atlanta          | 250          | 150          | 60%        |
| Newark           | 700          | 411          | 59%        |
| Birmingham       | 550          | 220          | 40%        |
| Detroit          | 350          | 140          | 40%        |
| Seattle          | 400          | 145          | 36%        |
| New York         | 700          | 230          | 33%        |
| Santa Cruz       | 650          | 192          | 30%        |
| Minneapolis      | 500          | 107          | 21%        |
| Des Moines       | 130          | 10           | 8%         |
| Los Angeles      | 500          | 25           | 5%         |
| Pittsburgh       | 200          | 0            | 0%         |
| Other            | 0            | 183          |            |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>7,330</b> | <b>3,446</b> | <b>43%</b> |
| <b>Should be</b> | <b>8,000</b> | <b>6,000</b> | <b>75%</b> |

## \$40,000 needed for Pathfinder Fund

Continued from front page

he and other fighting farmers and workers need. But to achieve this goal, a concerted effort is required between now and November 15 in every city where there are Pathfinder supporters. As we go to press, \$84,040 has been sent in. Another \$40,960 must be raised to reach our collective goal — a substantial challenge.

This campaign got a big boost over the past week — the result of a more concerted effort than earlier weeks. Partisans of Pathfinder sent in one of the largest piles of checks yet.

Based on this momentum, what is needed now is to organize the final stretch *day by day*. This includes bridging any gap between pledges and local goals and collecting all funds on time. It means, above all, Pathfinder supporters broadening their appeal to fellow working people they hadn't approached before.

Using public meetings effectively to maximize the fund-raising is essential — broadly publicizing the event, organizing a program that captures the breadth of interest in Pathfinder books, and a carefully prepared fund pitch. The reports below from Miami and St. Paul, Minnesota, highlight some ingredients of how we can achieve this objective.

### Florida small farmer: reading Pathfinder books is 'liberating'

MIAMI—Working people and others who frequent the Miami Pathfinder Bookstore celebrated the grand opening at its new location in Little Haiti on the October 30-31 weekend. The Saturday evening public event was used to help meet a local goal of raising \$3,500 as part of the \$125,000 fund drive. A total of \$1,000 was collected at the meeting.

Rail worker Bill Kalman, director of the local fund-raising effort, thanked the many volunteers who helped transform a dark and

dreary industrial office into a well-lit and gaily decorated bookstore and political center. Kalman especially thanked Bill Loomis, a political activist and worker at American Airlines, whose efforts made possible the complex electrical work necessary to run a professional site.

Karl Butts, a working vegetable farmer from Plant City, Florida, underscored the importance of Pathfinder books. His desire to "do something about hunger" from early in life led to his career in agriculture. He described several years of intensive lobbying for a world hunger organization because he felt that "only the federal government commands the necessary resources to make a difference."

Butts said, "I became convinced that the government had no interest in eradicating hunger, and I was desperate for information. Pathfinder has given me the answers finally. It's a liberating experience."

He expressed interest in visiting revolutionary Cuba as an alternative to capitalism's dog-eat-dog system. "I want to see a system that is not chaotic, where everyone is not competing for the same dollar, where farming can really be enjoyable," he explained.

Cindy Jaquith, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Birmingham, Alabama, was the keynote speaker. "The way the mainstream media covers Patrick Buchanan's bid for the Reform Party nomination," she noted, "you would think he's on his last legs, that he's run out of steam. But just the opposite is true." Jaquith explained that the central ideas contained in Pathfinder's newest title, *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes, are essential to counter the radical rightist proposals of Buchanan that get a hearing among some workers and farmers.

Jaquith presented a class the next day on the 1979 Iranian revolution and political de-

velopments in Iran today.

### Minnesota event narrows gap toward fund goal

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Supporters of Pathfinder books in this region made substantial progress toward their Pathfinder Fund goals at a public meeting held here October 30.

Helping close a gap in pledges toward the \$10,000 Twin Cities goal, participants offered an additional \$824, raising total pledges to \$8,338 — still a challenge for the next two weeks — and paid \$1,274. An additional \$380 was collected the next day. Some \$75 was collected toward the Chippewa Falls goal of \$400.

Keynote speaker James Harris highlighted the significance of the Teamsters fight for union recognition at Overnite Trucking Co. A number of people in the audience had been at the Overnite picket line at the terminal in the Twin Cities area and described the fighting spirit of the strikers and their goals.

Harris also explained how several farm activists in Georgia have been helping to lead the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

A photo display in the meeting hall highlighted the Steelworkers strike against ME International in Duluth, Minnesota. The workers, who make castings for the mining industry, have been on strike more than two months.

Rachele Fruit in Miami and Doug Jenness in St. Paul contributed to this article.

| PATHFINDER FUND  |                  |                 |            |
|--|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| RAISE \$125,000 TO HELP PRODUCE THE BOOKS WORKERS AND FARMERS NEED NOW |                  |                 |            |
| Area   | Goal             | Paid            | Percent    |
| <b>New Zealand</b>   | <b>2,550</b>     | <b>2,227</b>    | <b>87%</b> |
| <b>Sweden</b>  | 700              | 500             | 71%        |
| <b>United States</b>   |                  |                 |            |
| <b>Cape Girardeau</b>  | <b>250</b>       | <b>225</b>      | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>Detroit</b>   | <b>4,500</b>     | <b>3,930</b>    | <b>87%</b> |
| <b>Philadelphia</b>  | <b>3,600</b>     | <b>3,003</b>    | <b>83%</b> |
| <b>New York</b>  | <b>13,000</b>    | <b>10,625</b>   | <b>82%</b> |
| <b>Atlanta</b>   | <b>3,500</b>     | <b>2,811</b>    | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Newark</b>  | <b>9,000</b>     | <b>7,023</b>    | <b>78%</b> |
| <b>Ft. Collins</b>   | <b>500</b>       | <b>385</b>      | <b>77%</b> |
| San Francisco  | 12,500           | 9,208           | 74%        |
| St. Louis  | 1,300            | 925             | 71%        |
| Des Moines   | 1,800            | 1,253           | 70%        |
| Twin Cities  | 10,000           | 6,798           | 68%        |
| Chicago  | 8,000            | 5,100           | 64%        |
| Chippewa Falls   | 400              | 250             | 63%        |
| Cleveland  | 4,000            | 2,385           | 60%        |
| Pittsburgh   | 4,500            | 2,655           | 59%        |
| Boston   | 4,100            | 2,370           | 58%        |
| Los Angeles  | 8,000            | 4,180           | 52%        |
| Seattle  | 11,000           | 5,290           | 48%        |
| Miami  | 3,500            | 1,595           | 46%        |
| Houston  | 6,500            | 2,945           | 45%        |
| Washington, D.C.   | 6,000            | 2,495           | 42%        |
| Birmingham   | 3,000            | 775             | 33%        |
| Other U.S.   | 2,312            | 2,137           | 92%        |
| <b>U.S. Total</b>  | <b>\$121,262</b> | <b>\$78,363</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| <b>Canada</b>  |                  |                 |            |
| <b>Australia</b>   | 3,650            | 2,129           | 58%        |
| <b>France</b>  | 950              | 531             | 56%        |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>  | 500              | 250             | 50%        |
|  | 950              | 40              | 4%         |
| <b>Totals</b>  | <b>\$130,562</b> | <b>\$84,040</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| <b>Should be</b>   | <b>\$125,000</b> | <b>\$96,154</b> | <b>77%</b> |

# How can US Airways workers fight for stronger union?

BY REBECCA ARENSON AND NANCY COLE

PHILADELPHIA — Maintenance workers at US Airways approved a new five-year agreement by a 74 percent margin in early October, nearly an exact reversal of the margin by which a similar proposal was rejected last July. None of the major issues that led workers to vote down the earlier offer were resolved in the final agreement for 7,500 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM).

The contract included introduction of part-time utility (cleaners) for the first time, a pay parity scheme tied to wages and work rules at the company's main competitors, and mandatory overtime for deicing. An

Philadelphia the premiums that employees pay for Aetna U.S. Healthcare had jumped 2.6 times for the family plan to \$110 per month. This means that under the new wage rates, for example, a cleaner into their third year of employment who opts for the family insurance plan will see their paycheck actually decrease under the new contract.

Mechanics and cleaners were in a position to fight these concessions. Fleet service workers, who had finally approved a contract last spring five years after voting in the IAM, were set to back any action by the maintenance workers. Flight attendants were supportive, and AFA officials had reported to members that an arbitration decision after the 1992 maintenance strike now gave them the go-ahead to honor IAM picket lines. The customer service workers beat back several challenges by the company to their votes to join the Communication Workers of America and are in the midst of contract negotiations as well. Said one mechanic, "We knew we were in a good position, the company knew it, but people just didn't have the confidence that our officials could pull off a strike successfully."

Philadelphia mechanic Fred Wright commented that the negotiating committee "should have started with all the previous givebacks — health insurance copayments being the biggest one — and they should have demanded they all be wiped away, and then started negotiating a new contract."

Instead, the union tops engaged in years of secret negotiations when only the company and union officials knew what was happening. During this time there were no mobilizations of the ranks to show the company that workers were ready to fight for a decent contract.

Company attempts to divide the membership during this period was exacerbated by the union decision to divide mechanics and related workers (that is cleaners) off from other airline workers in IAM District 141. This was the IAM's misdirected response to the drive by the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association

## UNION TALK

increase in the onetime pay raise from 3.5 percent to 6 percent for the five-year contract was heralded by union officials as a major accomplishment. The signing bonus was also upped to 5 percent of last year's wages, and a fourth year bonus added.

Given the track record for airline contract negotiations — the last US Airways contract expired in 1995 — and the length of this agreement, the 6 percent pay raise could likely be spread over 12 years or more. Few workers believe the pay parity formula is designed to do anything but freeze our wages, and the contract actually mandates the company and union to come up with further concessions if our pay is above the rate they determine to be pay parity.

This leaves the next contract confrontation at the company to the 9,000 flight attendants organized by the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA). The AFA's October 19 hotline reported, "Company executives are telling flight attendants that all the other work groups have agreed to the company's 'parity' concept and that it's time for the flight attendants to get on the 'band wagon.'" This could mean "drastic cuts in scheduling, work rules and benefits. It would also mean an insufficient pay raise."

Flight attendants marked 1,000 days without a contract in late September with informational picket lines. If a tentative agreement is not reached by November 19, the union says it will ask the National Mediation Board to declare an impasse and begin the 30-day cooling off period, which could be followed by strike actions.

"Flight attendants were disappointed that we agreed to this contract," says Philadelphia cleaner Chuck Byrd. "It's all up to them now to take on the parity issue."

Philadelphia was the only sizable station to vote down the maintenance agreement. The day after the IAM voted on our contract, packets began arriving in the mail laying out options for next year's health insurance. Since it was never an issue presented to us during contract discussions, it came as quite a shock to discover that here in

## Protest demands city drop charges against Haitian man beaten by New Jersey cops

BY LEE OLESON

NEWARK, New Jersey — The trial of Max Antoine, a Haitian worker who was brutally beaten by Irvington, New Jersey police and then charged with various crimes by them, was postponed for the fifth time after a hearing October 18 in Essex County Court. The case is now scheduled for December 6.

Two days before the hearing 120 people rallied in support of Antoine in front of the Irvington police station. Representatives from several organizations spoke at the rally including the People's Organization for Progress, the New Brunswick Coalition Against Police Brutality, October 22nd Coalition, and the Socialist Workers Party. A spokesperson for New Jersey Congressman

Donald Payne office's also spoke at the event.

After the rally 50 participants marched from Irvington to the Essex County Court House in Newark and picketed and rallied there. "I'm not going to give up," Antoine said. "I'm going to keep on fighting till I die."

"It's been one postponement after another," Antoine's lawyer J.D. Larosiliere told the *Newark Star-Ledger*. "We're getting tired of it."

Antoine is accused of taking a police weapon, falsifying records, resisting arrest, and tampering with evidence after a June 1996 beating by the cops, which caused paralysis in his lower body, blindness in one eye and deafness in one ear.

## N.Y. rally: 'Stop police brutality'



Militant/Jason Corley

More than 1,000 people marched against cop brutality October 22 in New York City as part of a national day of actions across the United States. The protesters included many high school students and relatives of victims of police violence.

tion (AMFA) to break mechanics away from the IAM to form a craft bargaining group — instead of taking AMFA head on by explaining how we're all stronger when we're united in an industrial union.

The company's demand for part-time cleaners, which was not addressed by union officials, added to this division. "Part-time is a done deal because it's everywhere in the industry" was a common refrain from those not willing to fight the concessionary agreement. The fact was that they *hadn't* done it yet at US Airways. Now we'll work alongside each other with three classes of cleaners: those at the top of the pay scale, those on the B scale, and those on the B scale who are part-time with part-time benefits.

There is a lot of anger and discontent with the union officialdom, which unanimously recommended a yes vote on such a proposal. During contract discussions, officials expressed more concern with US Airways' falling stock prices than with how we could organize to protect our rights and get a decent contract. But union bureaucrats who look to a cooperative relationship with the company as an alternative to involving their members in a fight is nothing new to the labor movement.

*Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* is a book

that can help airline workers figure out how to take on these challenges. In it Jack Barnes writes, "The bureaucrats are complicit with the bosses in encouraging the divisions among workers that breed atomization and demoralization. They have no intention of leading the kind of fight necessary to improve working conditions, shorten hours of work, and increase wages. They cannot imagine a union that puts itself in the front ranks of a fighting movement for universal social security protection, real health and safety enforcement, and effective protection of the environment, regardless of the consequences for any boss or any bourgeois party or politician."

But that is the kind of labor movement we need as we enter the next millennium. True leaders don't address the bosses "to complain about what they are doing to us," Barnes contends. "Leaders talk to fellow workers, fellow fighters about where we are messing up; what we have to do; what we have to prepare for. Leaders explain how we have to increase our discipline, change our view of ourselves, and much more in order to accomplish our ends."

Rebecca Arenson and Nancy Cole are members of IAM Local 1776 at US Airways in Philadelphia.

## L.A. cops under fire in brutality scandal

BY MARK FRIEDMAN

LOS ANGELES — Revelations about police brutality, corruption, and frame-ups have filled the daily press here for several weeks. What began as a Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) investigation into corruption at the Ramparts division has expanded and given impetus to fighters against police brutality.

Rafael Perez, an LAPD Ramparts division narcotics officer, is cooperating with LAPD investigators as part of a plea bargain agreement in which he is expected to receive a five-year prison term for stealing about eight pounds of cocaine from police facilities. According to the September 21 *Los Angeles Times*, Perez and his former

partner carried out a shooting that left an unarmed man, Javier Ovando, confined to a wheelchair and wrongfully imprisoned. Ovando was just released from prison after serving two and a half years of a 23-year frame-up sentence. So far at least 12 cops have been relieved of duty, and three others, including Perez, forced off the job.

Under continuing pressure, city prosecutors suspended two anti-gang injunctions as revelations pointed to lying cops and fabricated testimony against youths. More than a dozen anti-gang injunctions have been granted the cops in Los Angeles County in the past few years.

Hundreds of cases will now be reviewed. The mayor, police chief, and other local politicians were quick to try and shore up the loss of confidence in the LAPD. They are attempting to revive the district attorney's roll-out team created in the aftermath of the 1992 cop beating of Rodney King, which sent prosecutors to the scene of every LAPD shooting.

The *Los Angeles Times* also reports that Justice Department officials have been monitoring the LAPD for the last several years to determine whether there is any pattern of "excessive force."

Workers throughout the area have been following and discussing this crisis as it unraveled within the police department. Meanwhile, relatives and local groups formed to fight for justice for various victims of cop brutality have stepped up their activities.

The cops, along with community merchants, have organized demonstrations in the Ramparts area and at other scenes of anti-cop brutality protests, to back the police and the anti-gang injunctions. Part of this public discussion occurred at a Militant Labor Forum held here October 10.

Donna Dymally, the mother of Marc Fitzsimmons, who was killed by the Los Angeles cops July 2, 1998, told the crowd,

"He went on an errand and we never saw him again. After five days we were informed of his death by out-of-state family.

The cops later said that he supposedly hit someone. He was chased and shot by the cops and bled to death, according to witnesses. It took the cops one and a half hours to get him to the nearest hospital." Dymally added, "This cuts across all gender and color lines, like Margaret Mitchell, the homeless woman with a supposedly stolen shopping cart, who 'threatened' two LAPD cops with a screwdriver" and was shot and killed. Also speaking was Corinne Mposi, who is part of the fight for justice for Shaka Ankofa (previously known as Gary Graham) who is on death row in Texas on frame-up charges.

John Benson, representing the Socialist Workers Party, noted, "The L.A. cops have used fabricated stories to further restrict our democratic rights and then brutalize people. They get injunctions against people gathering on street corners — like they use injunctions against pickets during strikes."

As more workers and farmers fight to improve their situation, Benson said, the cops get more aggressive — especially toward young people, to teach a lesson to those who stand up. "Mass responses in New York City, to the police torture of [Abner] Louima and killing of [Amadou] Diallo point the way forward," he said.

Forum participants added examples of police brutality. Brian Smith spoke about the killing of his brother, Danny Smith, in jail. The family was not told of his death for two days. The warden gave them one story and later Smith heard what really happened. "It can happen to anyone with the mentality of the Police Department that uses brutal force. The movement will take all people, Black, Latino, and white," Smith declared.

Mark Friedman is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

# Anti-WTO protests are opposite of labor solidarity

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

At the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) November 30–December 3, working people will be able to see played out, with a conference hall for a theater and diplomatic double-speak for a script, the considerable tensions and conflicts that characterize world trade today. Government ministers from more than 130 member countries and over 30 others that have applied for membership will attend.

As the meeting approaches the imperialist powers, with Washington at their head, are pressuring countries in the semicolonial world and the workers states to open up their markets to foreign goods and investment, while they selectively maintain protectionist barriers. And those same powers are locked in disputes with each other over access to each other's markets, and over their domination and economic plunder of the majority of humanity.

A wide range of unions and other groups have endorsed protests that will occur in Seattle at the same time as the WTO meeting. Organizers' declare that this is "the protest of the century." However exaggerated this claim, the WTO event and anti-WTO protests have become the subject of widespread interest and discussion.

Many unionists and working farmers rightly view capitalist organizations like the WTO with suspicion. The imperialist powers created the WTO and use it as a tool in their drive to squeeze yet more profits out of the labor of toilers around the world. Class-conscious workers oppose the organization and its policies. They call for the governments of the countries in which they live to withdraw from this organization, and all similar formations.

At the same time the trade body acts not as an independent force, but registers the class relationship of forces in the world. The most powerful imperialist power, Washington has already indicated it will defy WTO rulings when it considers its "national security" is at stake.

## Protests promote economic nationalism

Class-conscious workers will not participate in the protests that are being organized against the meeting in Seattle, however. The basis of these actions boils down to different expressions of economic nationalism — support for the bosses of the United States and their government — under the progressive cover of defending the environment, or opposing the low pay and bad working conditions that many workers in the semicolonial world endure.

"Make the Global Economy work for working families," states a leaflet issued by the King County Labor Council and the AFL-CIO in Seattle, urging workers to "Join us Nov. 30, the opening day of the World Trade Organization meeting... to demand changes." The national union federation has assigned two full-time field organizers to organize this protest and an associated conference. Officials from the United Auto Workers, United Steel Workers of America (USWA), Teamsters, and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union are among those involved in the event.

The heavy involvement of these union officials does not endow the protests with a working-class character. The union bureaucracy occupies a position between the union membership and the employers, acting to disorganize workers and minimize the impact of the struggles they undertake. They perform the same function in politics, including foreign policy, acting as "labor lieutenants of capital" in this field too. Since the buildup to World War II, the AFL-CIO leaders have advanced the foreign policy thrust of the ruling class.

In that period Washington established itself through military and economic conquest as the predominant imperialist power. It either defeated militarily — in the case of Germany and Japan — or elbowed aside — as with Britain and France — the other major imperialist powers.

Others planning to join the protests include environmental and church groups; the National Farmers Union, which is dominated by

wealthier farmers; and those associated with Ralph Nader, a well-known activist who criticized the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for "exporting jobs" when he ran for president in 1996.

Other protests are planned overseas at the time of the Seattle conference, with a similar nationalist character. A demonstration planned in France for November 27 will call for measures to supposedly protect France from being bought up by giant U.S. pension funds. The coalition building it includes both right-wing and leftist members of parliament, as well as many political organizations considered part of the Left. France and the United States, the world's two largest agricultural exporters, have frequently found themselves at loggerheads.

## Calls to defend 'sovereign nation states'

"The WTO has elevated corporate power above the sovereign powers of all nation states," reads a leaflet issued by People for Fair Trade, striking a common theme. The picture of a WTO standing over the imperialist powers like Washington, Tokyo and Berlin has no basis in fact. The trade body is a group of bureaucrats based in Brussels with an annual budget of \$75 billion dollars.

Workers have no interest in protesting to defend the national sovereignty of Washington or any other imperialist power. Sovereign Washington, and its sovereign allies and rivals, are the brutal enemies of working people at home and abroad. The WTO is their creation, and it will fall by the wayside if it loses its usefulness to them or cannot contain their conflicts.

In trade conflicts, many of the anti-WTO protesters lend support to Washington against the governments of semicolonial countries that are oppressed and exploited by imperialism. Many statements bewail rulings by the WTO against U.S. trade restrictions on imports of shrimp from Asia and oil from Venezuela.

The U.S. restrictions claimed that the foreign imports were associated with environmental damage. Washington and its rivals, whose profit-driven capitalist system is fundamentally inimical to environmental preservation, play on environmental concerns to win popular support in their trade conflicts.

Among those planning to participate in the November 30 AFL-CIO demonstration are the "Tibetan Rights Campaign," which is calling for "Free Tibet" and demanding that China not be allowed to join the WTO. This position dovetails with Washington's drive to weaken and militarily surround the Chinese workers state.

Before the Chinese revolution of 1949, Tibet was subjected to feudal rule by the class that the Dalai Lama — cultivated by Washington — now represents. The "free" Tibet advocated by liberal forces will be a return to that oppressed condition.

Despite the rhetoric used against the trade body, many of those organizing the coming protests call for its reform rather than its abolition. The "call for a turnaround of the WTO [is] a theme being echoed by a growing consensus of activists worldwide..."

## N. Korean gov't denounces provocations

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

The government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) issued a press release October 26 condemning the latest moves of aggression against that workers state by Washington and Tokyo.

"Judging from Japan's recent military movements and spate of outbursts made by its ruling quarters," read the statement, "the present Japanese government... is keen on militarily confronting the DPRK at any cost by making an 'emergency on the Korean peninsula,' a fait accompli."

The statement refers to Tokyo's October 27 war exercise involving more than 32,000 sailors in their so-called Self Defense Force, 110 warships including destroyers, and 180 warplanes. They were simulating conditions of a military "emergency on the Korean peninsula."

## The WTO Corporate House of Horrors

Tell Your Community the WTO is Taking Away Our Right to Make Laws!

People for Fair Trade and Network Opposed to WTO are setting up a WTO House of Horrors in Seattle for Halloween. This is leading up to the real thing — the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting here in Seattle between November 29th - December 3rd, 1999.

The haunted house idea is just one of the ways you can get the word out to your community about the WTO — this dismantlement of democracy which has been foisted on us as a trade pact. Look for more WTO House of Horrors ideas on our webpage and let us know your ideas. Come join us in Seattle at the end of November for the "Protest of the Century." We must let the



- In the Room of Doomed Lungs you will beasphyxiated in the cloud of air pollution (dry ice) because the state oil corporation got it's Venezuelan government to overturn our U.S. Clean Air law through the WTO.

Page from website of People for Fair Trade lends support to Washington against the governments of semicolonial countries like Venezuela in name of defending "our laws."

reports one anti-WTO publication. This is the approach of the labor officialdom.

"We are not going to be denouncing the WTO, asking that it be killed or go away," said Ronald Judd of the King County Labor Council, who is helping to organize the November 30 union rally. The mild criticisms voiced by AFL-CIO officials reflect their political support for the Clinton government and its trade policies. Judd called for the WTO to enforce "sanctions against [countries that violate] workers' rights."

This is consistent with the AFL-CIO's record in the past of opposing imports on the grounds that American workers' jobs were at stake. The federation's president John Sweeney, touted as being more progressive than his predecessors in the job — an image that the November 30 protest will reinforce in the eyes of many middle-class political activists — put the AFL-CIO's policy bluntly in 1996. "We want to help American business compete in the world and create new wealth for your shareholders and your employees," he said.

## A bridge to the ultraright

The nationalist approach not only backs up Washington's aggressive stance in trade matters and other aspects of its foreign policy but it also paves the way for workers, who are disillusioned with the established political parties and the bosses they loyally represent, to lend political support to rightist political figures.

Fascist-minded and other reactionary politicians have surfaced in many imperialist countries, given life by the rightward direction of government policy, and by the social and economic crisis which unfolds even in the upward swing of the business cycle.

The People's Party led by the industrialist Christoph Blocher in Switzerland and the

Freedom Party of Jorg Haider in Austria won second place in recent parliamentary votes. Both parties waged nationalist campaigns against "foreigners" and against the European Union, portraying themselves as representing "the people."

In phrases strikingly similar to those employed by many groups planning to protest in Seattle, the ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan bemoans "the surrender of our national sovereignty to the WTO." Buchanan's "brigades" represent the initial recruits to fascist gangs that will, in the future, be turned loose on the organizations of working people.

Teamsters union president James Hoffa is taking the bridge of the economic nationalism of the union officials to Buchanan to its logical conclusion. The right-wing magazine the *American Spectator* reports that "Hoffa is committed to backing Buchanan... during the primary season." In France, a number of forces formerly in socialist and left wing groups have been drawn to the Bonapartist, strongman figure of former Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, who has compared the WTO to the Third Reich.

In opposing the imperialist trade body of the WTO, working people need to reject the nationalist politics represented by these forces — the same politics that underpin the protests in Seattle.

As Jack Barnes writes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*, a book that socialist workers are campaigning with in a number of countries, "The only 'we' we recognize is that of working people and our allies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico — and the rest of the Americas and the world. Not 'we' Americans, 'we' English speakers 'we' the white race, or anything else that chains us to the class that grows wealthy off the exploitation of our labor and that of our toiling brothers and sisters the world over."

south Korea.

An overwhelming 500,000 of south Korea's 600,000 soldiers are engaging with 30,000 U.S. troops in Army field training, Navy landing exercises, and nighttime war tactics. At least two U.S. Navy vessels, the *USS Juneau* and the *USS Germantown*, are accompanying their Seoul naval counterparts in the war-training exercise.

"The 'Foil Eagle' joint military exercise the U.S. and South Korean ruling quarters plan to stage in the whole area of South Korea from October 26 to November 5," read the DPRK statement, is an act of "aggression aimed at a forestalling surprise attack on the DPRK." The declaration called the war drills "a vicious challenge" to the will of Korean people and a move to reinforce the decades-long forced division of north and south.

# Worker-bolsheviks and the fight for power

The following excerpts from *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky touch on a key component of the Bolshevik Party led by V.I. Lenin that made it possible for them to lead the workers and peasants to power in October 1917. This component, ignored in most bourgeois "histories" of this momentous event, was the creation of a new type of revolutionary cadre that constituted the Bolsheviks' base: the worker-Bolshevik.

In the excerpts that follow, Trotsky explains the class character of the Bolshevik Party and tells how worker-Bolsheviks helped lead the February 1917 revolution that overthrew tsarism, and then played the decisive role in winning over the mass of toilers to the need for the workers and peasants to take power in their own hands.

This perspective of the fight for power is summarized in the final excerpt, which refers to a June 1917 congress where the Bolsheviks under Lenin were a small minority. Four months later, they would win the majority of the working people to the perspective of seizing power.

\*\*\*

## BY LEONTROTSKY

In every factory, in each guild, in each company, in each tavern, in the military hospital, at the transfer stations, even in the depopulated villages, the molecular work of revolutionary thought was in progress. Everywhere were to be found the interpreters of events, chiefly from among the workers, from whom one inquired, "What's the news?" and from whom one awaited the needed words.

These leaders had often been left to themselves, had nourished themselves upon fragments of revolutionary generalizations ar-

iving in their hands by various routes, had studied out by themselves between the lines of the liberal papers what they needed. Their class instinct was refined by a political criterion, and though they did not think all their ideas through to the end, nevertheless their thought ceaselessly and stubbornly worked its way in a single direction. Elements of experience, criticism, initiative, self-sacrifice, seeped down through the mass and created, invisibly to a superficial glance but no less decisively, an inner mechanics of the revolutionary movement as a conscious process.

To the smug politicians of liberalism and tamed socialism everything that happens among masses is customarily represented as an instinctive process, no matter whether they are dealing with an anthill or a beehive. In reality the thought which was drilling through the thick of the working class was far bolder, more penetrating, more conscious, than those little ideas by which the educated classes live. Moreover, this thought was more scientific: not only because it was to a considerable degree fertilized with the methods of Marxism, but still more because it was ever nourishing itself on the living experience of the masses which were soon to take their place on the revolutionary arena. Thoughts are scientific if they correspond to an objective process and make it possible to influence that process and guide it.

To the question, Who led the February revolution? we can then answer definitely enough: Conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin.

◆

In the February revolution, as we know, the worker-Bolsheviks played the decisive rôle... Although separated from these workers by



Women workers demonstrate in Petrograd, Russia, in March 1917.

two war fronts, and almost without communication, Lenin had never lost touch with them. "Let the war, jails, Siberia, hard labor, shatter them twice, ten times, you cannot destroy that stratum. It is alive. It is imbued with revolutionism and anti-chauvinism."

In his mind Lenin had been living through the events along with these worker-Bolsheviks, making with them the necessary inferences — only broader and more boldly than they. In his struggle with the indecisiveness of the staff and the broad officer layer of the party, Lenin confidently relied on its under-officer layer which better reflected the rank-and-file worker-Bolshevik.

◆

At the first congress of the soviets on June 4, [Menshevik leader] Tseretelli during his

speech remarked in passing: "In Russia at the present moment there is not one political party which would say, Give us the power in our hands." At that moment a voice was heard from the benches: "There is!"...

In a speech at that same session Lenin explained his reply from the benches: "The Citizen Minister of Posts and Telegraph (Tseretelli) said that there is no political party in Russia which would express its readiness to take upon itself the whole power. I answer there is. No party can decline to do that, and our party does not decline. It is ready at any minute to take the whole power. (Applause and laughter.) You may laugh all you want to, but if the Citizen Minister puts this question to us he will get the proper answer."

## Newly typeset 'History of Russian Revolution' available

### BY RYAN LEWIS

In a victory for all supporters of Pathfinder Press, a newly typeset printing of Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* was printed, bound, and delivered in time to mark the 82nd anniversary of that landmark in human history. A special cause for celebration is the marked improvement in the quality of the book due to the dedicated work of the volunteers organized in the effort to put all of Pathfinder's titles into digital format. (See article on page 4.)

Written by Trotsky from exile in the early 1930s, the book explains the social, economic, and political dynamics of an event that, more than any other, transformed the history of the 20th century.

Written by one of the central leaders of the first socialist revolution, *The History of the Russian Revolution* details how working people of the town and country organized to topple the tsarist regime in February 1917, and how eight months later they established a government of the toilers, brought an end to Russia's involvement in World War I, and overturned capitalism. It describes the Bolshevik party led by V.I. Lenin and why it was capable of leading this victorious struggle for power. (see excerpts above.)

The English translation of Trotsky's *History* was first published in 1932. Subsequent printings were produced by photographing the same text and laboriously stripping each page of film into flats. These flats were used to produce plates for the printing press, with a slight decline in quality each time as the film deteriorated.

Now, the text of the book has been entirely reformatted through the digitization process, with an end result of cleaner looking and more easily readable type. Most importantly, when the stock from this printing is sold out it will take considerably less labor to get printing plates back to the presses, using the computer-to-plate machine now installed in Pathfinder's printshop. Readers will also notice the improved cover from the previous edition. It has not been redesigned, but is a higher quality printing resulting from the use of the computer-to-plate technology.

At more than 1,300 pages, the production of Trotsky's *History* poses a number of challenges for the volunteer workers who staff the printshop. In order to keep the book in one volume, it has to be printed on paper too thin to be run on the sheetfed presses and folded in the bindery, which is how other Pathfinder books are produced. As in previous

### CHAPTER IV

#### THE MILITARY-REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

**I**N spite of the change of mood beginning toward the end of July, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks dominated the reorganized Petrograd garrison all through August. The

#### The Military Revolutionary Committee

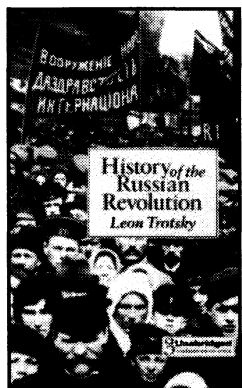
In spite of the change of mood beginning toward the end of July, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks dominated the reorganized Petrograd garrison all through August. The proletariat was disarmed; the Red Guard had kept only a few thousand rifles. In those circumstances, notwithstanding the fact that the masses were again coming over to the Bolsheviks, an insurrection might end in cruel defeat.

Above, easier-to-read text produced by Pathfinder reprint project volunteers from the pages *The History of the Russian Revolution*. Top, text from the older version of the book.

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### LEONTROTSKY

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printings, the text was produced instead on the web press, used to print the *Militant* every week.

The sheetfed presses are designed for higher quality printing than the web, so web operators paid a lot of attention to the press run to make sure the final product would meet Pathfinder's standards. Operators discussed the experience in all aspects of production of earlier printings by previous crews, which made it possible to avoid or resolve a number of problems and challenges. This in turn facilitated more efficient finishing of the book in the bindery.

Printshop worker Aaron Armstrong was assigned to organize the collation of the book before binding, a more complicated task than usual. "This is one of the most difficult Pathfinder books to produce, but the final product is beautiful; it's much easier to read. The volunteers did a wonderful job, and they insured that this book will be in print for new generations."

Peter Thierjung, the lead binder operator in the printshop, said the previous printing of *The*

*History of the Russian Revolution* was more difficult to produce. "Last time the binder was maxxed out, a number of parts broke during the run, and we had to call mechanics for suggestions on how to get the book out. This time the book is slightly thinner, which is better for the machine, and the run went very smoothly. The improved binding means a more durable book."

Thierjung set up and ran the job along with Amanda Ulman, a binder trainee, which was an important step toward her qualifying as an operator. Another trainee was part of the crew on the three-knife trimmer used to finish the book.

To celebrate the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution and the new printing of Trotsky's *History*, Pathfinder is offering the book at a special price of \$25 for members of the Pathfinder Readers Club through the end of the year.

Ryan Lewis is a member of the Young Socialists and the head operator on the web press in Pathfinder's printshop.



# Illinois governor backs trade with Cuba while attacking revolution

BY DAVID ADAMS

CHICAGO—Illinois governor George Ryan's recent trip to Cuba dominated the state's media for several days, sparking widespread discussion about Cuba and the nearly four-decade-long economic warfare by Washington against that country. Ryan, a Republican, used the trip to speak against the embargo, while attacking Cuba's revolutionary government as a dictatorship. The trip marked the first time a U.S. governor has traveled to Cuba in the 40-year history of the revolution.

Ryan's trip partly reflected the desire of some U.S. capitalists, including large grain cartels, to end the embargo against Cuba so they will not lose out to companies from other countries who can legally do business in Cuba. The trip was billed as a "humanitarian mission" in order to comply with U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba. But the desire to lay the groundwork for business contacts should the embargo be lifted was openly discussed by Ryan and other members of the delegation.

Among those on the 45-person delegation that accompanied the governor was G. Allen Andreas, chairman and chief executive officer of Decatur-based agribusiness giant Archer Daniels Midland Co. Officials from heavy equipment manufacturer Caterpillar Corp., other Illinois businesses, state politicians, and religious figures also took part. Dozens of reporters traveled with the delegation.

The goal of U.S. economic policy, which Ryan shares, is to overthrow the revolution made by Cuban workers and farmers and restore the domination of U.S. capital that existed before 1959. Pushing business contacts for Illinois corporations, Ryan chided the embargo tactic, saying, "We've tried this policy for 40 years, that hasn't worked."

## Open hostility toward Cuban revolution

Officials from the U.S. Interests Section in Havana arranged a meeting between Ryan and several opponents of the revolution in Cuba. After the meeting, Ryan told reporters, "I don't know what they told us we didn't know. But the concern is Fidel Cas-

tro. Basically that's the problem with Cuba, Fidel Castro. Forty years of heavy communist rule under Castro has left its mark, and these people know it."

## Washington not about to drop embargo

Later in the trip, Ryan distanced himself somewhat from those remarks, saying, "Those were the words that came from the dissidents."

Most Illinois politicians and newspapers came out in favor of Ryan's trip. Asked how he responded to vocal critics of the trip from some Cuban-Americans in Miami, Ryan responded, "I don't represent Miami. I represent Illinois."

The discussion on the trip reflected growing debate among Cuban-Americans on the embargo. The *Chicago Tribune* quoted Guillermo Bauta, secretary of the Illinois Cuban-American Chamber of Commerce, as saying, "The problem is not the embargo. The problem is Fidel Castro." He called the trip a "fatal error." The *Tribune* also printed a letter from Cuban-American Rafael Ravelo, who commended the Illinois governor for going to Cuba and charged that U.S. government policy toward Cuba has "hurt the Cuban people for almost 40 years."

One of those given central credit in the big-business press for convincing Ryan to make the trip to Cuba is Democratic state legislator Edgar Lopez. Lopez is infamous in the Puerto Rican community here for leading a witch-hunt against fighters for the independence of Puerto Rico.

While in Cuba, Ryan announced the creation of a Cuba-Illinois Exchange Council to promote educational, cultural, social, and sports exchanges between Cuba and Illinois. He floated the idea of the Chicago Cubs or White Sox going to Havana to play Cuba's national baseball team.

These proposals fit the framework of what U.S. officials call "track two" of their policy against Cuba. This approach consists of allowing an expansion of specific academic and cultural contacts in hopes of influencing layers within Cuban society and buying allegiance to capitalism and opposition to socialism.



Bohemia

Cuban workers pour into streets to support revolution in August 1994. During Ryan's visit, President Castro reiterated that revolutionary Cuba's policies would not change.

The editors of the *New York Times* praised Ryan's trip. "The time is ripe for changing American policy toward Cuba from isolation to democratic engagement," stated a November 2 editorial in the liberal daily. "American businesses, like American farmers, see post-Castro Cuba as a potentially lucrative market and do not want to concede it to foreign competitors."

Despite such tactical differences over the embargo by a minority within the U.S. ruling class, there is no indication of a change in the government's decades-long policy. As recently as last August an amendment to an agriculture bill that would ease restrictions on food and medical exports to Cuba, which had been adopted by the Senate, was killed in the House. Washington's economic warfare against Cuba has in fact intensified under the Clinton administration. At the same time Clinton's course has been increasingly directed against Washington's imperialist allies, who are also competitors, who trade with Cuba.

The U.S. State Department publicly criticized Ryan for his seven-hour meeting with Fidel Castro. "We prefer that there not be a lot of high level contact with Castro so long as he refuses to lift his embargo on the Cuban people," said department spokesperson James Rubin.

Speaking to the dozens of reporters covering the governor's visit, Cuban president Fidel Castro stated that the embargo "hurts the farmers of Illinois. In such times as the present, where there is depression of prices, it does not make sense really to prevent farmers from selling to Cuba." He emphasized that Cuba would not change its economic and political policies in exchange for lifting the embargo. "You cannot strangle a coun-

try economically and criticize it at the same time."

## Working people discuss Ryan's trip

Tom Smith, a veteran of many strikes against Caterpillar and a member of the United Auto Workers Local 974, commented on Ryan's trip. "Cat's business in East Peoria is sour. They have a lot of unsold inventory. I think Cat has been looking at Cuba as a market for a long time," he said. "They are interested for their own damn reasons. And Governor Ryan's relationship with working people in Illinois is not very good."

Jake Perasso, a meatpacker at Ampac, a slaughterhouse in Chicago, reports that the visit has sparked some lively discussion among some of his fellow meatpackers. "We have been discussing the governor's trip. One of my co-workers said that Fidel Castro uses his popularity to get privileges. A couple of other workers were quick to speak up about their support of the Cuban revolution, including Fidel Castro."

Although most coverage in the big-business press sought to slander the Cuban revolution, a few articles gave a glimpse of the obstacles the U.S. rulers face in their desire to roll back the Cuban revolution, whether by economic warfare or "engagement."

The *Chicago Sun-Times* ran one such article called, "Night life in communist Havana an eye-opener." It reported the observations of one befuddled businessman on the Illinois delegation. At a restaurant in Havana, the *Sun Times* said, John Glennon, president of Health Alliance, asked a waitress if the man directing the staff was the owner. She did not understand what he meant by the word, "owner," so several bartenders and waiters had a quick huddle. The waitress returned and asked, "By owner, do you mean is this his restaurant?"

"Yes," replied Glennon. She then explained, "Nobody owns anything here. The state owns everything."

Glennon remarked to the reporter, "Here's a 24- or 25-year-old lady and you think of the system she's lived in for her whole life. She has no concept of an individual owning a restaurant."

## Ryan no friend of Illinois workers

BY JOHN GEORGE

CHICAGO — In the weeks before his trip to Cuba, Illinois governor George Ryan took the lead in opposing the efforts of disabled miner Chris Ledvina and Janet Howe, cofounders of the National Coal, Mineral and Energy Museum in West Frankfort, Illinois, to establish a National Miner's Memorial as part of the museum. The memorial would be built in the area of the Orient 2 mine disaster, where 119 people died from a methane gas explosion in 1951.

On August 30 Ledvina, who gets around in a wheel chair as a result of a 1978 roof cave in, took up residence 600 feet underground in Mine 25, which is owned by the museum and is about four miles from Orient 2. His aim was to raise \$2 million as the beginning of an effort to raise \$18 million to build the memorial and support the museum. The planned memorial would honor the more than 200,000 miners who, according to Ledvina, have died on the job in mines in the United States.

Ledvina and museum employees attempted to enlist Ryan in their efforts. At first the governor's office indicated sympathy and support. Some of his aides met with Ledvina underground September 2. Based on a proposal to meet with the governor, the disabled miner suspended his stay in the mine on September 15.

At the meeting the next day, a museum press release stated, "For an hour and fif-

teen minutes the Governor and his advisors did nothing but launch baseless attacks on the Museum, the management and its operations." Ryan appointed a panel to further investigate the matter, however.

In a phone interview with the *Militant*, Ledvina said this panel concluded that "the facility was of no value to Illinois. They said it was unsafe, unsightly, and expensive."

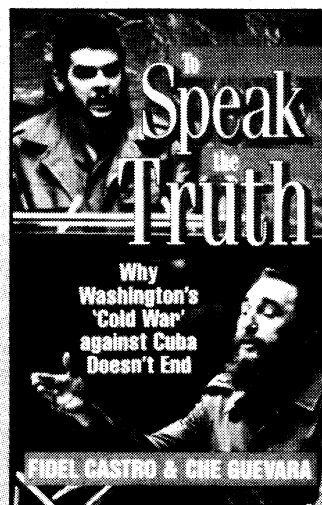
A museum press release stated, "Not only did the Governor not support us, when nearly every political friend in Illinois including race tracks, ball parks and casinos receive multimillion dollar funding packages, but the Governor chose to harm us as well. The Governor broke the back of one of our most significant fund-raising campaigns."

The museum defenders refute all of the allegations made by Ryan's investigators. They note that the Museum has attracted 70,000 visitors from all 50 states and 44 foreign countries. In response to a slanderous report spread by the governor's press secretary that 10 people were recently trapped inside Mine 25, they pointed out that all 10 have denied the allegation and have made themselves available for interviews. Ledvina said that since the beginning of this year the museum has been faced with numerous investigations by state and federal agencies.

The final rejection of state support for the miners museum and memorial came the day

before Ryan left for Cuba. When the *Militant* asked Ledvina about the governor's ostensibly humanitarian visit he responded, "I don't think Ryan has a humanitarian bone in his body."

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# California strikers call for rally, stand up to violence-baiting

BY LARRY LANE  
AND ELLEN BERMAN

KING CITY, California — After four months on the picket line against Basic Vegetable Products, striking members of Teamsters Local 890 are standing strong. They are doing this in spite of increased harassment by the company and the cops. More recently, they have been the target of a local media campaign of strike violence-baiting.

Approximately 750 workers went on strike on July 7 against this major producer of onion and garlic powder when the bosses demanded a three-year wage freeze, the right to contract out jobs, and a reduction of the work week to 37.5 hours for half of the workforce. In addition to all of the previous demands, Basic is now asking for new rules making it easier for supervisors to do bargaining-unit work, a two-tier wage scale, an increase in copayment for health insurance, an elimination of the existing pension plan in exchange for a 401K plan at one-third the company contribution level, and a \$20 monthly fee from every worker until the company is able to "recoup strike-related losses."

Basic Vegetable is the largest employer in this town, located south of San Francisco in the heart of the Salinas Valley. The company has fired the strikers and permanently replaced them with about 300 scabs. About 29 union members have crossed the picket line in

cent weeks. Basic has accused the strikers of more than 160 incidents of vandalism and violence, and the local media has given extensive coverage to these claims. The company has offered a \$10,000 reward for "information leading to the arrest and conviction of those engaging in or directing the violence."

## Strikers face attacks

But the strikers have another story to tell. On August 18 eight strikers were attacked by a group of about 30 strikebreakers in Avenal, where the Teamster members were peacefully passing out leaflets to discourage replacement workers from accepting jobs as strikebreakers. Locally, several strikers report being followed and threatened by scabs.

Hallie Cox, a 25-year electrical crew lead at the plant, related how he was arrested by the King City Police on charges of rock throwing to "create great bodily harm." He was held on \$12,500 bail which was later reduced to \$6,000 on condition that he stay away from the picket lines and company property. Interviewed at the strike headquarters where he was cooking chicken for the pickets, Cox said he is fighting this restriction in court because it "has taken away my First Amendment rights."

Frank Gallegos, the union president, told the King City *Rustler* that the violence has been directed against strikers by replacement



Militant/Ova Aspoy

Locked-out steelworkers of Kaiser Aluminum join Teamsters Local 890 picket line in front of Basic Vegetable Company on Labor Day, September 6.

workers. He added, "But the worst violence is what the company is trying to do to our jobs and our families, and to this whole community."

The strikers in Local 890 have mapped out a campaign of fighting back against the company offensive of replacement workers, violence-baiting, firings and frame-ups.

Workers and union officials have visited other Basic Vegetable plants in Washington State, Idaho, and Oregon, as well as Modesto, California, to talk to fellow workers about the strike.

On October 25 the strikers met with the San Francisco County Central Labor Council to solicit support for a Solidarity Demonstration

to be held November 4 at Basic Vegetable's offices in San Francisco's financial district. The noontime demonstration will seek to inform San Francisco Bay area workers about the strike, which has been largely ignored in the Bay area media.

Local 890 has called a march for November 14 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Fairgrounds in King City, 101 Canal Street. The California Labor Federation (AFL-CIO) has put out a call to all county labor federations, asking for two specific things: financial contributions and participation in the march and rally on November 14. A similar march and rally of 4,000 took place in August at the same

Continued on Page 14

## Big Three contracts chip away at union strength

BY JEAN LUC DUVAL  
AND WILLIE REID

DETROIT—Agreements on wages and benefits between the United Auto Workers Union (UAW) and the Big Three—Ford Motor Co., General Motors Corp., and Daimler-Chrysler (DMX)—have now been adopted. The contracts guarantee the U.S. auto bosses can drive ahead on consolidating the industry and continue the superprofits from record-breaking production and booming sales.

An article in *Business Week* describes the settlements as "a clear case of highway robbery [of the auto companies].... But nobody blinked an eye, not even the Big Three shareholders or inflation-wary Wall Street economists."

Delphi, a parts spin-off from GM, avoided a duplication of the 1998 confrontation in Flint, Michigan, between with the union and GM, by signing a separate contract that matches GM's wage and benefits scale for eight years. GM will guarantee their health and pension benefits for these eight years.

The settlements negotiated, however, further weaken the union. These contracts have a four-year duration instead of three years, the tradition for decades. And, in spite of the numerous strikes recently—from Flint to Dayton, Ohio—over job conditions, the current settlements do nothing to shift this vital issue into the national agreements.

Their omission as a national issue reinforces the employers' ability to whipsaw workers—to pit UAW locals against each other and, even more so, against their counterparts in Canada. Members of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) have just adopted three-year contracts. Auto workers in the United States and Canada will face the auto giants at different times, weakening the potential for international solidarity.

The contracts come at a time when workers know the auto bosses are making superprofits and when working people's increasing resistance and growing solidarity are winning gains in other industries.

*Business Week* notes, "While Detroit might appear to be a holdup victim, in fact, the UAW's winnings—of 3% annual pay hikes—are less than the 4% that union workers won at Boeing, AT&T and elsewhere."

The so-called new job-security provision in this year's contracts does not prevent the auto barons from continuing to cut their workforce through attrition. GM can drop as many as 30,000 workers. "If jobs are lost because of market-driven reductions in sales volumes, the new-hire obligations don't

apply," the article in *Business Week* stated.

With their eyes on the global market, U.S. auto barons will seek to match the productivity efficiency of some competitors, like Toyota, Honda, and Nissan, while driving production to dominate markets in Europe and South America. Auto workers can expect the speedup, overloading jobs, and overtime to continue and worsen.

In the settlement with DMX, UAW officials won the company's agreement to remain "neutral" in the union's efforts to organize workers at the nonunion Mercedes plant in Alabama.

The front page of the October 29 issue of the union-busting *Detroit News* reports that "even though the company agreed to remain 'neutral,' Daimler-Chrysler AG has increased the wages and benefits for workers at the Alabama plant that allow them to keep up with the economic gains negotiated by the UAW."

Negotiations between the UAW and Ford, which is having its most profitable year in history, gave the best expression of the pressure from the ranks.

The auto giant announced plans to follow GM's lead and divest its Visteon parts division. Many workers saw this move as an attempt by the Ford bosses to close more plants and slash the wages of some 23,500 people employed in the parts plants, continuing the trend in the industry to widen

the gap in wages and working conditions between parts and assembly workers.

The UAW officialdom set a strike deadline against Ford for 11:59 p.m. October 8, the first national walkout the company has faced since 1976. But the deadline was extended by the officialdom minute by minute for 13.5 hours.

Even then, some workers tried to put their stamp on the outcome. Workers shut down the Auto Alliance plant in Flat Rock, Michigan; the Explorer assembly plant in St. Louis; a truck assembly plant in Kansas City; and a small pickup truck assembly plant in St. Paul, Minnesota.

At other Ford plants, smaller numbers of workers left the shop, affecting operations without completely stopping production. At the Michigan Truck Plant, just outside Detroit, scores of UAW Local 900 members showed up before the expiration to help set up picket lines if a strike was called.

The extension became a point of discussion and anger. Dana Docusen, a metal finisher with five and half years seniority, expressed the opinion. "The union shouldn't have set a deadline if we can't walk out. It makes us look weak." He added, "There was a sense of pride and solidarity in the plant and now its like we told the schoolyard bully to meet us at the flag pole and then we don't show up."

In New Jersey at Ford's Edison Assembly

Plant workers expressed widely differing opinions about the threatened strike. Gus Angelo, a 28-year Ford employee on the Final Line, argued that strike action was called for because, "It is important to protect the Visteon people. It's not just the 23,000 workers it's their families, too." In contrast, Lilian Holt a body shop worker with 24 years at the company, said, "I hope we don't strike, I have bills to pay."

All three contracts with their four-year duration include a 3 percent wage increase each year, a \$1,350 signing bonus, new Christmas bonuses for DMX workers, and increases in the pension benefits for all retirees. The two-tier wage scale for new hires is unchanged.

Most UAW locals have adopted the national agreement. But local agreements, most of which are still to be negotiated, can generate some resistance. Workers in UAW Local 980, Edison, New Jersey, passed their local agreement by about 61 percent after a long discussion both contracts. At the GM metal stamping plant in Parma, Ohio, workers expressed little interest in the national contract, but have voted down a local proposal twice.

Jean Luc Duval and Willie Reid are members of UAW Local 235. UAW members John Sarge, Susan Anmuth, and Brad Downs contributed to this article.

## Meatpackers walk out at New York shop

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG

BRONX, New York — Twenty-three meatpacking workers downed their knives at Plaut & Stern early in the morning of October 29. They walked out to demand a union contract nearly six months after the company refused to sign the agreement that covers almost all the other shops organized by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 174 at the Hunts Point Meat Co-op Market.

A strike vote by the workers the previous day was unanimous, according to UFCW Local 174 business agent Frank Kissel.

Plaut & Stern has also kept 11 of the 24 hourly workers there from joining the union, strikers say, some for as long as three years. Workers at the plant come from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Poland, Germany, and Yugoslavia. All but one of these

workers joined the action, setting up a spirited picket line outside the gate of the giant market, where about 1,000 workers cut and process much of the meat sold in the New York area.

Workers at most of the Hunts Point shops are organized by UFCW Local 174, some by the Teamsters, and others are nonunion. At Plaut & Stern, workers cut and bone beef quarters, mostly for provision houses in the metropolitan area.

Word of the strike immediately spread to other shops in the market. The strike became a big discussion among the 50 UFCW members at B. Rosen & Sons, Inc., located next door to Plaut & Stern. About half of the Rosen workers joined the picket line for at least part of their lunch break, as did about 10 workers at Hanau Meat Company, Inc., another UFCW-organized plant in the market.

"This is an example for all the meat co-op

workers, all [Local] 174 members, 'cause if they can do this to us, your boss can do it to you," Alberto Medina told the assembled crowd. Medina recently became the shop steward at Plaut & Stern. Meanwhile, trucks entering and leaving the market and carloads of workers ending early shifts honked their horns or stopped to express solidarity.

One of the Rosen workers, Marvin Ramirez, summed up the spirit of solidarity at the action. "We came out here to support and give a hand to our people, to be together," he stated.

Strikers continued their job action Monday, November 1, joined again by workers from Hanau, Rosen, and elsewhere in the market, amidst verified reports that the company had hired two nonunion butchers for production beginning that day.

Mitchel Rosenberg is a member of UFCW Local 174 at B. Rosen.

# Plane crash spotlights disregard for safety

## Some news reports seek to implicate Boeing workers, or 'Muslim terrorists'

Continued from front page

cluding one large section of the aircraft and personal items of passengers. Among these items are "none with burn marks that might have suggested an explosion," according to the *New York Times*.

Despite those findings, the *Washington Post* reported November 2 that "NTSB [National Transportation Safety Board] chairman Jim Hall said today that nothing has been ruled out as a possible cause of the crash, and the FBI is continuing to review lists of passengers, maintenance crews, and others who had contact with the aircraft. The bureau also is bringing lab and bomb technicians" to be part of the investigation.

FBI agents have questioned numerous airport workers, from customer service agents, baggage handlers, and skycaps to mechanics, cleaners, and food handlers in Newark, Los Angeles, Boston, and New York — every airport the plane had been to since its arrival from Cairo.

The federal government agencies involved in the investigation of the 1996 crash of Trans World Airlines Flight 800, in which 230 people lost their lives, came under heavy criticism as the investigation into that crash dragged on. The FBI, NTSB, and the Clinton administration, together with the owners of TWA presented and acted on the sole theory that the crash was the result of a terrorist bombing or missile attack.

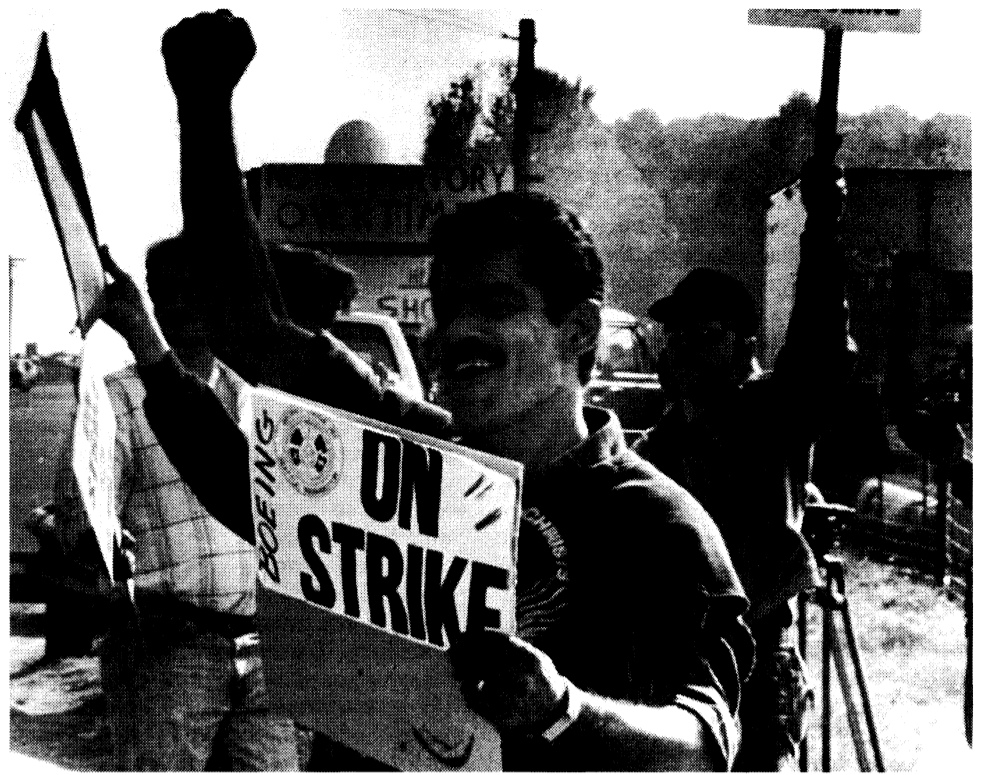
Despite the fact that not a single shred of evidence for this was found in the more than 95 percent of the aircraft recovered, the Clinton administration and Congress used the crash to push through draconian "anti-terrorism" legislation, and to institute new "security" measures that further infringe on the rights of working people. These targeted airport workers and passengers from spe-

cific countries, especially in the Middle East and certain Latin American countries, including Cuba, for particular suspicion and assaults on their rights to privacy.

Evidence that the explosion was precipitated by problems in the design of the Boeing 747's center fuel tank was available from the beginning, but it was only in November of 1997 that the FBI announced that the crash of TWA Flight 800 was due to mechanical failure.

Just one day prior to the EgyptAir crash, news broke that Boeing had done a study on similar problems with the fuel tanks on one of its military jumbo jets — similar in design to the 747 — 16 years prior to the TWA crash. The company, however, did not make the report available to the NTSB until June 1999. Despite efforts by federal officials to minimize the impact of this report and their acceptance of the claim by Boeing officials that they did not intentionally hide the study from federal agencies investigating the TWA crash, the spotlight is once again on the safety of Boeing's aircraft.

A 1991 crash of a Boeing 767 similar to the EgyptAir plane has been highlighted in the course of the initial investigation into the latest disaster. It was determined that the Thai airline crash, which killed 223 people, resulted from mechanical malfunction of the thrust reverser in flight that caused the aircraft to go into a catastrophic dive. Thrust reversers are used to slow down aircraft on landing, but if deployed in flight, send an aircraft into a tailspin. Three years after the Thailand crash, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ordered a series of major thrust-reverser repairs on all U.S.-registered 767s. While EgyptAir and other foreign carriers are not obliged to strictly abide by U.S. regulations, the November 2 *Washington*



Militant/Eric Simpson

**Boeing machinists during 1989 strike over mandatory overtime. Antiunion reports have sought to blame aerospace workers for 767 crash. Meanwhile news reports revealed Boeing did not provide information on problems with 747 fuel tanks to investigators of TWA crash.**

*Post* reported that the EgyptAir aircraft did make the modifications in 1993.

The *New York Post* and some other big-business media sources have struck an anti-labor note in their coverage of the EgyptAir disaster. Reporting the day after the crash, *New York Post* staff writer Bill Sanderson pointed out that the 767 Egyptian airliner was built by Boeing machinists only two weeks prior to the Thai 767 that crashed in

1991. In a barely veiled attempt to blame the workers who built the plane, along with the union that organizes them, for the crash, Sanderson's article was headlined, "Jetliner built during a time of labor strife."

The two Boeing 767s were built "during one of the most turbulent times in the company's history," he wrote. The article goes on to note that the International Association of Machinists (IAM) were preparing to go out on strike, and did so on Oct. 4, 1989. Sanderson stated, "In addition to the money, a major issue in the 48-day strike was the heavy amount of overtime required of production workers, many of whom complained of being too tired to do their jobs properly." Some television reports have raised similar innuendo.

To be sure all possible bases were covered to take advantage of the crash to go after democratic rights, the *New York Post* ran another article in the same issue by Sanderson and Niles Lathem positing that only an explosion, and probably a bomb, could have caused the catastrophic destruction at that altitude that Flight 990 crashed. The piece quoted Mary Schiavo, an ex-inspector of the U.S. Department of Transportation, for authority.

It was accompanied by a side bar by Lathem entitled, "Some of the Usual Suspects," which listed "terrorist groups" and individuals who might have a "possible motive for a jetliner attack targeting Egypt and the United States." All of those listed were Muslim or of Middle Eastern origin.

*Olga Rodriguez is a member of the IAM.*

## Indiana foundry workers wage strike for safety, pay, and seniority rights

BY HARVEY MCARTHUR AND BILL SCHMITT

AUBURN, Indiana — An important labor fight is unfolding in northeastern Indiana as workers at the two Auburn Foundry plants here continue a six-month-long strike against bosses' attacks on workers safety, wages, and seniority rights.

The 675 workers, members of Local 322 of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union (GMP), walked out when the previous contract expired May 3. Auburn Foundry bosses immediately moved to bring in strikebreakers to try to keep production going.

Several strikers pointed to divide-and-rule tactics the bosses have been using in attempts to break the strike. Mechanic Harvey Thompson explained that the company proposed a sizable wage increase for maintenance mechanics, but virtually none for laborers, grinders, and other production workers. The employers have gone to the Black community in nearby Fort Wayne, Indiana, to hire many of its strikebreakers; few Blacks

worked at Auburn before the walkout. Strikers also pointed out that women are now being hired as scabs, whereas almost none worked here before. In addition, more than 100 of the original strikers have crossed the picket lines and returned to work.

GMP corresponding representative Dan Irvin said union negotiators have recently reached tentative agreement with the company on most issues. The bosses, however, now say they will take back only 75 of the strikers, and fewer than that if the union does not sign an agreement immediately.

Auburn Foundry is a major producer of gray-iron castings for General Motors and other auto companies, as well as appliance and pump manufacturers. Faced with the worldwide economic crisis and cut-throat competition in auto sales, these companies have been squeezing their suppliers, trying to drive down costs. Auburn bosses in turn are trying to force the workers bear to bear the brunt of this increased competition through speedup and wage and benefit cuts.

"Three years ago, we settled a contract with a \$2 wage increase over three years," said Irvin. "This time they offered no raise the first year, and only 15 cents each of the following two years." In addition, Auburn demanded 90 other contract concessions from the workers, including eliminating cost-of-living adjustments, gutting seniority rights in job assignments, and cuts in benefits, he said.

"A foundry is a hard and dangerous place to work in," noted Curtis Terry, a scale operator with 14 years at Auburn. "There are jobs for 20-year-olds and jobs for 40-year-olds. By gutting seniority they mean to push out a lot of the older guys."

The company also wants to outsource more work, such as grinding castings, to nearby nonunion foundries that pay as little as \$7 an hour, Terry said. Auburn Foundry production workers averaged around \$15.50 per hour at the time of the strike.

Paul Houlton, an electrician with 15 years in the plant, said the bosses want to be able to impose mandatory 12-hour weekend shifts on maintenance workers on top of their regular work week. They are also demanding a stricter attendance policy, including the right to fire workers for minor inju-

ries such as cuts or burns, he added.

"Safety is really the biggest issue," said Thompson. "Right now they cut corners to push production out. They don't take the time to adequately clean ladles between pours and they use inferior pipe scrap in the furnaces, which leads to dangerous blow-outs of molten metal on the shop floor."

"We used to be able to say no to unsafe situations," noted Terry. "But now the bosses want more control. We have filed more than 400 grievances over the past three years. We want the contract to say the company has to fix problems within a specific deadline, but they refused."

A strikebreaker mechanic was crushed to death in a mold machine October 13, underscoring the importance of workers' safety demands. "We feel sorry for the guy, even though he was a scab," said Terry. "They put him to work without experience and without properly locking out the machine."

GMP strikers have organized several marches and won support from other unionists, including locals of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and United Auto Workers at the nearby Cooper Tire and Eaton Industries plants and the big GM coach and truck plant in Fort Wayne. A June 20 strike support march of 300 people included members of 30 other unions.

"The steelworkers and auto workers have really been great," said Larry Chapman, a forklift operator who was picketing the gate to plant no. 2. "They've raised money, held raffles, and joined marches. I don't know how we would have held out this long without them." He said another encouraging local development was that workers at the RAMCO aluminum plant had just voted to join the USWA, with a 72 percent majority.

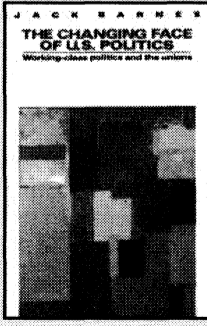
Chapman was one of a group of GMP strikers who went to Mansfield, Ohio, recently to join rallies with locked-out workers at Armco Steel. "We learned a lot from them, about how to run our food kitchen, strike headquarters, and other things," he said. "It was a great experience."

*Harvey McArthur is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100 in Chicago. Bill Schmitt is a member of the Young Socialists in Detroit.*

*from Pathfinder*

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Thurs., November 14,  
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
**March and Demonstration to support Teamsters on Strike against Basic Vegetable**  
King City Park at the fairground. Exit at Canal St. From Highway 101.  
For more information contact Teamster Local 890 (831) 424-5743, (831) 385-4580 or at [www.temasters890.org](http://www.temasters890.org)

Sat., November 20  
**Mass mobilization and rally**  
In support of the locked out workers at Armco (now AK Steel). Sponsored by United Steel Workers Local 169 in Mansfield, Ohio.

# Teamsters strike against Overnite expands

**Continued from front page**  
dropped by at least 25 percent, and Overnite has closed barns in Little Rock, Arkansas; Milwaukee; New Orleans; Laredo, Texas; and Rockford, Illinois. Many other terminals are operating at minimal capacity, according to the Teamsters.

Overnite is the sixth-largest trucking company in the country, and the largest that runs nonunion, with 8,200 drivers and loading dock workers at 165 terminals in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Workers have been waging an organizing campaign for years at the company, which is now a subsidiary of the rail giant Union Pacific Corp. A majority of workers have voted to join the Teamsters at terminals representing 45 percent of the workforce.

## Bosses wage campaign against union

Overnite bosses have bitterly resisted workers' efforts to win union contracts, and have 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 has won several National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) rulings ordering the employers 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 terminals to block union organizing drives, and carried out harassment, discrimination, and surveillance against workers backing the union.

The day after the strike began, Dale Watson, who was recently fired as trucking operations manager in Overnite's Memphis terminal, confirmed many union charges against the company. Watson reported that the company's antiunion campaign included a "hit list" of union supporters to harass and intimidate, and that he had followed orders from above to help fire 40 pro-union workers since 1995.

Freedom from this kind of abuse, favoritism, and lack of security on the job is at the heart of the Teamsters' strike to win a union contract. Richard Merritt in Atlanta, who has worked for Overnite 22 years, put it this way: "You can't just give dictatorial power to the boss, which is what having no union means."

"The organizing drive was tough," said Greg Cagle, a shop steward for drivers in Teamsters Local 120 on strike at Overnite's Minneapolis terminal. Workers there voted to join the Teamsters in 1994. Leading up to the vote, "Overnite managers came in from out of town and carried out a pressure campaign," Cagle said. "They rode with us, promised us overtime pay and lots more if we kept the union out. They said they'd close down the terminal if we voted in the union." According to Cagle, 12 of the 55 local members crossed the picket line when the strike started, but four have been convinced to come back out and more are considering it.

On weekdays strikers in Minneapolis follow the scab trucks and picket them when they try to make deliveries at food warehouses where Teamsters and other unionists work. At two such warehouses, workers have refused to handle the strikebreakers' trucks.

## Solidarity rally in Atlanta

Workers from more than a dozen union locals in Atlanta attended an October 28 solidarity rally sponsored by the Atlanta Labor Council and Jobs With Justice. Among the 250 people there were members of the United Auto Workers; Association of Flight Attendants; the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE);

United Food and Commercial Workers; Service Employees International Union; Communication Workers of America; and several building trades unions. Union drivers from UPS, Roadway, Consolidated Freight, and USF Holland turned out.

Strikers like David Dalton, who also works on the dock at USF Holland, came out to the rally because "this strike is about the state of the labor movement today. If Overnite beats the Teamsters back then other companies will use the same strategy and try to do the same thing," Dalton said. "We're not going to let that happen. This strike will be the measuring stick."

Seven members of UNITE from the Marshalls Distribution Center in Decatur, Georgia, joined the rally. Posters were put up in the plant and distributed by strike supporters, and union members got the rally flyer translated so that workers from Bosnia and Somalia could read it. Fred Flemister, a receiving dock worker with two years at the plant who joined the solidarity rally, said, "When you're rallying for other unions, the flyer should be translated into as many languages as possible." Looking ahead to next May when the union contract expires at Marshalls, Flemister added, "We're doing this for our future. We might be in the same situation and need their support."

Workers joined the strike and the solidarity rally for a number of reasons. There were veterans of campaigning for the union at Overnite like Eddie Dunn, who recalled union representation elections as far back as 1979. Dunn spoke for many when he said, "The big issue isn't money, but job security and having a say-so in the workplace." He also pointed to a rotten pension plan as a sticking point for workers. A driver who retired recently with 28 years on the road only got a \$600 monthly pension. Pension benefits are based on workers' income from their last five years on the job. "So many older guys take the higher-paying over-the-road jobs," said Dunn, "but they shouldn't have to put in this time," taking the harder jobs just for a little more pension money.

Eloy Hernández was harassed and fired by Overnite's Atlanta bosses in September of this year. With only a couple of months on the job as an in-town driver at the time, Hernández joined a July 1999 walkout called by the Teamsters and walked the picket line "because I'm just for what's right," he said. Hernández, who came here from Cuba 18 years ago, said he later complained to the company about people getting bids out of seniority and other favoritism. After being screamed at by a foreman he was fired for "insubordination."

"They call you names, sometimes they call you a communist, but I don't care," Hernández concluded. "I'm on the picket line today."

## 'It's time to stand together'

Two rank-and-file strikers addressed the Atlanta rally, in addition to Democratic Party politicians and speakers representing several unions. Joe Reeves introduced himself saying, "I'm a second generation Overnite driver," and described what sparked the organizing drive in Atlanta. In 1994 the bosses in Atlanta announced that workers with as much as 15 years seniority on the loading dock would be changed to part-timers, said Reeves. For these workers "pay was cut from \$14 to \$10 per hour, and benefits were reduced. Then when I started speaking against this, the terminal manager called me 'stupid' for complaining. That's when we started signing people up on the union cards." Reeves, who has 27 years at Overnite, concluded, "It's time to stop bowing our heads, and to stand together."

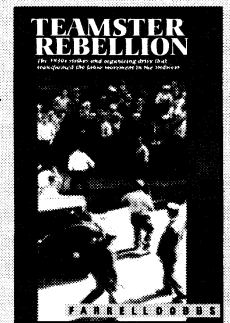
In the early evening here a number of Overnite trucks drive into and out of the terminal gates. Strikers explain that both during the July strike and today, the company has shifted many workers from the Charlotte, North Carolina, facility to Atlanta, trying to keep the operation going and to demoralize and intimidate strikers. Several times during the October 28 Atlanta rally there were exchanges between strikers and those who crossed the picket line and were walking in the terminal door. Trying to win over the line-crossers, one striker kept repeating "Don't cross our picket line. Join us. Here's where

the power is." Striking Teamster Ken Graves said some workers walked out after having gone into work the first couple of days of the strike, and pointed to one who had joined the rally that day.

Many strikers referred to the importance of this fight for the whole labor movement, a sentiment that is reinforced by the consistent presence of other unionists on the picket line. Ken Graves concluded that since the week-long strike last July, "more and more people stay out each time. This is not just Overnite. It's for truck drivers and working people everywhere."

Mike Italie is a member of UNITE Local 1997. Arlene Rubinstein in Atlanta, Alyson Kennedy and Shelton McCrae in St. Louis, and Maggie Trowe in Minneapolis contributed to this article.

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## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Washington's 50-Year Cover-up of Its Crimes in Korea.** Speaker: Chan Kim, Korean student at Wayne State University; Willie Reid, Socialist Workers Party and member of the United Auto Workers. Fri., Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. 7414 Woodward Ave. (one block north of Grand Blvd.). Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

### TEXAS

#### Houston

**What Workers and Peasants Won in the Russian Revolution.** Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. **Trade Pacts, "Free Trade," and Protectionism — Tools for Enforcing Domination of U.S. Big Business.** Fri., Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. Both events to be held at 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 847-0704.

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## CALENDAR

### MISSOURI

#### St. Louis

**The Potential of Working People to Change Society.** A benefit for the Pathfinder Fund. Speakers: Elizabeth Stone, airline worker, member of the International Association of Machinists; Martin Dunne, tire builder, member of the United Steelworkers of America; representative of the Young Socialists. Sun., Nov. 14, 1 p.m. Lunch 12 p.m. Donation: program \$4, meal \$6. Salad Bowl Cafeteria, 3949 Lindell. Tel: (314) 924-2500.

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**A Young Socialists/Communist League Class Series on Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium.** Class held every Sunday at 11 a.m. Pathfinder Bookstore, 851 Bloor St. W. For more information, call (416) 588-4324.

# U.S. rulers can't restore capitalism in China without battle

The following selection on the changes taking place in China today and the living effects of the 1949 Chinese revolution is taken from "So far from God, so close to Orange County: The deflationary drag of finance capital." It was presented at a regional socialist educational conference in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 New Year's weekend, and later adopted by the delegates to the Socialist Workers Party national convention in July 1995. The entire speech ap-

## from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

pears in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY JACK BARNES

In China the rapid and massive transformation of the toiling classes that is under way right now dwarfs anything that has happened since the early days of the industrial revolution in Europe. The Stalinist apparatus of the parasitic caste in China cannot and will not escape the fate of those from Belgrade and Budapest to Berlin and Moscow. But the pace and forms of such a crisis in China can be expected to be different, for reasons related to this historic transformation.

In the Soviet Union, the Stalinist regime exhausted its potential several decades ago to accelerate economic growth and raise labor productivity by opening up new lands to cultivation and drawing peasants in large numbers out of the countryside into mining, oil extraction, and industrial production. A similar pattern holds true for the deformed and degenerated workers states of Eastern Europe, despite their varying histories and class structures. Only in Albania is more than 50 percent of the labor force engaged in agriculture. Elsewhere the percentage is less than a third of the labor force, usually far less.

In China, on the other hand, nearly three-quarters of the population still live in the countryside, and more than 90 percent did so as recently as the opening of the 1980s. So it is still possible in China to draw toilers off the land into the cities and industry on a large scale, raising the productivity of labor in this way.

Central to the industrialization of every modern nation is a transformation of relations between town and country, such that labor power is pulled into the factories. Capitalism has a very brutal way of doing this. Peasants' land is taken away from them. Their fields are fenced in and turned into grazing lands for herds of cattle and flocks of sheep owned by capitalist farmers. They lose traditional rights to the use of common lands, to forage for firewood, to hunt and fish. This process is accelerating in parts of Mexico today and lies behind the Chiapas resistance, for example.

Marx provides a good summary of how this happened in Britain, in the closing part of volume 1 of *Capital*. He chose chapter titles like "The expropriation of the agricultural population from the land," "Bloody legislation against the expropriated," "The genesis of the capitalist farmer," and "The genesis of the industrial capitalist."

### The Chinese revolution of 1949

But doesn't China's class structure, then, make it much more like many other countries in the Third World, which also have huge reserve armies of labor in the countryside? The answer is no. That would be to ignore the central fact of history and the class struggle in China in this century: the revolution of 1949.

Coming out of World War II, China — above every country in the world — had been the apple of the eye of U.S. imperialism. In the wake of the Chinese revolution, an incipient fascist movement in the United States, spearheaded by Senator Joseph McCarthy and then-U.S. congressman Richard Nixon, began agitating around the question: "Who lost China?"

But it was the wrong question. No one lost China. The Chinese *took* it — that was the real answer.

Through the Chinese revolution, the workers and peasants eliminated imperialist pillage and expropriated the emerging capitalist class in both agriculture and industry. These conquests made possible China's centralization as a modern nation, with a massive network of production and distribution that operates to a significant degree on a national scale. This is true despite all the distortions from forced collectivization of agriculture and Stalinist methods of economic planning and management of industry.

India is similar to China in many ways — not the least in its size, some 900 million people compared to China's 1.2 billion. More than 70 percent of the population of India lives in rural areas. Both countries experienced centuries of colonial domination and superexploitation (even if China maintained its formal independence through most of that period).

But India never had a socialist revolution. And that is a big difference. There will undoubtedly be a large expansion of both imperialist and domestic capital in India over the coming decade. But the capitalists will confront the fact that India has still never truly been formed as a modern, centralized nation-state with a unified national market. Commodities sell at completely different prices from one region of the country to the next. Products are taxed as they are transported internally across state borders, as they were prior to the bourgeois revolutions in France, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. India is still saddled with this legacy of precapitalist society and colonial exploitation that in China has been largely overcome through a massive workers and peasants revolution.

The manifestations of this class difference between China and India are tangible and dramatic. To this day, life expectancy in China is about ten years longer than in India; infant mortality is a third lower than in India; and the illiteracy rate in India is twice that in China.<sup>1</sup>

### Massive migration to the cities

That is the framework in which to look at the gigantic migration from the countryside to the cities that is unfolding in China. As the regime has reorganized agricultural production over the past fifteen years, dismantling the giant collective farms forcibly imposed on peasants during the revolution's first decade, tens of millions of rural toilers are being pushed off the land year in and year out.

A friend from Minnesota recently sent me an article that first appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* and then in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. It reports that the percentage of China's population living in rural areas has declined by 20 percent just in the past fifteen years — that is, a shift of some 200 million people. Almost as large as the entire population of the United States!

Some 80 million of these former peasants, the article says, have migrated to big cities, especially along the coast, where many live in wretched conditions. In search of a livelihood, millions of toilers from the countryside in China continue to head toward the cities, to head toward the small towns, to head toward the factories and manufacturing establishments large and small.<sup>2</sup> What is happening to them is comparable in many ways to what happened to those pushed off the land in England several hundred years ago, described by Marx.

Because of the Stalinist "population policies" imposed in China, working people there are required to carry ID cards and are supposed to seek permission before moving. As a result, the article reports that many of the rural toilers who have migrated to urban areas are denied legal residence in the cities and thus are not able to send their children to school or to use public health facilities. (These reactionary population measures also include forced sterilization and abortions, as well as economic and other penalties against families with more than one child.)

Horrible living and working conditions are being created in the swelling proletarian neighborhoods and in both the huge state-owned enterprises and rapidly expanding capitalist-owned factories in China today. Workers face



Peasants in Shanghai, China, burn deeds of former landlords, 1951 during land reform. Through revolutionary struggle toilers eliminated imperialist pillage and expropriated capitalist property in agriculture and industry.

low wages, extremely long hours, and often appalling health and safety conditions.

Because of the socialist revolution, however, workers and peasants in China have a different view of themselves, of what they are capable of, and of their social rights earned as part of the working class. Toilers in China have a different attitude toward their right to land; their right to a job; their right to a certain level of education and health care; their right to a place to live at a payable rent; their right to jobless benefits and a retirement pension.

### Giant struggles are coming

This is what the imperialists confront in attempting to restore the dominance of capitalist social relations. This is not the China whose land, resources, and cheap labor the U.S. rulers lusted for coming out of their victory over Japan at the end of World War II. The U.S., Japanese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and other capitalists setting up shop in China today — as well as the expanding capitalist layers and wannabe capitalists within China's dominant social caste — are already meeting resistance from workers and peasants. As these class battles develop, we will see in practice why the socialist revolution in China and the fact that a workers state still exists — no matter how horribly deformed — remains the key to politics there.

Clashes are also bound to sharpen *inside* the Stalinist bureaucracy in China, which

still dominates the country to a greater degree than in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, where these apparatuses have shattered since 1990. Big sections of the bureaucratic caste in China, including in the armed forces officer corps, are determined to maintain centralization and control over the departments and state enterprises from which they derive their power and privileges. This brings them into conflict not only with workers in these enterprises, but also with other sections of the bureaucracy trying to open up China more to capitalist relations and foreign investment.

Giant struggles are coming in China. And given the massive urban migrations, the coming history of the countryside there will be settled more than ever by what happens in the cities, not vice versa.

For communists, it will be a great pleasure to be part of the changes that hundreds of millions of Chinese workers on the march will bring to the world working-class movement.

<sup>1</sup> In a November 1995 commentary on China and India, three economists for Wall Street's Merrill Lynch investment house wrote that "during the past quarter-century, China's economy has grown considerably faster than India's, on average — roughly 8% a year vs. 4.5%. . . . Internally, China has built a more extensive infrastructure than India [and] has a healthier and better-educated workforce than India."

<sup>2</sup> The estimated number of migrants reached 100 million by late 1998.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

November 15, 1974

BARRACKVILLE, W.Va. — "We've been down too long — we need to move up." That's how Jack Van Pelt, a roof bolter at Bethlehem Steel's Barrackville mine, explains the determination of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) to strike if necessary to win a decent new contract.

While a team of *Militant* reporters was interviewing miners here in West Virginia, contract talks between the UMWA and the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association (BCOA) in Washington, D.C. were slowly grinding to a halt. Now that a nationwide strike appears inevitable on or before Nov. 12, when the old contract runs out, the coal operators and the government have begun cranking out their lies and distortions in the hopes of turning public opinion against the miners' demands.

The UMWA demand for more safety will cut into "productivity," they complain; higher wages and a cost-of-living clause will cause more inflation, they argue; the coal companies are "too poor" to afford better fringe benefits, they moan.

Many miners don't even have to read the newspapers to know that the companies are raking profits in the meantime. Daniel Sears, for example, buys his heating coal from Bethlehem at cost. "Our wages haven't gone up for a year now," he said. "But the coal cost me \$7.60 a ton last year; then they raised it to \$10.25 the first of April; then they raised it to \$14.25 this fall; then they raised it to \$18.75 last week."

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

November 14, 1949

The people of Harlem are ready to fight actively against police brutality whenever they get a chance. They showed this once again on Nov. 3, when the police broke up a parade for Benjamin Davis, the Stalinist candidate for City Council, a few hours after he was released from jail on bail.

Participants in an outdoor Davis election rally at 110th St. and Lenox Ave., learning that Davis himself would speak at a meeting at 125th St. and 7th Ave., started marching north behind three sound trucks. When the procession reached 114th St. and Lenox Ave., it was stopped by radio cars and cops, who began to push the people off the street. Some of the spectators pushed back. That set it off.

The cops then charged the crowd, not only the paraders but everyone on the sidewalks, "night sticks flailing indiscriminately," according to Ted Poston, N.Y. Post reporter who was himself struck twice by police clubs because he happened to be in the vicinity.

At this point the people living in the adjacent buildings entered into the picture. They had not been participants in the Davis parade, and presumably had no special sympathies for the Stalinists. They had merely been looking out of their windows, attracted primarily by the music of the sound trucks. But what they saw taking place before their eyes — a brutal police attack on defenseless people — is an old and familiar story in Harlem, and it moved them to action. Bottles, tin cans and other household implements began pouring out of the windows and off the roofs.

# Solidarity with Overnite strike

Continued from front page

selves against a profit-hungry boss. They are attempting to address divisions in the workforce fostered by the company, such as between dock workers and truck drivers, as the only road to building a strong union.

Overnite is an example of the deepening drive by the employers to turn the screws on working people — going after safety, health care, a living wage and full work week, and respect on the job — to scrape ahead in their increasingly competitive and profit-driven market system.

Working people in cities and countryside have a stake in the outcome of this battle, and can seek ways to win support for the unionization drive. Every fighting worker, every unionist who has been through a similar struggle recently, and every farmer or rural worker who has stood up to fight the increasing exploitation by the bosses, can make a difference in the outcome of the strike by acting now to engage concretely in support activity.

The October 28 labor solidarity rally held at the picket line in Atlanta is an example for the labor movement and marked a boost to the strike. Union drivers from other freight companies came to show support. Many other unions were present to throw their weight behind the strike.

Two years ago the Teamsters at UPS won wide support among working people as they fought for the rights of part-time employees. Part-time workers, of whom there are millions today in this country, knew they had a stake in the UPS strike. As the Atlanta rally showed, the battle at Overnite also strikes a chord with many working people.

The Overnite strike takes place at the same time that members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

are on strike against Titan Tire and General Chemical Soda Ash Partners, Inc. Steelworkers are also fighting lockouts by Kaiser Aluminum and AK Steel, among other battles. These fights strengthen and reinforce each other, enhancing the chances for victory for the union.

The Overnite strike stands on the shoulders of the recently concluded walkout by USWA members against Continental General Tire and the union organizing victory of the textile workers in Kannapolis, North Carolina. It coincides with an upturn in the fight for a union by workers at Delta Airlines as well.

The Teamsters at Overnite can tap into the potential strength of the union movement and those who are now trying to win union representation. The 2,000 strikers at Overnite and the hundreds of other unionists who have joined them on the picket lines are a component of the new proletarian social movement coming into being in the United States.

This incipient movement is characterized by its militancy, its staying power, and its ability to act on solidarity. Joining together in picket lines and other actions to back the unionization drive will strengthen the strike and bring to bear the lessons and experiences of other struggles over the past several years.

The *Militant* urges its readers to join the strike activities. Get out the *Militant* to co-workers and other fighting working people. Bring a co-worker or a friend to the picket line or a rally. Show around *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-class Politics at the Millennium*, an essential book that is a handbook for all those coming into and helping to forge this new proletarian movement in the cities and countryside today. A timely response to this strike can make a difference in furthering the union of all working people.

# U.S. hands off Cuba now!

For the past 40 years, Cuba has been the target of an unceasing effort by the rulers of the United States to rid the Americas of the revolutionary government that came to power when Cuban workers and farmers overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959. An essential element of this course has been an economic, commercial, and financial embargo aimed at crippling Cuba's economy.

In the first years of their revolution, the workers and peasants of Cuba wrested control of the banks and industries from the hands of U.S. owners and distributed land to the peasants. For 40 years, they have fought shoulder-to-shoulder with toilers across the globe in their struggles against colonialism, imperialist domination, and capitalist exploitation. These are the crimes that have earned the Cuban revolution the unending hatred of the U.S. rulers.

The recent trip to Cuba by Illinois governor George Ryan reflects an increasing debate among capitalists in the United States over how best to approach Cuba. Members of the grain cartel, heavy equipment manufacturers such as Illinois-based Caterpillar, and other corporations are under ever-increasing pressures of international competition. They chafe under any restrictions on their ability to trade, and their owners have spoken out against the embargo imposed on Cuba.

The U.S. rulers are profoundly dismayed that the Cuban revolution has not fallen in the wake of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. They continue to underestimate the determination of the Cuban working people and their revolutionary leadership. A minority within the ruling class views the embargo as ineffective and believes that Washington should move away from its policy of trying to isolate Cuba economically in favor of

other ways of undercutting the revolution.

Despite such tactical differences, the entire ruling class is united around the goal of overthrowing workers' and farmers' power in Cuba.

The *Chicago Tribune* editorialized in support of Ryan's call to end the embargo against Cuba while sharply voicing hostility toward the revolutionary government. "Ryan injected some plain-talking Midwestern sense into a policy issue that for too long has been driven by Cuban-American exiles in Miami and elsewhere—who support the embargo even though it has failed to dislodge Castro," the *Tribune* editors wrote.

But it is a fiction that U.S. policy is written by the former Cuban bourgeoisie. The hostile course against Cuba is charted by the billionaire families who rule the United States. Their policy is not based on the short-term profits of individual capitalists, but on the fact that they cannot tolerate the living example that the Cuban revolution offers to fighting workers the world over. They will not let up in the decades-long policy of economic warfare aimed at strangling the Cuban revolution. In fact, the embargo has been strengthened under the Clinton administration.

Defenders of the Cuban revolution need to get out the truth about the conquests of working people there and explain why Washington's hostility against Cuba does not end. Workers, farmers, and young people around the world need to demand an end to the embargo against Cuba, an end to the ban on travel by U.S. residents to Cuba, and that the U.S. armed forces get out of illegally occupied Guantánamo Bay.

# Teamsters strike in California

Continued from Page 10  
location.

The flyer building the November 14 demonstration asks in English and Spanish, "Which side are you on?" On one side, the flyer explains, is "a gigantic company whose owners have given hundreds of thousands of dollars to political campaigns that weaken unions, ban affirmative action and bilingual education." On the other side are the 750 Basic workers, on strike "to defend their jobs, their pensions, their community, and their way of life."

Local unions and labor councils throughout the state are making plans to participate. San Francisco airline workers in Machinists Local Lodge 1781 are recommending that the San Mateo Labor Council make buses available for transport to the rally and are organizing a collection for the strikers' food bank. United Food and Commercial Workers unions in the Bay Area have raised money and are planning to send food.

Toby Davis, a mechanic with 29 years in the plant, explained the strike this way: "It's not the money. They [Basic

Vegetable] want to bust the union. In the last few years they went from 82 mechanics down to 44. They have doubled and tripled the workload and enlarged the operation. If we roll over, it doesn't stop here. It has to stop here."

This sentiment was echoed by many on the picket line. They spoke of the company's many attempts to divide the workforce, but said also that these attempts have backfired. Both men and women emphasized the leading role of women in the strike, and spoke of being part of the initial struggles in the 1970s to get women into the workforce and into jobs that were previously reserved for men only.

Striker Linda Villasenor was quoted in the *Rustler* as saying, "I can't understand how [Basic] can say we're money hungry. If we were, we'd be in there. They showed us in the [proposed] contract. They want to cut insurance and health care. We know where we stand. We have to fight for our rights."

Larry Lane and Ellen Berman are members of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 1781.

# Vieques protests

Continued from front page

ring protests over the decades. It is the Navy's main live-fire range for war maneuvers.

Since April, when a U.S. warplane on bombing practice dropped two bombs that killed Vieques resident David Sanes, several protest camps have been permanently organized in the eastern restricted zone. Tens of thousands of people have participated in ongoing protests in Vieques, throughout Puerto Rico, and in a number of U.S. cities.

Threat of mass arrests

The San Juan daily *El Vocero* reported November 3 on U.S. government plans for mass arrests of protesters in Vieques. The paper, citing "completely reliable" unnamed sources in Washington, said 300 Spanish-speaking U.S. Marshals would be flown in from the U.S. Southwest to the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, across from Vieques. The Puerto Rican government has stated it will not take part in such arrests.

Those detained would be flown to the U.S. penitentiary in Puerto Rico or to the United States. Bail would be \$500 if they agreed not to return to Vieques. Those saying they would return to Vieques might be held in prison camps until they came to trial. Eglin Air Force base in Florida was mentioned as a possible detention site. The arrests could come as early as Thanksgiving weekend if U.S. commander-in-chief William Clinton gives the order.

The source said the U.S. Coast Guard would be used to blockade Vieques and demand identification of anyone traveling in the area, including island residents. Neither the U.S. Justice Department nor the Coast Guard would answer questions from journalists.

Anti-Navy protests both here and in the United States are being planned in response to any arrests in Vieques.

"In case arrests or evictions take place before the student assembly, we have a strike vote and will carry it out. Obviously, after the strike there would be a ratification meeting," said General Student Council president Kevin Rivera.

A student strike at the UPR is expected to have broad support among teachers and university employees as well as the general public. Fund-raising to support the protest camps in Vieques has been carried out by the organization *Universitarios con Vieques*, which includes students, professors, and trade unions representing university employees.

Rivera visited the protest camps in Vieques October 24. Student leaders here are also encouraging student organizations in the United States to become involved in solidarity with the struggle against the U.S. Navy in Vieques.

Pro-Vieques protesters interrupted a speech by Clinton in Philadelphia October 29. A demonstration and forum in solidarity with Vieques was planned at Harvard University November 4. A leader of the Vieques fishermen is touring some U.S. cities to tell the truth about their battle.

Water supply to U.S. base is blocked

On October 28 the intakes on the Río Blanco river that supply water to the Roosevelt Roads base were blocked with rocks and plywood, causing a major water shortage on the base.

The next day, top Puerto Rican police officials, FBI agents, Navy officials and employees of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) descended on the site where 25 members of the "Water for All" Movement were staging a protest. The organization is one of many around this U.S. colony that have led protests demanding decent water service.

The members of Water for All did not claim responsibility for the blockage and refused to accept the official order from DNER secretary Daniel Pagán ordering the intakes reopened. DNER employees moved the objects blocking the pipes.

The area around the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station has chronic water problems. This reporter has been in homes in the area that have been without water service for months at a time.

At the same time, in face of public outrage at the U.S. military, the DNER is threatening a \$17 million lawsuit against the Navy for theft of water. The intake has been in the stream since 1942, and the "Water for All" Movement brought to the attention of the Puerto Rican government that the Navy has no valid permits to take water out of the stream.

The outpouring of opposition to the U.S. Navy by working people and others has forced the colonial government and parties to pose as champions of Vieques. Pro-statehood governor Pedro Rosselló has rejected a White House panel's recommendation to let the Navy resume target practice while looking for an alternative site over a five-year period.

Washington, however, is ratcheting up the pressure in the hopes that bourgeois forces in Puerto Rico will buckle. U.S. senator Trent Lott has demanded the cutoff of U.S. funds to Puerto Rico if the Navy is not allowed to train in Vieques. Raising the threat of job losses, U.S. senator James Inhofe has introduced a bill to close the Roosevelt Roads base if the Navy leaves Vieques.

"We are very concerned," declared Puerto Rican senator Orlando Parga, a member of the right wing of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party who announced a "pro-American march" in November. "Lately we have been the topic of news projected to the mainland that gives the impression that Puerto Ricans are renouncing their identity as American citizens," he complained.

# Aluminum workers in Alabama resist lockout

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 about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or

accident pay] and callback rights. In their proposal retirees' insurance would have a \$20,000 lifetime maximum benefit. We lost our dental and eye care," he added.

The locked-out workers want wage parity with the McCook Metals plant near Chicago, owned by the same company as Scottsboro Aluminum, and improved health insurance for retirees. "The biggest issue is cost of living," said Jeff Steeley, who works in the finish de-

partment. "We're just getting close to where we were in 1983 and now they want to chop us back down 70 cents," Bellomy continued. New hires in the labor pool start at \$8.50 an hour and electricians top out at \$15.30 an hour.

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An October 21 letter from the company outraged the unionists. "If employees decide they want to continue to earn wages and benefits to provide for their family — or for any other reason — employees have the right *not* to strike and to come to work and cross a picket line," wrote Robert McDole, the company's general manager. "If employees withdraw or resign their membership in the USWA *before* they cross a picket line, they could *not* be subject to fines or other union discipline."

The boss also warns, "If employees are permanently replaced, it could be a matter of months — or it could be years — before vacancies occur."

No one from the union has crossed the line.

"They're just trying to scandalize the union, trying to get you to withdraw," said Samuel Nichols, who is one of about 30 Black workers locked out of the plant.

"They had plans of separating us out but it brought us together," added Donnie Hancock, a maintenance mechanic.

The aluminum workers were happy to receive the solidarity of two Steelworkers from the Birmingham area. They were familiar with the Kaiser Aluminum lockout and several were interested in reading about it in the *Militant*. Workers from Lozier, a local store fixtures plant had visited too, according to one of the women workers.

"We need all their [unions'] support," said Jimmy Myers, a furnace operator in the cast shop who said

## New Zealand nurses demand equal pay raise

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — More than 300 nurses, midwives, and support staff staged rolling strike action over three shifts October 27 and 28 at Christchurch Women's, Lincoln, Lyndhurst, and Rangiora hospitals. The strike was about "a fair deal and equity," said Chris Wilson, an organizer for the New Zealand Nurses' Organisation.

Canterbury Health is contracted by the government to run health services in the Christchurch region. At its other hospitals workers received a 4 percent pay increase over a two-and-a-half-year period. The company claims that because the strikers have a higher base rate they should not get the same increase.

In effect what Canterbury Health is saying is "no reward for two and half years." That is "not acceptable," Wilson added.

Organized in two hourly blocks, the strike action was staggered to cover most shifts. At Christchurch Women's workers organized picket lines during the morning and afternoon walkouts. A union meeting was held for night shift workers.

On the picket line nurses held placards with slogans reading, "Canterbury Health under values women's health workers. It doesn't pay to care," and, "The way nurses are treated is enough to make you sick."

More than half the cars tooted in support as they drove past. Fliers were also distributed to passersby explaining the issues in the strike.

Joining the nurses on the picket line were workers organized by the Public Service Association; Hotel, Hospital, Restaurant and Related Trades Union; and the National Union of Public Employees, who were also offered the same inferior contract. Like the nurses, they have

## Unionists rally in New Jersey for workers fired in organizing drive



Some 300 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Union marched in Union City, New Jersey, October 27 to protest the firing of three workers at the Goya Foods plant in Miami. The company fired the workers after they spoke out about unsanitary conditions at the Miami facility during a successful organizing drive.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

SCOTTSBORO, Alabama—Scottsboro Aluminum LLC locked out 420 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 7468 several hours before their contract expired October 10. Workers on the afternoon shift were sent home at about 5:00 p.m., with the company claiming there was no more work.

As they drove out the gate, the Steelworkers passed two busloads of replacement workers coming in. The night and morning shifts were turned away when they reported for work. The contract expired at 12:01 a.m. October 11. The company broke off negotiations.

Scottsboro Aluminum is one of the largest employers in this small, northeast Alabama town.

More than 40 workers were gathered outside the plant gate October 22. They said the "lockout line" is kept similarly staffed around the clock. Workers declined to call it a picket line, since they are not on strike.

The mood of the workers is relaxed and confident. They have taken over a grassy area between Goosepond Credit Union and the company's property line with picnic tables, barbecue grills, and plenty of coolers.

A Roadway truck driver got out of his truck in front of the credit union, refusing to cross the line. A salaried employee came out to bring the truck through the gate. The aluminum workers warmly welcomed the truck driver.

"They're trying to chop our seniority and do away with bidding rights for two years — they hollered 'stability,'" said Allen Bellomy, chairman of the union grievance committee. "They want to take away our S&A [sickness and

been working without a contract since December 1998.

Further strike action is being planned.

## Tool and Engineering strikers vote down offer

CHICAGO — The roughly 100 full-time workers who are members of USWA Local 15271-002 once again voted down a contract offer by Tool and Engineering Company/Division Farley, Inc. October 17. Only five workers wrote yes among the first 55 or so ballots counted. Since a majority were then already against the contract, the tally was halted.

The strike will mark its first full year on November 28 and although a few more workers have gone in, the majority of strikers remain adamant in their attitude of fighting this battle out to the end.

The latest offer was virtually identical to the proposals that provoked the strike in the first place. On the two central issues in dispute there was no change. William Farley, owner

of the company, wants single workers to pay \$75 per month for medical insurance and married workers to pay \$150 a month. In addition he proposes wage classifications that would amount to enormous wage cuts. Pete Suljic declared, "After 26 years I would be making only \$8 an hour, when I was making \$16."

Paul Baquet, who has 24 years at the plant, is part of the negotiating committee. He said about 60-70 workers met for about three and half hours the week before to discuss the contract and then came back to vote on it the next week.

For a few months a number of outreach activities were organized by the local. These included leafleting at the Chicago Opera House where Farley is a member of the governing board, and on the subway line.

Kristin Meriam and Susan LaMont, members of the USWA in Birmingham, Alabama; Ruth Gray in Christchurch; and John George in Chicago contributed to this column.

## LETTERS

### Libraries in barber shops

Gladys Williams' article about placing books in a barber shop in Georgia reminded me of a letter written 50 years ago by a Nicaraguan revolutionary.

Carlos Fonseca was the central leader of the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] of Nicaragua, the organization that led the revolution of 1979. In the mid-1950s, as a radical teenager, Fonseca wrote a letter to the Nicaraguan Minister of Public Education proposing that libraries be set up in barber shops.

"Libraries ought to be set up in places the masses want to go," he said. "I don't think there is any location in the cities and neighborhoods of Nicaragua that is more appealing for the reading public than barber shops. I have observed that most people who visit barber shops go for the newspapers and magazines they find there, more than for the haircut. . . The people — and this is very impor-

tant — who go to these barber shops looking for newspapers and magazines are working people. . . The purpose of my letter is to suggest that all the workers' barber shops in working-class neighborhoods be used for the community libraries your Ministry is going to establish."

Matilde Zimmermann  
Poughkeepsie, New York

### Support nurses in Ireland

On Oct. 16, 1999, the Irish Nurse Organization (INO) went on strike. Some 28,000 nurses are in a dispute over wages and working conditions in the 26 counties of the Irish republic. Pickets went up at 7:00 a.m. at all major hospitals and health clinics. The nurses had support from many driving passersby in Limerick who honked in support for the nurses. The strike was getting much attention on the RTE, the national radio station for Ireland.

On the radio many patients in

hospitals were interviewed; one patient said he supported the nurses fully in their demands. When asked if he was concerned about his own health issues, he said the state was responsible for his well being and the blame should be squarely put on them, because the state was responsible for the nurses' standard of living and them being in a dispute with the government.

At the same time of the nurses' strike, Irish railway unions were threatening a 48-hour work stoppage during the upcoming bank holiday weekend. The nurses union also had a demonstration of more than 9,000 nurses on October 21 at noon on O'Connell Street outside the General Post Office. It filled the whole of O'Connell Street for two and half hours, tying up traffic throughout Dublin City.

I went to talk to pickets outside the Maternity Hospital on Parnell Square as a member of the Steelworkers in the United States. They told me issues in the strike ran from

many nurses working more than 20 years for the health service, not yet even at the top of the wage scale making around 10 pounds an hour (about US\$14); the unsociable hours nurses are forced to work; as well as the future of student nurses at university and what guarantees they had for future jobs in the health care field.

This is an important strike for all workers to support and let others know about.

Dennis Chambers  
Chicago, Illinois

### Drug monopolies' profits

In his article, "AIDS virus ravages sub-Saharan Africa," [in the October 25 *Militant*] T. J. Figueroa asserts, "Much HIV/AIDS research in North America and Europe is devoted to engineering expensive drugs that can generate continual blood-profits for the capitalist pharmaceutical monopolies. Relatively little research is geared toward find-

ing cheap vaccines that can cure the disease."

This seems off to me. What does it mean to "engineer expensive drugs"? Almost all drugs, at least new ones, are expensive, no? Do the companies do anything different from what they do with any other research? The writer's characterization of the drug monopolies goes for all their activities I think; not just AIDS research. All the "normal" laws of capitalism apply.

If this isn't true, please explain. By the way, the article was really good, typical of the *Militant*.  
Marty Anderson  
Staten Island, New York

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## Tarnished Peronists lose presidency, new Argentine chief to continue austerity

BY HILDA CUZCO  
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Breaking a decade of Peronist rule in Argentina under President Carlos Menem, opposition candidate Fernando de la Rúa, the mayor of Buenos Aires, won the October 24 presidential elections. He trounced Eduardo Duhalde, candidate of Menem's Justicialist Party, with 48 percent to 38 percent of the votes.

During the election campaign de la Rúa made it clear he would continue Menem's economic policies: austerity measures, pegging the peso to the U.S. dollar, and undermining union rights in the name of "labor reform." De la Rúa's victory pleased Wall Street and local capitalists.

At the same time, de la Rúa's promises of jobs and fighting the corruption associated with the Menem regime have raised the hopes of many working people, hit hard by a recession. Many voted for him as a lesser-evil candidate. "I'm praying that de la Rúa will not be a liar like all the rest of the politicians here," said Alejandra Domínguez, an unemployed garment worker in Buenos Aires, as she came out of the polls. De la Rúa's Alliance for Work, Justice and Education is a coalition of his Radical Civic Union (UCR), the oldest traditional bourgeois party, and the Front for a Country in Solidarity (FREPASO) — social democrats and former Peronists who parted ways with Menem.

Menem's bourgeois nationalist Justicialist Party has played a dominant role in Argentina since it was founded by Juan Perón after World War II. Perón ruled at a time when workers organized powerful industrial unions and wrested substantial concessions from imperialism and native capitalists, including an expansion of the social wage, women's suffrage, and the nationalization of rail and other industries.

Since then the labor movement has been politically tied to the Peronists, despite the party's role as defender of the interests of the native bourgeoisie.

### Ten years of Menem

Menem's predecessor, Radical president Raúl Alfonsín, had presided over a period of hyperinflation that destroyed workers' living standards. Menem, elected in 1989, shed traditional Peronist policies, aligning his government closely with Washington and loyally following the prescriptions of imperialist financial institutions.

The Menem government ended hyperinflation by tying the peso to the U.S. dol-



Public employees took to the streets of San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, August 13 to demand back pay.

lar — a policy known as "convertibility" that has led to relatively stable but brutally high prices for consumer goods. Today the dollar is used as a unit of account for virtually all except the most immediate transactions. Some 60 percent of bank deposits and almost all savings accounts, mortgages, and leases are denominated in dollars. Some voices in business circles have even called for "dollarization," that is, declaring the dollar the official currency.

Conducting a massive fire sale, Menem sold off most state-owned companies to capitalists — including telecommunications, oil, utilities, provincial banks, and the post office. The result was a greater concentration of wealth among the rich, on one hand, and large-scale layoffs and speedup for workers on the other.

The government has driven to cut workers' social wage and pass "labor reform" laws designed to make it easier for bosses to fire workers, hire temporary employees, and gut union contracts.

Meanwhile, the country is in the grip of a deep and long recession for the second time in four years. The economy is likely to shrink by 3.5 percent this year. Unemployment is officially 14.5 percent — in a country with no unemployment insurance. Workers' paychecks are running out much earlier in the month than even last year. The

number of homeless workers in Buenos Aires has tripled in the last two years.

Argentina is being devastated by the worldwide deflationary crisis. The bulk of its exports are agricultural commodities, whose prices have plummeted over the past two years on the world markets. The country has been shaken by the international financial crises in Russia and Brazil.

Brazil's 40 percent devaluation of its currency in January has undermined Argentina's exports, especially in auto manufacturing, where production has dropped to half of last year's levels. Brazil is its largest export market.

At the same time, Argentina's debt to foreign capitalists has doubled from 1990 to almost \$150 billion — five and a half times Argentina's export earnings. Interest payments to the bankers are now 15 percent of the national budget, up from 5 percent when Menem took office.

These deteriorating conditions have prompted labor resistance. Public employees in the northern province of Tucumán took to the streets in August to demand back pay. Riot police attacked them with tear gas and rubber bullets, leaving two dozen wounded. In September, truckers went on an eight-day strike to demand the abolition of a 1.5 percent vehicle tax and relief from steep fuel prices and tolls.

The economic and social crisis has tarnished Menem's image, fueling corruption scandals in the government, especially the judiciary and police. At least 10 of Menem's top advisers have been fired or are under indictment for corruption charges, mostly stemming from privatization kickbacks.

### Why de la Rúa won

De la Rúa capitalized on the corruption issue to win votes. He pledged to crack down on tax evasion by the rich to fund social programs. At the same time he promised continuity in basic economic policies. The Peronists were divided by a power struggle between Menem, who wanted to run for a third term but was barred by the constitution, and presidential candidate Duhalde, governor of Buenos Aires province. Duhalde presented himself as to the left of both Menem and the Alliance. His promise of pension increases and talk of a moratorium on Argentina's huge foreign debt got an icy response from Wall Street.

Besides losing the presidency and their majority in the lower house of Congress, the Peronists lost control of many provinces long considered their strongholds. But they held onto the governorship of Buenos Aires province and the majority in the Senate. This means both parties will share governmental responsibility.

A third presidential candidate, Domingo Cavallo, former finance minister and architect of Menem's economic plan in the early 1990s, won 10 percent of the votes.

After his victory, de la Rúa, who takes office December 10, wasted no time in reassuring foreign investors. He called on Menem to impose a freeze on social spending during his remaining days in office. The likely appointee as economy minister, José Luis Machinea, has floated calls for steep austerity measures in the name of slashing the budget deficit. One of de la Rúa's slogans is, "Debts are paid and honored, not debated."

In foreign policy, de la Rúa has proposed a slight shift away from Menem's close public alignment with Washington. He has said the Argentine government will no longer contribute troops to U.S.-led "multinational" military operations, as it had under Menem in the Balkans, Haiti, and Cyprus.

But he has made it clear Buenos Aires will not stray far from its masters in Washington. After getting a phone call from the White House, de la Rúa said, "I told President Clinton we would work together for peace and against drug trafficking."

## Sweden: murder of unionist sparks actions

BY JOHAN NILSSON  
AND ANITA ÖSTLING

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Tens of thousands of people rallied in Sweden October 23 to protest the murder of union activist Björn Söderberg, who was gunned down outside his home October 12. Rallies took place in 20 cities and towns, numbering close to 30,000 people in all. The biggest action was in Stockholm, where 8,000–10,000 people came out. In Gothenburg 4,000 participated. The rallies were sponsored by the four main national union federations, whose top officials shared the platform in Stockholm.

"This is the first big demonstration I have attended," said Ibirocay Reguiera, a 24-year-old student. "I think it's important to take a stand, to show that enough is enough."

Söderberg, the murdered union activist, was a member of the Syndicalist Workers Federation (SAC), a splinter since 1910 from the main union federation in Sweden, Landsorganisationen (LO). This summer Söderberg had a temporary job in a warehouse where Robert Vesterlund, the editor of the ultrarightist paper *Info 14*, also worked. When Vesterlund was elected to the local

union leadership, Söderberg alerted the top national leadership of this union, the Retail Workers Union, to the fact that the man was a fascist. He also reported it to the media, and the union election made big headlines.

Vesterlund was expelled from the union and soon after quit his job. The same day he was expelled, someone ordered a Xerox copy of Söderberg's pass photo from government authorities to a well-known rightist address in Stockholm.

Three men in their early 20s, who the cops say are associated with forces around *Info 14*, have been arrested on suspicion of murder. Vesterlund is not among them.

The fact that a union activist was the target of attack was a new development. Previously immigrants, homosexuals, and Jews have been assaulted and even murdered by ultrarightists in Sweden. But Bill Erlandsen of the Retail Workers Union says that other union officials have received threats.

The morning of October 23 a bomb went off outside the SAC office in Gävle, a town 200 kilometers north of Stockholm. Gävle is a stronghold for the syndicalists and is the town where Joe Hill, a leader of the Industrial Workers of the World in the United

States in the early part of this century, was born. More than 1,000 people rallied in Gävle in protest hours after the bombing.

In Stockholm a number of local unions organized transportation to the rally. The presence of union officials was notable, but many rank-and-file members also came. So did a great number of young people.

Union members Anna Lithander and Erica Dahlgren attended. Lithander told the *Militant*, "We were at the May Day rally, but this feels bigger and more committed, more serious, like people really know why they are here."

Bertil Jonsson, the chairperson of LO, and Sture Nordh, the chairperson of TCO, another major union federation, both stressed the "defense of democracy" in their talks.

Since Söderberg's murder there has been a lot of debate on whether "non-democratic and violent organizations" should be made illegal. Anders Lönnberg from the Swedish Academics Central Organization (SACO), announced at the rally, "We are checking whether we can introduce a clause in our statutes that gives us the right to refuse membership to people who are members of non-

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### NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 10

A magazine of Marxist  
Politics and Theory

"There will be new Hitlers, new Mussolinis. That is inevitable. What is not inevitable is that they will triumph. The working class vanguard will organize our class to fight back against the devastating toll we are made to pay for the capitalist crisis. The future of humanity will be decided in the contest between these contending forces."  
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