

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Che Guevara
and the imperialist reality**
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Stop the attacks on immigrants' rights

Miami picket builds October 12 march in New York

BY BRAD CAIMAN

MIAMI — Loudly chanting "Justice, for immigrants!" more than 200 protesters, most of them Haitian, picketed across from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) building here September 25. Blowing whistles and chanting in Creole and English, the demonstrators attracted the attention of hundreds of passing motorists, many of whom honked in support. The protest was organized by the Haitian rights organization Veye-Yo and the Miami Committee for Dignity and Justice for Immigrants, which includes the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). It publicized the national march in New York City for immigrants rights on October 12.

Tens of thousands of immigrants in southern Florida are affected by recent changes in U.S. immigration law. A legal loophole had allowed immigrants without papers who "qualify" for U.S. residency to remain in the country while awaiting their permanent residency papers, or "green card," if they pay a \$1,000 penalty. These penalty fees amounted to \$200 million last year, which the INS has used to build more detention centers.

That loophole was set to expire October 1, meaning that up to 1.5

million immigrants around the country would be required by law to return to their homelands and wait for their residency papers to be sent.

Marie Jose, who came to the protest, told the *Militant* that this will result in immigrant families being split apart. "I think it's inhuman to separate families like that," she said. "We don't know how long the separation will be."

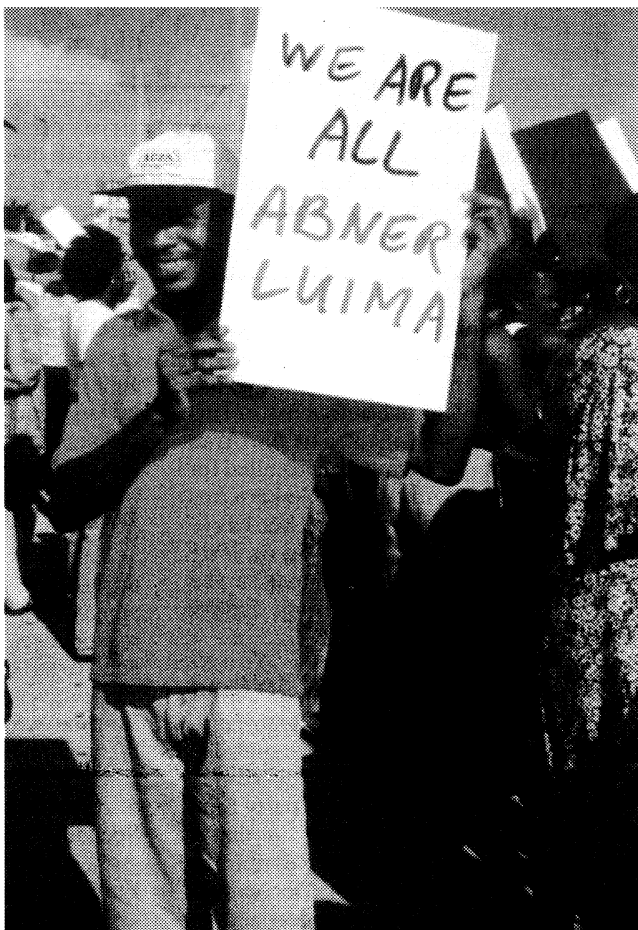
On September 29 the U.S. House of Representatives voted to extend the law allowing immigrants awaiting papers to remain in the United States, but only for three weeks.

Many of the protesters expressed anger over the Catch-22 nature of the laws. For instance, under another law that went into effect in late September, any undocumented immigrant who leaves the United States after residing here for more than 180 days cannot return for between three and ten years.

These laws create a legal limbo for huge sections of the workforce, where immigrants who may be entitled to a green card must live and work without legal protection, subject to deportation at any moment.

Daniel Jasmin, a Haitian student in Miami, said that because of these restrictive laws "this protest is very

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Militant/Angel Lariscy
Participant in Miami protest refers to Haitian immigrant in New York who was tortured by police in August.

Havana conference celebrates Guevara's legacy

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — A range of conferences, cultural activities, and other events are taking place here and throughout Cuba to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Ernesto Che Guevara and his fellow combatants in Bolivia.

One of the main political events in the weeks leading up to the October 8 anniversary was an international conference sponsored by the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) and its magazine *Tricontinental*. The gathering, "Twenty-First Century: Legacy and Relevance of Che's Work," was held here September 25-27.

Guevara, Argentine by birth, became one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution that brought down the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and opened the road to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. He was one of the outstanding Marxist leaders of the 20th century. In 1966 – 67 Guevara led a nucleus of revolutionary combatants from Bolivia, Cuba, and elsewhere in Latin America fighting to overturn the military dictatorship in Bolivia and bring to power a government in

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U.S. troops to stay in Bosnia 'a good while'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

NATO troops backed by helicopters took over four transmitters in the Serb-controlled part of Bosnia October 1. This assault took place soon after the Clinton administration officials announced their occupation force will most likely stay in Bosnia well beyond next year's announced deadline.

U.S. national security adviser Samuel Berger told an audience at Georgetown University September 23 that the occupation force must "stay engaged for a good while to come."

Two days after Berger's speech, the U.S. Congress passed a spending bill that would permit the president to request more funding for the 9,000 U.S. troops in Bosnia, which are leading a 35,000-strong NATO occupation force, past Clinton's stated withdrawal deadline of June 30, 1998.

NATO secretary-general Javier Solana said the transmitters seized October 1 were turned over to supporters of Bosnian Serb president Biljana Plavsic, the rival of chauvinist Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. Armored vehicles blocked roads between the transmitter sites and Pale, headquarters of Karadzic.

Carlos Westendorp, a so-called senior civilian official charged with enforcing Washington's policies in Bosnia, demanded the military operation after a September 28 broadcast by Bosnian Serb Television reported that the imperialist-crafted war crimes tribunal was "moving against the Serbs" and "was a political instrument aimed

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Workers in Asia bear brunt of smog crisis

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia — Beneath the pall of choking smog blanketing more than half of Southeast Asia lie devastating human and social consequences that threaten the health, lives, and livelihoods of tens of millions of workers and peasants.

For two months, increasing parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines have been affected by life-threatening levels of pollution caused by thousands of out-of-control forest fires. Indonesian officials concede that smog levels are so high in some areas as to be impossible to measure with normal testing equipment.

Far from a "natural" disaster, the fires were deliberately set by capitalist corporations to clear land cheaply for rubber, palm oil, and timber plantations in vast parts of the islands of Sumatra, Java, and the Indonesian parts of Borneo and New Guinea — as they have been doing since the early 1980s. Seasonal monsoon rains normally extinguish the fires, with notable exceptions in 1982-83 and 1994. Now, once again, the wet season has still not come and is not expected until November. Some 1.5 million acres of forest have already been destroyed.

Despite a law passed after the 1994 devastation that made burning off land illegal, the companies have so far acted with impu-

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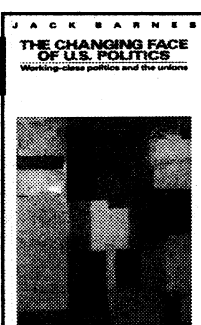
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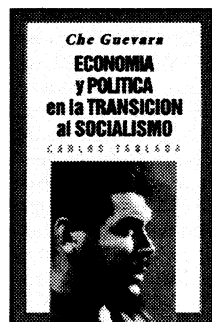
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Socialist Workers fight for ballot rights — pages 4, 14

Netanyahu backs settlements

On September 24 Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to construct 300 new homes in the West Bank settlement of Efrat. Palestinian Authority minister Hanan Ashrawi denounced the move, saying, "This is another dangerously irresponsible decision bordering insanity.... We are rapidly hurtling toward the abyss." Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat pointed out that an Israeli withdrawal on the West Bank was three weeks overdue and should be done without delay. Palestinian Authority police had just begun a campaign to crack down on activists allegedly involved in the group Hamas, detaining scores of Palestinians they deemed suspects in recent suicide bombings in Israel.

"We [Washington] have made it quite clear this particular building is not at all helpful" in stabilizing the situation, said U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright in response to Netanyahu's announcement.

Meanwhile, Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri rejected an Israeli proposal under which Tel Aviv would withdraw its 1,500 troops who occupy 10 percent of Lebanon, contingent upon Beirut organizing a massive crackdown on rebels there.

Arab gov'ts defy UN sanctions

The Arab League, which represents governments from some 22 countries in the Mideast region, voted September 21 to defy the United Nations sanctions on Libya. The move gives permission for planes carrying Libyan head of state Muammar el-Qaddafi to their territory, as well as aircraft used for religious or humanitarian purposes. The sanctions were imposed at the urging of Washington and London in 1992, on grounds of the Libyan government's refusal to hand over alleged suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner.

Ankara bombs northern Iraq

On September 25 Turkish warplanes ripped through northern Iraq bombing 15 Kurdish camps near the Iranian and Syrian borders. More than 130 tanks and 16,000 Turkish soldiers accompanied the air raid, which Turkish foreign ministry spokesman Sermet Atacanli labeled "routine" and "limited."

Hundreds rally for Puerto Rican independence



Above, hundreds of pro-independence activists celebrate Grito de Lares—the anniversary of the 1868 uprising against Spanish colonial rule—September 23 in Lares, Puerto Rico. Trade unionists and others in that country have called an October 1 general strike and march against the sale of government-run phone company, Telefónica.

ited." The Anatolian news agency reported the sites were inhabited by rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has been fighting for Kurdish autonomy in Turkey. The Iraqi government and the Arab League condemned the attack and called for immediate troop withdrawal. Ankara has frequently violated the sovereign borders of Iraq since Washington, following its 1991 military assault on the people of Iraq, carved out an area no longer under Iraqi control called the "no-fly zone."

Rightist concessions in N. Ireland

The Ulster Unionist Party, the largest pro-British party in Northern Ireland, conceded September 24 to participate in substantive talks that include the republican party Sinn Fein without "decommissioning" — that is disarmament — by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as a precondition. Decommissioning had been used by London and its

lackeys in Northern Ireland as a pretext to exclude Sinn Fein from talks that began in June 1996. The Democratic Unionists, led by Ian Paisley, and Robert McCartney's UK Unionists withdrew from the talks in protest of Sinn Fein's inclusion.

Italian workers resist pension cut

Italian prime minister Romano Prodi urged trade unions September 26 to accept pension cuts in order to reduce the government budget. Italian unions, however, threatened to strike if Rome pushes through austerity measures that would take a workers lifetime wage as opposed to the usually higher finishing wage as the basis for their pension. Measures would also raise the age of retirement and freeze early retirements. Spending on pensions is 14 percent of Italy's gross domestic product — almost double the European Union average.

Right gains votes in Norway

September 15 parliamentary elections in Norway registered gains by the ultrarightist Progress Party and slippage in support for the social democratic Labor Party. The Labour vote fell by 5 percent to 35.1 percent, although it will still be the largest party in the legislature. The Christian Democratic, Liberal, and Conservative parties, which together received 26 percent of the vote, announced plans to set up a coalition government. The Progress Party got 15.5 percent of the vote, the highest in its 25-year existence, and will have the second largest number of seats in parliament.

Norwegian capitalists, partly due to revenues as the second-largest exporter of oil

reserves, are experiencing a short-term economic boom. But it comes with a steady drop in the rate of growth of the gross domestic product — from 4.5 percent in 1996 to 3 percent in 1997 and 2.3 percent projected for next year. A 4 percent increase in real wages in 1996 — the largest since the 1980s boom — and 4.6 percent unemployment, one of the lowest in Europe, led the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to issue a report panicking about inflationary pressures.

Argentine Natives defend land

Activists of the Kolla people in northern Argentina have been setting up roadblocks and protests in recent months to prevent the Tabacal sugar refinery from coming in and setting up shop. The indigenous people have been fighting for nearly half a century to safeguard their land. The Kolla were granted 142,000 acres of land by Tabacal originally, but the company went bankrupt last June and auctioned off the San Andrea ranch, where the 2,000-strong community lives. Activists say that the company sent a hired thug to live on the ranch and terrorize residents, including issuing death threats. Tabacal bosses call the claims "fabrications." Another issue that is drawing support for the Kolla fight is the company's complete disregard for the endangered forests of Argentina, chopping down centuries-old trees and dragging them over other vegetation.

U.S. database will track workers

The Clinton administration will begin implementing the National Directory of New Hires on October 1, which will require every employer to submit files on the each worker, or face fines of up to \$500 per employee. An article in the September 22 *New York Times* pitched the new directory as a novel tracer of "deadbeat" parents — those not able or not willing to pay child support. Everyone hired after October 1 will have a file with a minimum of a worker's name, address, Social Security number, and wages. Robert Gellman, who the *Times* described as a privacy and information policy expert, noted that the system opens workers up to potential cop harassment.

Investment banking giants merge

The Travelers Group — a conglomeration of financial companies — announced plans to merge with Salomon Brothers investment bank September 24, creating a financial behemoth rivaling Merrill Lynch and Co., American Express Co., and major investment banking firms in Europe and Japan. The merger may cause a series of other company consolidations as capitalist try to rise to the level of international competition. Though Sanford Weill, chairman of Travelers Group, refused to comment on layoffs that would result from the merger, unnamed sources cited in the *New York Times* say that up to 2,000 people are expected to be terminated.

—BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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From the struggle in California to organize strawberry pickers and other farm workers to the October 12 march for immigrant rights at the United Nations, the 'Militant' is on the scene giving a working-class perspective on the fight for immigrant rights. Don't miss a single issue!



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Ontario workers: 'No to government cuts'

BY DEBRA LOVINSKY
AND SUSAN BERMAN

NORTH BAY, Ontario — A sea of green flags and banners floated into Thomson Park here as thousands of workers and students gathered to protest the proposed cuts by the Ontario government to education, health-care benefits, and union rights. The vast majority of the protesters were teachers. They were joined by nurses, government employees, health-care workers, steelworkers, auto workers, postal workers, and high school and university students.

Organizers say that 180 buses came into North Bay, which is a four-hour drive north of Toronto. Estimates of the crowd ranged from 8,000 to the organizers' estimate of 30,000. The previous day over 3,000 people began the North Bay days of protest by shutting down 22 work sites including most government offices. A rally to defend education attracted 2,000, including many high school students.

The main target of the protests are bills 136 and 160, proposed legislation by Ontario premier Michael Harris that would shift the costs of social services and education onto municipalities and school boards. The bills also would have outlawed strikes by public sector workers for four years and

made wages and working conditions subject to the rulings of a government-appointed committee. In the face of threats of province-wide work stoppages, the Harris government announced prior to the days of action that it would retreat on these last two provisions.

Trade unionists, however, have not backed down in face of this partial victory. Public sector union officials say that unless the no-strike rule is withdrawn in writing they will proceed with province-wide strikes. They also announced that they would stand behind the teachers, who now face some of the most severe attacks.

The provincial government plans massive cuts to education funding, all in the name of improving education. They propose cutting teachers' paid class preparation time and prolonging the work year. Teachers estimate 10,000 jobs will be lost.

Militant correspondents talked to three teachers from Saugeen District Secondary School in Port Elgin. "When I count the amount of time in the building and the amount of time at home preparing I'm working a 62-hour workweek," explained Margaret Wysman. "If they take our preparation time away, how can we prepare to help each individual student. It's the students who



Students joined teachers and other unionists marching in North Bay September 27

will suffer," Susan Dolphin added.

Despite this, "parent support is increasing all the time," explained Erin O'Sullivan. The teachers described that already there are tremendous shortages in the schools: not enough desks and chairs, or books. O'Sullivan described having to rotate 25 textbooks among three classes.

Wysman said the teachers weren't just fighting for themselves but also for other workers in the school system. Cuts to janitorial staff have left one janitor to service an entire school at times. "I think we have

to stand together," she insisted. The three emphasized they were not protesting against their own board of education but against the government.

Mary Sue Smith is a lab technician and member of the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union. "We never had the right to strike," explained Smith. She said that the current system of arbitration is likely to change, resulting in arbitrators being more answerable to the government rather than workers.

The Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) had representatives from several cities throughout Ontario. Barb Wahl, president of the ONA from Waterloo, said that in the last few years "10,000 nursing positions have been lost to layoffs and attrition." She explained, "Our main concern is that with cutbacks patients are kept in the hospital for such a short time and they don't get the care they need or adequate preparation time to organize home care."

The next protest against the Ontario government cuts is scheduled for October 17 in Windsor, Ontario. For further information, contact the Ontario Federation of Labour at (416) 441-2731.

Susan Berman is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5338 in Toronto.

Bank depositors panic in Malaysia

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

On September 24 scores of depositors in Malaysia tried to withdraw their savings from several branches of MBf Finance, the country's largest finance company. Bank Negara, the central bank stepped in to "re-assure depositors," backing MBf Finance.

The run is a sign that the regional economic crisis triggered by the devaluation of the Thai currency in early July is far from over. Total loans by Malaysian financial institutions this year are estimated to approach 170 percent of the projected 1997 gross domestic product — the highest level of indebtedness in Southeast Asia, according to Standard & Poors, the international credit rating agency. S&P revised the country's sovereign debt September 25 from "stable" to "negative" and opposed Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's moves to restrict currency trading.

Tensions escalated between Malaysian government officials and international capitalist investors when Mahathir declared that currency trading "should be made illegal" at a mid-September annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Hong Kong. At a previous gathering, Mahathir denounced currency speculators as "rogues" and "crooks who make millions of dollars by making Malaysians 20 percent poorer." The Malaysian ringgit has declined in value by a rough 20 percent. To discourage currency trading, Mahathir introduced new rules on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange requiring sellers to deliver physical share certificates to their brokers before selling.

Billionaire currency speculator George Soros responded, calling Mahathir a "menace to his own country" who "is using me as a scapegoat for his own failures."

Welsh vote yes to own parliament

BY ANNE HOWIE

MANCHESTER, England — On September 18 the government proposal to establish an elected assembly in Wales was approved by 50.3 percent to 49.7 percent. This is a substantial turnaround from 1979, when a similar proposal was defeated by a margin of 4-1. The Yes vote was predominant in the Welsh-speaking rural counties in the north and west of Wales, and the traditional industrial and mining areas in the south. Those counties bordering England, and the area around the Welsh capital, Cardiff, returned No votes.

United with England since 1536, Wales has a population of 2.9 million, 18.5 percent of whom speak Welsh as a first language. It has suffered substantially from the coal and steel closures of the last couple of decades, resulting in high unemployment, particularly among youth, of which more

As more turmoil looms in the region, Thailand's finance minister, Thanong Bidaya, stated that the recent contraction of the economy was expected to cause 1 million people to lose their jobs. Michael Mussa, chief economist for the IMF, said September 18 that Thailand would experience a painful economic slowdown that "is certainly going to feel like a recession."

In a move to quell unrest, the military sent 3,000 soldiers, tanks, and heavy weapons into Bangkok September 18, supposedly for a parade. "Please tell people not to panic,"

said a military spokesperson trying to assure people that a coup was not being prepared. A few days earlier, several thousand workers from factories and state enterprises had protested in Bangkok demanding government assistance and the resignation of Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh.

Meanwhile, the Financial Times of London reported September 29 that Southeast Asian governments may have to pay risk premiums on bonds as high as those paid by most Latin American regimes to attract international investors.

Cuban editor to tour United Kingdom

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Norberto Codina, editor of the Cuban publication *La Gaceta de Cuba*, will be speaking in the United Kingdom and Sweden in November. *La Gaceta de Cuba* is the magazine of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. It is a lively forum for discussion on culture and everyday life in Cuba.

Codina will arrive in London early November and participate in a poetry symposium organized by the Association of Cultural Attachés of Latin America, Spain and Portugal. His two-week tour will then take him to Sheffield and Manchester in the north, and Bristol in the west.

The Norberto Codina Tour Committee held its first meeting September 13. The meeting was initiated by Pathfinder Distribution, which distributes *La Gaceta de Cuba* in the UK. Opening the meeting, Tony Hunt said that the recent bombing of Cuban hotels gave added importance to the tour. "Get-

ting out the truth about Cuba — among working people and youth, and all those interested in culture — is especially important at this time. As Codina has himself said, the most important cultural event in Cuba was the revolution that brought literacy and culture to millions previously denied it," Hunt added.

John Waller a member of the national executive of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC), attended the meeting for his local CSC group in Sheffield. They have decided to host a day school November 29 at which Codina will be the featured speaker.

Two lecturers from Hackney Community College in London, Behige Smith and Jayne Bullock, spoke enthusiastically of the prospect of Codina speaking at their campus. "Hackney is the poorest area in London, one of the poorest in the country," Smith commented. "It will be great for the students and teaching staff alike to have Norberto Codina visit."

Hilda Kaune, a Chilean exile and long-time Cuba solidarity activist, presented a report to the meeting on the openings for the tour among Latin Americans in London. She and Terry Bennett, a student at Middlesex University and an activist in the Friends of the MST of Brazil, formed the nucleus of a committee that will flesh out these openings. "There are also opportunities among Latin Americans in Bristol" said Gareth Evans, co-editor of *Entropy*, an experimental arts magazine.

Jane King, dance critic of the *Morning Star*, the newspaper associated with the Communist Party of Britain, and Emma Sangster, an artist and secretary of North-East London CSC, spoke of the opportunity to win further support for the tour. "This tour can reach people who haven't been involved in activity in defense of Cuba before," Sangster said. Celia Pugh, from the Communist League and a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union at Lucas in west London, said that a number of fellow trade unionists at the plant

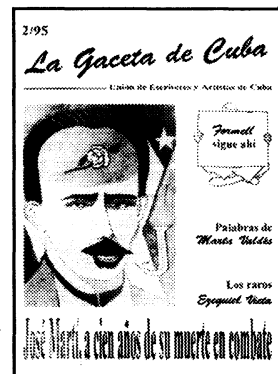
had donated material aid to Cuba and read literature about the revolution. "From Norberto Codina they'll be able to hear firsthand of the Cuban reality and the challenges facing the revolution."

Further information about the tour can be obtained from the Norberto Codina Tour Committee, BCM Box 7621, London WC1N 3 XX.

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Step up Pathfinder Fund collection

BY FRANCISCO PICADO

NEW YORK — Over the last week supporters of Pathfinder Press in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and New York made or raised their pledges to the Pathfinder Fund, pushing the total amount pledged above the international goal of raising \$125,000. Now the challenge is collecting the money.

As of September 30, the funds coming into Pathfinder's office in New York were nearly \$20,000 behind schedule. As we enter week five in this nine-week campaign, supporters around the world are striving to catch up on the collections by October 7. That means sending in about \$32,700 over the next week.

The Pathfinder Fund is aimed at making possible the publication and distribution of the books that tell the history of 150 years of struggle by the working class for its emancipation.

"It important to realize that these monies are needed now to keep the presses running," said Peter Thierjung, who is helping to or-

ganize the fund in New York. Thierjung works in the printshop where Pathfinder books are produced. "This past month we organized in the printshop to get out eight titles," he explained. "Seven of them were books that were out or nearly out of stock such as *Teamsters Power* by Farrell Dobbs and the French translation of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada. These financial contributions make it possible in a very concrete way to keep these books in print."

Pathfinder also published a new title this past month: a new Spanish-language edition of *Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*.

Fifty-nine copies of this new title were sold by a team of international volunteers at a fair organized by the Communist Party of Spain, in Madrid. "Participants bought more than \$1,500 worth of Pathfinder titles," said Paco Sánchez, who also works at Pathfinder's printshop in New York. Sánchez "went way over the limits" of his luggage allowance to get the books to

Madrid just two days after the new title had been printed.

Another team of volunteers, Luis Madrid and Margrethe Siem, are currently helping to promote this book in Puebla and Mexico City, Mexico, including at events where the author is speaking.

Supporters in cities through out the world are organizing fund rallies to discuss world politics and working-class resistance in the United States and elsewhere.

Nearly 50 people attended a September 27 benefit in Seattle celebrating Pathfinder's recent publication of the Spanish translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics — Working Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes. Speakers included Laura Garza, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee, and Tomás Villanueva, a leader of the United Farm Workers in Washington state. Those attending gave \$1,890 to the Pathfinder Fund on the spot, and a few made new pledges that they will pay over the rest of the fund drive.

\$125,000 Pathfinder Fund September 1 - November 1

CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
Seattle*	9,000	6,120	68%
Boston	5,500	2,775	50%
Philadelphia	4,000	1,767	44%
Des Moines	2,400	1,051	44%
Detroit	4,000	1,555	39%
Atlanta*	4,500	1,679	37%
Twin Cities	7,000	2,485	36%
Chicago	11,000	3,236	29%
Houston	5,500	1,550	28%
Birmingham	3,500	865	25%
Pittsburgh	5,000	1,195	24%
New York*	13,500	2,895	21%
San Francisco	9,500	1,850	19%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	562	19%
Miami	3,000	530	18%
Los Angeles	10,000	1,705	17%
Newark	8,500	1,295	15%
Cleveland	2,400	30	1%
Other	2,918	1,636	56%
U.S. Total	114,218	34,781	30%
New Zealand*	2,870	840	29%
Australia	750	125	17%
Canada	5,300	915	17%
Sweden	700	0	0%
United Kingdom	1,200	75	6%
Other Int'l		35	
INT'L TOTAL:	125,038	36,771	29%
SHOULD BE:	125,000	55,000	44%
* Raised Goal			

Socialist Workers defend election rights

Atlanta ballot victory

BY JILL FEIN

ATLANTA — "As Municipal Superintendent of the city of Atlanta, I hereby give notice that you have been "Qualified" as a candidate for mayor in the November 4, 1997 Municipal General Election," said a October 1 letter to Socialist Workers candidate Doug Nelson from Olivia Parks Woods. A week earlier, Woods had challenged Nelson's ballot status.

On September 9 Nelson filed forms with the city to be placed on the ballot. There is a \$3,000 fee to get on the Atlanta ballot for mayor. To waive this a candidate can file for "pauper" status.

That is exactly what Nelson, a 22-year-old assembly worker and a member of the United Steelworkers of America whose pay averages \$900 a month, did. This option was won as a result of the victories of the civil rights movement, which rolled back some of the laws that kept Blacks and other working people off the ballot.

In 1969 Linda Jenness ran for mayor of Atlanta on the SWP ticket. A lawsuit by the socialist campaign resulted in Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black ordering a waiver of the filing fee. As a result, Jenness and 36 others were able to get on the ballot for the municipal elections. Four of them actually won the election for the office they were running for.

On September 23 of this year, Nelson received a letter from Woods challenging his qualifications as a "pauper." A hearing was set for October 1 where he was instructed to "show cause why you should not be disqualified."

When hearing of this challenge, working people reacted with anger. David Bouffard wrote to Olivia Woods saying, "I am outraged at your attempt to keep Douglas Nelson of the Socialist Workers Party off the ballot for Mayor of Atlanta. The SWP has run candidates in state and municipal elections all over this country for over 50 years."

Upon hearing about this attack, radio host Heather Gray immediately scheduled Nelson on her one-hour show on WRFG for October 6. Teresa Nelson, executive director of the Georgia State ACLU, agreed to take part in a speak-out for ballot rights that will be held at the socialist campaign headquarters October 4.

Paul Cornish, a production worker at Wilen, and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), met with Nelson and decided to help staff a campaign table at the Southeast UNITE conference scheduled for Atlanta October 4-5. Cornish and others plan to collect signatures on a petition to demand Nelson's name remain on the November 4 ballot.

In the days leading up to the hearing, campaign supporters gathered signatures on this petition at several worksites in the area. Abby Tilsner, a member of the United Transportation Union, got several signatures from co-workers at the Norfolk Southern railroad. Three workers at Norfolk Southern's Industry Yard bought copies of the *Militant* from a campaign team there September 28, and

one signed the petition. Two days earlier, seven Teamsters who work at UPS's Fulton-Industrial facility signed to support Nelson's right to be on the ballot, and six bought copies of the *Militant*.

Nelson spoke to reporters at a press conference just prior to the October 1 hearing, where he was represented by attorney John Sweet. Later that day he was interviewed on a Georgia Tech campus radio station.

"My campaign thanks all those who supported this fight," the Socialist Workers candidate said in a news release after getting confirmation of the decision, which he described as "a victory for all workers."

Ruled off in Houston

BY BARBARA GRAHAM

HOUSTON — On September 26 the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Houston, Patti Iiyama, was informed by the City Secretary's office that her name was ruled off the ballot in the upcoming November municipal elections.

Rather than paying the \$1,250 filing fee, as the majority of the big-business candidates did, Iiyama and her supporters fanned out to working-class neighborhoods and area campuses. More than 1,000 Houston residents signed petitions to place the socialist candidate's name on the ballot. City officials claim only 597 of those signatures are valid — 34 short of the 631 needed to meet

the legal requirement. Another candidate who petitioned to get on the ballot, transit worker Laverne Crump-Smith, was also denied a place in the election on grounds that her petitions were not properly completed.

"This decision to exclude me is a political act," Iiyama said. "It denies a working-class candidate the basic right to be heard with equal access to the political process."

"My campaign supports Ms. Crump-Smith's right to be on the ballot," she added. "These acts denies the people of Houston the right to hear all points of view."

Noting that the debate over affirmative action is a serious issue in the campaign, Iiyama stated, "My campaign takes an unequivocal position in favor of defending and extending mandatory affirmative action programs in education and jobs — both in the public sector and private business."

Iiyama and her supporters are organizing a challenge to this exclusion, including holding an October 2 press conference on the steps of city hall to protest the exclusion.

"I call on all those who defend an open and democratic discussion during these municipal elections to demand that the mayor reverse this undemocratic ruling and place the name of Patti Iiyama on the ballot as a candidate for mayor in the 1997 mayoral race," the candidate said.

"And even if this attempt to win ballot status fails, I promise that I will continue my campaign and speak out in the interests of working people."

SWP candidates join New York debates



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Wendy Lyons (center), a garment worker and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for comptroller in New York City, participates in debate with the incumbent, Democrat Alan Hevesi, and Genevieve Torres of the Independence Party September 29. The week before, Shoghi Fret, also a garment worker and leader of the Young Socialists in New York, debated with the other candidates for public advocate, incumbent Democrat Mark Green and Jules Polonetsky, a Democratic assemblyman picked by the current mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, to run on the Republican and Liberal Party lines. Socialist candidate Olga Rodríguez, a member of the International Association of Machinists, will participate in the mayoral debate October 9. The debates, sponsored by the city campaign board, are carried live on New York One cable television station and on WNYC radio.

Seattle disclosure fight

BY ROBBIE SCHERR

SEATTLE — A battle over the right to privacy and freedom of association has opened up in Washington State.

On September 23 the Washington State Public Disclosure commission (PDC) voted to exempt the Socialist Workers 1997 Campaign from disclosing the names of its contributors and vendors. But the PDC's decision came on the heels of and ran counter to a September 10 ruling by the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC), which denied the party's request for such an exemption.

The SEEC had granted the party's request in 1993.

In March 1997 the Federal Election Commission (FEC) extended the SWP election campaign exemption for six years.

The PDC decision to extend the party's long-standing exemption was a victory for democratic rights. The socialist campaign presented numerous incidents of harassment and intimidation by police, employers, and others of the SWP and its supporters that have occurred in recent years, as testimony to the need to protect the privacy of donors.

On Friday, September 26, the Seattle Times — the evening daily newspaper — joined the SEEC in its offensive against democratic rights. The Times ran a lengthy lead editorial entitled, "Free and Fair elections require full disclosure."

The article describes the incidents cited in the SWP's written documentation to the SEEC as "trivial by modern campaign standards." It concedes that in the past minority parties, including the SWP have been targeted for disruption but argues "the mere fact of historical intimidation does not override a fundamental, present-day need for open government and open books."

The Times urges that "the PDC's hasty decision should be reconsidered."

An October 8 special meeting of the SEEC is slated to reconsider the SWP's request for an exemption. Supporters of privacy and freedom of association are gathering letters of support to present along with further evidence of disruption.

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Persistent sales effort can put drive back on target

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"We are now on target for our *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription goals, after being behind for three weeks," said Beverly Bernardo from Vancouver, British Columbia, in a September 28 note to the *Militant*. "Here's how we did it.

"First we sold eight *Militant* subs on two weekend trips to Vancouver Island, where 2,400 pulp and paper workers are on strike against Fletcher Challenge. Our efforts there included picket line visits, door-to-door sales, and set-

ting up literature tables on campus and working-class communities. We also attended a picnic sponsored by the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers union local in Port Aberni.

"Secondly, we have sold subscriptions through a variety of activities in the Vancouver area: one on the job to a fellow member of the International Association of Machinists; two door-to-door in campus residences; one by calling back someone we met at a campus literature table; three to members of the Young Socialists; one at a Take Back the Night march, along with four Pathfinder books; one at a conference of youth against APEC [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation]; and two at a Pathfinder fund event on Korea, along with one copy each of *New International* no. 7 and no. 10.

"We have also sold three special offers of a *Militant* sub and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* (see front-page ad) — two to young people interested in the YS."

The persistent efforts by members and supporters of the Communist League and Young Socialists in Vancouver, who are at the top of the chart at the midpoint of the subscription drive, point to what everyone can do around the world.

Consistently seeking workers, especially those who have gone through some battles, also pays off.

Socialists have been regularly selling the *Militant* to Teamsters members at three UPS depots in Atlanta for the last seven weeks. During this period, ending with the September 29 issue, they sold 119 copies of the socialist newsweekly — an average of 17 per week. One of these workers subscribed to the *Militant* two weeks ago, said Floyd Fowler from Atlanta in a telephone interview. Another turned up at a *Militant* Labor Forum recently, and seven signed a petition supporting the ballot fight of Doug Nelson, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of the city (see article on page 4).

Following up on single-

copy sales on the job brings in new subscribers as well.

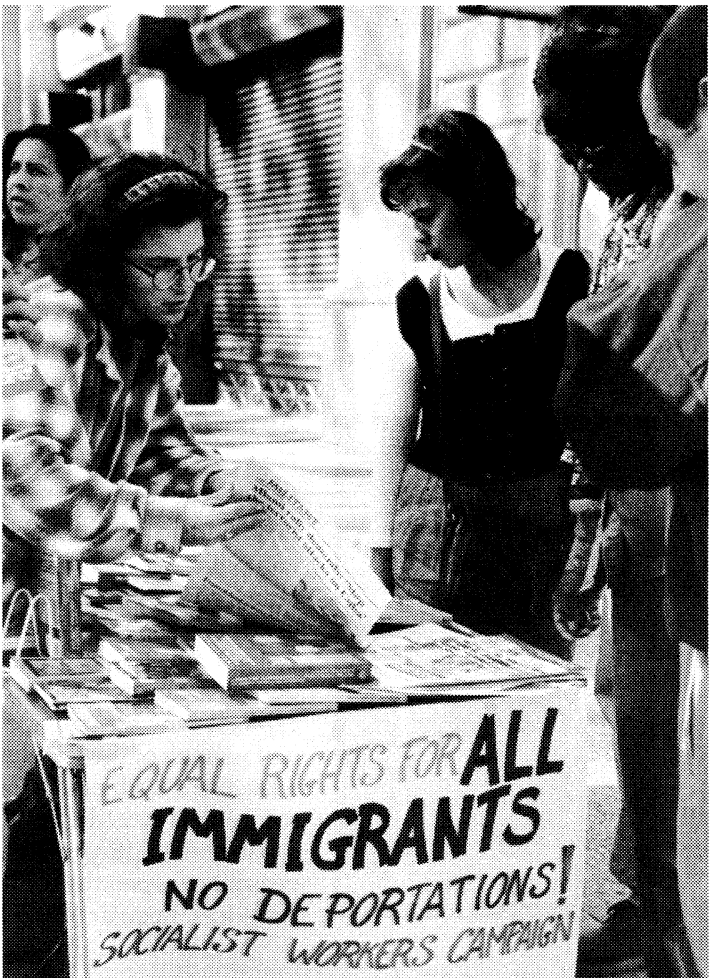
"So far I have sold three *Militant* subscriptions to steelworkers at the Bethlehem Steel Sparrows Point plant outside Baltimore," wrote Brian Williams, who is a production worker at that mill. "One guy, the head of the veterans committee in the union, bought a copy of the paper outside the monthly local meeting of the United Steelworkers of America. He said he had read an issue when it was sold at the plant years ago. After buying a couple of more issues he decided to subscribe.

"A young new hire also got interested in the paper after buying it for a couple of weeks. He suggested keeping in touch by e-mail since we worked different shifts in different departments. 'The *Militant* is a great paper,' he wrote in one e-mail message. A week later he also signed up for his subscription."

During the fourth week of the drive the *Militant* received 19 new subscriptions from unionists in the United States who signed up after talking to socialists on the job, the highest weekly total yet.

Socialist workers find interest in the paper in all kinds of labor events. During the September 21 – 25 AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh, for example, they sold 100 copies of the *Militant*, three subscriptions each to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* (PM), and 30 Pathfinder books.

As the 30th anniversary of the fall in combat of Ernesto Che Guevara approaches, sales of books by the Argentine-born revolutionary and on the significance of his work for today are on the rise.



Militant/Hilda Cuzco Sales at September 21 International Cultures Parade in New York

Janice Lynn, a member of the International Association of Machinists from Washington, D.C., reports that socialists sold 5 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 1 to PM, and 42 books at the September 27 – 28 Baltimore Book Festival. These included Guevara's *Bolivian Diary*, *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956 – 58*, *Che Guevara Speaks — Selected Speeches and Writings*, and two copies of *New International* no. 8 on "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism."

As we enter the fifth week of the drive — a "target" week of sales — *Militant* supporters around the world are increasing their efforts to get back on or ahead of schedule.

"Our goal is to be back on target by the end of the target week (i.e. with 12 *Militant* subscriptions under our belt)," wrote Bob Aiken from Sydney, Australia. "Among other things, next week we're getting out to a coal miners picnic, organized by the Northern District of the CFMEU miners' union."

'MILITANT' SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE							
September 1 – October 26							
WEEK 4							
City/Country	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
CANADA							
Vancouver	50	27	54%	5	4	20	5
Montreal	30	16	53%	10	3	30	14
Toronto	50	23	46%	10	1	20	7
Canada total	130	66	51%	25	8	70	26
NEW ZEALAND							
Auckland	30	13	43%	2	3	10	4
Christchurch	15	6	40%	1	0	5	2
Wellington	3	0	0%	1	0	1	0
NZ total	48	19	40%	4	3	16	6
UNITED STATES							
Washington, DC	40	29	73%	15	8	15	9
Philadelphia	25	14	56%	8	2	8	4
Miami	40	21	53%	22	7	25	11
Des Moines	40	21	53%	20	14	20	8
Boston	40	20	50%	15	9	35	13
Birmingham, AL	47	23	49%	5	4	15	2
Seattle	70	30	43%	20	9	20	5
San Francisco	70	29	41%	30	11	35	6
Pittsburgh	48	18	38%	3	0	15	2
Detroit	40	15	38%	8	2	12	8
Atlanta*	33	12	36%	15	14	15	1
New York	140	49	35%	70	30	60	50
Los Angeles	110	36	33%	55	18	55	17
Newark, NJ	120	36	30%	40	16	60	24
Chicago	95	28	29%	30	9	40	4
Houston	40	9	23%	15	2	15	2
Cleveland	30	5	17%	6	0	10	4
Twin Cities, MN	70	9	13%	15	4	15	2
Other		9					
U.S. total	1098	413	38%	392	159	470	172
UNITED KINGDOM							
London	50	16	32%	12	14	35	40
Manchester	25	7	28%	2	0	12	5
UK total	75	23	31%	14	14	47	45
AUSTRALIA	16	4	25%	3	0	10	4
SWEDEN	16	4	25%	7	4	8	2
ICELAND	10	2	20%	1	0	5	0
Other international		4					36
International totals	1393	535	41%	446	188	626	291
Should be	1300	650	50%	400	200	600	300

* raised goal

IN THE UNIONS							
Country/Union	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
AUSTRALIA							
AMWU	2	1	50%	0	0	1	0
UNITED STATES							
IAM	50	20	40%	15	3	22	0
UTU	50	13	26%	5	0	20	1
UFCW	9	2	22%	13	6	9	5
USWA	38	8	21%	4	0	22	0
UAW	50	1	2%	5	0	25	0
OCAW	30	1	0%	10	0	15	0
UNITE	8	0	0%	8	1	6	0
U.S. total	235	45	19%	60	10	119	6
CANADA							
USWA	5	3	60%	1	0	5	1
IAM	10	2	20%	1	0	5	0
Canada total	15	5	33%	2	0	10	1
NEW ZEALAND							
EU	7	1	14%	0	0	1	0
MWU	2	0	0%	0	0	1	0
UFBGWU	2	0	0%	0	0	1	0
NZ total	11	1	9%	0	0	3	0
UNITED KINGDOM							
AEEU	5	0	0%	0	0	5	1
RMT	3	0	0%	0	0	2	0
TGWU	5	0	0%	0	0	4	0
UK total	13	0	0%	0	0	11	1

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Metal Workers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

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☐ I am interested in attending the YS convention

☐ I am interested in joining the Young Socialists

☐ Enclosed is \$12(Can) for a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*

NAME

ADDRESS

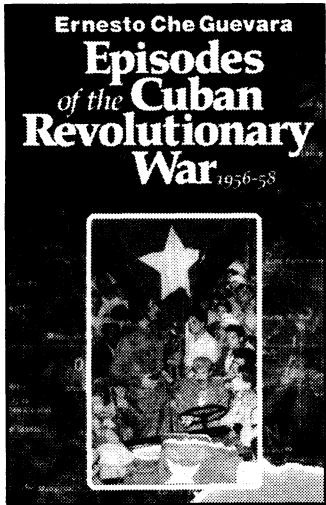
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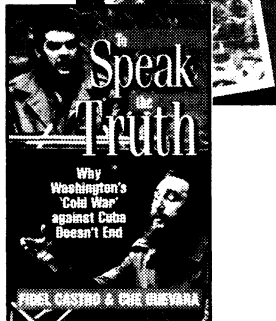
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Ernesto Che Guevara
Bolivian diary



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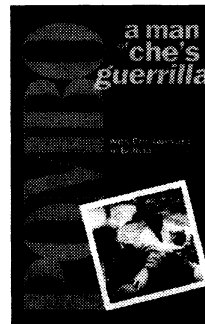
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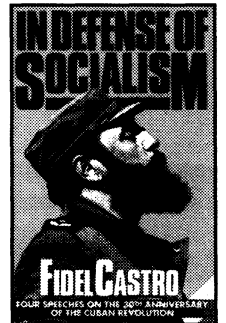
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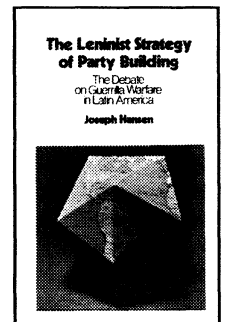
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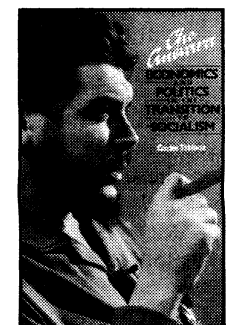
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Che and the imperialist reality

World capitalism is weaker today than 30 years ago, says panelist at Havana conference on Ernesto Che Guevara's revolutionary legacy

The following article was circulated in Spanish translation to participants in the conference on "The 21st Century: The Legacy and Relevancy of Che's Works," held in Havana, September 25 - 27, 1997, and was the basis of a presentation to that gathering by Mary-Alice Waters. The conference, sponsored by Tricontinental magazine and the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, was organized on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Guevara's death in combat in Bolivia.

Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the magazine New International and president of Pathfinder Press, has edited and written introductions to several English-language editions of Guevara's works, including *The Bolivian Diary* and *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, both published by Pathfinder. Most recently she edited Pathfinder's English edition of Pombo: A Man of Che's 'Guerrilla' by Cuban brigadier general Harry Villegas, and wrote the preface to a new Spanish edition of Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism by Carlos Tablada. The following is copyright © Pathfinder Press 1997 and reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

"Twenty-one years have elapsed since the end of the last world conflagration, and various publications in every language are celebrating this event, symbolized by the defeat of Japan. A climate of optimism is apparent in many sectors of the different camps into which the world is divided." Yet, "it is appropriate to ask whether this peace is real."

These were the words with which Ernesto Che Guevara opened his 1966 Message to the Tricontinental, "Create two, three . . . many Vietnams: That is the watchword."

These words are an appropriate place to begin today — not only because this message, Che's last major political article, was published 30 years ago in the magazine that has taken the initiative to bring together the participants



Photos: Above, Pathfinder; right: Militant/Margrethe Siem
"The imperialist reality of the 21st century in becoming would not be strange to Che Guevara," who died in combat in Bolivia 30 years ago. Above: Guevara addresses February 1960 rally in Cuba. Right: UPS strikers and supporters rally in New Jersey during August 1997 labor battle. Strike victory by Teamsters has U.S. bosses worried.



in this international symposium. Far more important is the fact that Che's Message to the Tricontinental so accurately depicts the imperialist reality of the world we seek to change, the reality we must face unflinchingly if our anti-imperialist struggle is to be victorious, within the United States as elsewhere.

Che's words remind us how well he understood the world in which, at the side of Fidel and others, he helped lead the working people of Cuba to establish the first free territory of the Americas and open a new chapter in the history of the modern working-class movement. They help focus our attention on the most important change that has occurred over the 30 years since Che's death: the fact that the relationship of class forces in a world still dominated by imperialism — with ups and downs, advances and setbacks — has shifted in favor of the oppressed and exploited.

The post-World War II economic and social order christened by Washington's heinous flood of fire against the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is still with us. But the "climate of optimism" Che pointed to in 1966 is no more. Today's climate is rather one of foreboding among the imperialist masters, marked by short periods of "irrational exuberance" (to quote the top central banker serving the U.S. rulers) and lengthening periods of gloom; heightened anxiety among the middle classes of all countries who count on the propertied rulers for protection and

stability; social polarization marked by aggressive probes by rightist and incipient fascist currents; and, most important of all, signs of resistance and rising defensive struggles among those from whose labor capital extracts surplus value in an attempt to reverse its long-term crisis.

In the United States, for the first time in years, an important section of the working class nationwide, the UPS (United Parcel Service) workers organized by the Teamsters union, emerged victorious from a hard-fought strike that drew popular support in the United States as well as worldwide attention. A new preoccupation is palpable in serious bourgeois circles in the United States, as they face the prospect of more frequent and more successful working-class resistance to declining real wages, accelerated speedup, two-tier pay scales, and other stratagems that seek to divide workers and weaken solidarity on the job. The employers are also considering the upsetting implications for their precarious economic health of the possibility that defensive battles by workers may set an example and bring weighty reinforcements to other social struggles — against police brutality, for immigrants rights, in support of women's equality, against racist discrimination.

The United States is no exception in this regard. Throughout the imperialist world, and especially in Europe, the pattern of growing resistance and sharpening class conflict is evident.

Those who dominated the other two "sectors of the different camps into which the world is divided" — to whom Che referred almost thirty years ago, and who, as he noted, shared the "climate of optimism" with imperialism's rul-

¹ Ernesto Che Guevara, "Vietnam and the World Struggle for Freedom (Message to the Tricontinental)," in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution: Writings and Speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara* (Pathfinder, 1987), p. 347.

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MARY-ALICE WATERS

Participant in 3-week Che Guevara 30th anniversary commemorations in Cuba

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ing families — also find the weather sharply changed. The bureaucratic castes that dominated much of what was termed the socialist camp today find themselves in disarray as they run after a declining capitalist system. And the bourgeoisies of the third world — from Mexico to Malaysia — are discovering the awful truth that the so-called miracle of emerging market economies doesn't culminate in emerged industrially advanced capitalist countries, stable currencies, and broadening well-being, but leads instead to explosive instability and increased domination and ownership by all the parasitic forms of imperial capital. Both these formerly optimistic ruling elites today confront urban and rural toilers in greater numbers, toilers increasingly impatient with the long wait for the promised capitalist prosperity for all.

The peace was not real

The dawn of the 21st century brings with it not a new international order but speculative frenzies and growing capitalist division and disarray. Che was right: the peace was not real. And it has not been real — no matter how often proclaimed — since the nuclear annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki registered the ascendancy, and the true face, of the North American colossus. As the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*, said in its banner headline the week of Tokyo's surrender to Washington in August 1945: "There is no peace!"

That has been the truth not only of the second half of the 20th century but remains so for the opening of the 21st. It has marked the course of the imperialist powers toward the peoples of the semicolonial world and the workers states ever since the Yankee ascendancy — and more and more indicates the future of relations among the capitalist powers themselves, as well. The convulsions we are living through are products of the increasing exhaustion of the world order that emerged from the flames and ashes of World War II with U.S. imperialism then near the pinnacle of its power.

Fifty years ago Washington's imperialist rivals/allies were desperate for loans and industrial goods to rebuild. The toiling peoples of the Soviet Union who heroically carried the brunt of resistance to German imperialism's invading forces — war weary, and facing colossal reconstruction tasks — seemed more vulnerable than ever before. But U.S. imperialism's great hopes began to evaporate even before they could be born, as the conscript ranks of the U.S. armed forces, workers and farmers in uniform, refused to allow themselves to be used against the rising tide of the colonial revolution. In mass demonstrations of a size and sweep unprecedented in the history of modern warfare, U.S. soldiers, sailors, and members of the merchant marine — from France to the Pacific bases — said, "No, we're going home!"² Through the breach, over the next decade, the fighting toilers of the colonial world sacrificed mightily but advanced — from China, to India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Korea, Egypt, and further — driving out their weakened former colonial masters.

The banner of national liberation and independence, unfurled worldwide during the war and postwar years, continued its triumphal advance up to and through the victory of the Cuban workers and farmers in 1959 and then their deepening socialist revolution that distanced them from the capitalist orbit and enabled them to face down the Yankee colossus.

The "climate of optimism" Che noted in 1966 was the product of a quarter century of accelerated economic expansion, with rates of growth whose memory make the capitalists weep today. This expansion was fueled, first, by massive war production and productivity increases, and then by the extensive renewal of capital made necessary and possible by the historically unprecedented scope of the wartime destruction of plant and equipment in Europe, Japan, and much of Asia, as well as by the prior horrendous defeats of the working-class movement in many of these countries. But the growth of profit rates and increasing rate of expanded production that undergirded the postwar capitalist dream and imperialist power were already beginning to wane even as Che wrote.

Today after a quarter century of declining profit rates — despite brutal "cost-cutting" drives against the wages and living standards of working people in all sectors of the world — the world capitalist economy is in the midst of a long-term deflationary crisis, marked by growing instability, financial volatility, and mercurial giddiness underlying bourgeois opinion. Trade and currency conflicts are intensifying. Balloons of capitalist debt, created by forcing larger and larger loans on semicolonial governments and businesses, expand and then deflate with increasing speed. From the collapse of the Mexican peso a few years ago, to the currency crisis shaking the Asian "tigers" today, to the looming prospect of devaluation in Hong Kong or Brazil tomorrow, to the highest levels of unemployment in Germany since the coming to power of the Nazi

regime — such events are only slightly hidden forms of the dollar crisis and the growing instability and weakness of the imperialist powers, including the Yankee colossus. They are harbingers of more, much more, to come.

Beneath the braggadocio about the global "market miracle" — and its "theoretical" rationalizations that go by names such as the "New Era" and the "New Paradigm" — lies the reality of a growing gap between prosperity and well-being for relatively narrow layers of the better-off middle classes, on the one hand, and, on the other, increasing insecurity, misery, and impoverishment of the great majority. This is the actuality from the city streets and rural villages of Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and



Photo at right: Militant/Joseph Hansen
"Courage, dignity, and tenacity of Vietnamese people changed forever the consciousness of millions in the United States and hastened day of reckoning for U.S. imperialism." Above: Vietnamese freedom fighters enter Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in April 1975. Right: April 15, 1967, demonstration against Vietnam War in New York City.



Haiti, to those in Egypt, India, Thailand, and Indonesia; from the refugee camps of war-torn Africa, to the mines, factories, and farms of Russia; from the working-class suburbs of major European cities, to the swelling ranks of working families newly denied food stamps and medical aid in the U.S. land of milk and honey.

At the opening of this decade, the U.S. rulers briefly trumpeted the dawn of a "new world order," even "the end of history," in the wake of the White House-orchestrated and UN-camouflaged assault on Iraq — a murderous war on a sovereign nation exposed and denounced in the United Nations Security Council only by Cuba's representative, speaking with Che's spirit.³ But Washington's promises of spreading peace, prosperity, and democracy throughout the region were merely cynical rationalizations for the use of military might to shore up a weakening imperial world order.

Today large parts of Yugoslavia are confronting not only the devastating consequences of the first land war in Europe in 50 years, but what is becoming a prolonged imperialist occupation. As Washington and its European rivals maneuver for position there, they are sinking their roots more and more deeply into the Balkans powder keg. The Clinton administration acknowledged two days ago what many both in Yugoslavia and the world over have long known — that neither Washington nor the other imperialist powers in NATO have any intention of withdrawing their troops from Bosnia next year or by any foreseeable date.

The U.S. rulers are pressing the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe in order to reposition their troops closer to the heartland of the October Revolution and lay the basis to eventually accomplish by force what, to their dismay, they have failed to achieve in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union — restoration of the dominance of stable capitalist social relations.

Washington is rekindling the imperialist powers' "Great Game," as it pushes for domination of the vast Caspian oil reserves throughout the Caucasus and Central Asian republics of the former USSR. The basis for renewed assaults against Iran grows apace. The steady social and economic disintegration of sub-Saharan Africa is accompanied by increasingly frequent imperialist military interventions. The permanent garrisoning of tens of thousands of nuclear-armed U.S. troops on the Korean peninsula threatens another holocaust on an even greater scale than that inflicted on workers and peasants there almost half a century ago. And on the opposite end of this island where we are meeting today, the U.S. government still maintains a military base at Guantánamo on illegally occupied Cuban soil, a dagger always ready for whatever provocation Washington deems useful.

U.S. president William Clinton can arrogantly assert, as he did in his second inaugural address last January, that "America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation." And the new secretary of state chosen by Clinton to personify the direction of his second term can and will pursue the aggressive and insolent foreign policy born of such historical miscalculation. But we are far from a unipolar world in which a declining Yankee empire reigns supreme as "the indispensable nation." Between the opening salvos of World War III, already sounded from Iraq to Bosnia, and those of a new global conflagration stand countless defensive battles that will be waged by the toiling classes who constitute the "indispensable answer" for humanity. They will have their chance to take their own destiny in hand and determine the course of history.

The imperialist enemy is weaker

This world of capitalist disorder — the imperialist reality of the 21st century in-becoming — would not be strange to Che. Nor would he fail to recognize the weight, power, and political leverage of the Cuban revolution within this reality. Far from being dismayed by the odds we face, moreover, he would have examined this world with scientific precision and charted a course to win, turning toward the battles with the warrior's spirit he was imbued with.

Four points call out for emphasis in relationship to Che and the imperialist reality:

1. Che's scientific understanding of the world in which

we live and fight drew deeply on the continuity of the modern working-class movement, on the cumulative lessons of the battles we have won, and the battles we have lost over the last 150 years — from the foundations laid by Marx and Engels, through the continuity forged by Lenin and the Bolshevik revolution whose 80th anniversary we celebrate a few weeks from now. Che understood, profoundly, the character of the enemy we face: that imperialism is a world system — the last stage of capitalism, a system ruled by the law of value — and that the world class struggle is an interrelated whole. Proletarian internationalism is not a luxury, or one among

several effective choices; it is dictated by capital itself, by its inevitable national conflicts and its rapacious character. Che knew that proletarian internationalism is a precondition for the working class to surmount the competition among ourselves inherent in the condition of propertyless wage slavery, to rise to a level of discipline and culture necessary to win, and to transform ourselves in the process.

"Let it be known that we have measured the scope of our acts and that we consider ourselves no more than a part of the great army of the proletariat," Che wrote in his Message to the Tricontinental.⁴

"We must definitely keep in mind that imperialism is a world system, the final stage of capitalism," Che said in that article, "and that it must be beaten in a great worldwide confrontation. The strategic objective of that struggle must be the destruction of imperialism. . . . In focusing on the destruction of imperialism, it is necessary to identify its head, which is none other than the United States of North America."⁵

Over and over, taking advantage of the broadest public forums, including some arenas not used to hearing the truth fearlessly spoken — at the 1961 Organization of

² See "1945: When U.S. Troops Said 'No!'" by Mary-Alice Waters, in *New Internationalist* no. 7 (1991).

³ Fidel Castro and Ricardo Alarcón, *U.S. Hands Off the Middle East! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations* (Pathfinder, 1990), edited with an introduction by Mary-Alice Waters.

⁴ Guevara, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 359.

⁵ Guevara, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 356.

American States-sponsored conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay; at the 1964 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva; before the UN General Assembly later that same year; at the 1965 Afro-Asian solidarity conference in Algiers — Che dissected and exposed the political and economic workings of the imperialist system. And he did so with profound understanding, unflinching truthfulness, and a trenchant humor that instilled confidence in working people and revolutionary fighters the world over.

In Cuba, as he fulfilled his many leadership responsibilities, Che labored — day in and day out — to strip bourgeois obfuscation from questions of political economy and to assure workers access to knowledge of the economics and politics of socialism, so they could increasingly and confidently assert control over the organization and administration of labor and all aspects of production.

He sought to instill in the Cuban workers and farmers a consciousness of the stakes involved and of their historic role on the front lines of confrontation with the “great enemy of the human race,” as he accurately labeled U.S. imperialism in his Message to the Tricontinental. No accommodation is possible, he taught us, and, more importantly, no loss of nerve ever occurs without a consequent strengthening of the class enemy.

“Those who know recent history know that you can’t play with imperialism,” Che told the assembled workers at the INPUD, the National Industry of Domestic Utensils and Products in July 1964. “[Brazilian president] Goulart is out, exiled in Uruguay, just to show how you can’t play with imperialism. And [Dominican dictator] Trujillo is no more, demonstrating even better that you can’t play with imperialism; because when Trujillo put his personal interests above the interests of the empire and decided to make his own policy — after having amassed a huge fortune with the help of the same North Americans, from the blood and sweat of his people — when it came to that moment of rebellion, he was simply liquidated.

“And the same thing happened to the Vietnam puppet [Ngo Dinh Diem] who thought for a moment that he could blackmail the North Americans. This is a dangerous game. The North Americans cannot be blackmailed; they go directly after what they want and they know what they want. In order to face up to the North Americans, it is necessary to speak in a very clear and straight way and to put aside any thought of placing life ahead of principle, just as our people have done on repeated occasions; and beyond the government there must be a whole people armed and prepared to defend it.”⁶ The lesson for fighting workers and farmers and uncompromising rebel youth in the world today could not be more succinctly put.

One of the most perceptive — if unintentional — tributes to Che in this 30th anniversary year appeared a few weeks ago in the letters column of one of the main organs of the United Kingdom’s ruling class, *The Times* of London. Almost as if trying to illustrate Che’s words just quoted, the author of the letter, Maurice Baird-Smith — writing from retirement in southern France, in the inimitable style of the moneyed British — recalled the following:

Sir, The return of the remains of Che Guevara to Cuba (The World in Brief, July 14) brings back vivid memories of the contacts I had with him in the early 1960s when I was director of an international oil company in Havana which was sequestered by the Cuban Government.

“El Che” was an out and out Communist who never hid his belief that we should be got rid of. To visit him in his office was an unforgettable experience. He sat in “battle dress” with two pistols on the desk pointing at me. He was always very courteous but left no doubt that he was dealing with an organisation which he felt the world could well do without.

Quite.

The representatives of imperialism, confronted by the power of the Cuban working class as it took its own destiny in hand, have never forgotten, nor will they ever forgive, the lessons they were taught.

Vietnamese struggle changed the world

2. Guevara was one of the few leaders of world stature who understood and explained with unvarnished clarity that the successful resistance to U.S. imperialist aggression being mounted by the Vietnamese people represented a turning point in the history of the 20th century that would have far-reaching consequences worldwide. In issuing his call to “create two, three . . . many Vietnams,” Che accurately noted that the ability of the Vietnamese to hold off the weighty military machine of U.S. imperialism was unprecedented — despite being “tragically alone,” from the standpoint of economic and military aid commensurate with their needs.

“Defensive weapons, and not in sufficient number, are all these marvelous Vietnamese soldiers have besides love for their country, for their society, and a courage that stands up to all tests,” Guevara stated in 1966. “But imperialism

is bogged down in Vietnam. It sees no way out and is searching desperately for one that will permit it to emerge with dignity from the dangerous situation in which it finds itself.”

At the same time, Che emphasized, “when we analyze the isolation of the Vietnamese we are overcome by anguish at this illogical moment in the history of humanity. U.S. imperialism is guilty of aggression. Its crimes are immense, extending over the whole world. We know this, gentlemen! But also guilty are those who at the decisive moment hesitated to make Vietnam an inviolable part of socialist territory — yes, at the risk of a war of global scale, but also compelling the U.S. imperialists to make a decision.”⁷

Most importantly, Che understood

World capitalism faces deflationary crisis marked by trade conflicts and financial instability. Right: currency crisis in Thailand has spurred demonstrations against antilabor policies of government and imperialist banks. Below: Workers last year protested shipyard shutdown in Germany, where joblessness is at highest levels since first years of Nazi regime. Sign reads: “Hands offered, fists clenched.”



that the courage, dignity, and tenacity of the Vietnamese people in fighting for their sovereignty, for their freedom from subordination to the inhuman consequences of the laws of capital, had changed forever the political consciousness of millions living in the United States and was hastening the day of reckoning for U.S. imperialism.

The fact that U.S. soldiers, confront “the permanent hostility of the entire population” in Vietnam, Guevara noted, is “provoking repercussions inside the United States. It is leading to the appearance of a factor that was attenuated by imperialism at full strength: the class struggle inside its own territory.”⁸

It will be a long time, Che wrote, “before we know if President Johnson ever seriously intended to initiate some

of the reforms needed by his people — to sandpaper the class contradictions that are appearing with explosive force and mounting frequency. What is certain is that the improvements announced under the pompous title of the Great Society have gone down the drain in Vietnam. The greatest of the imperialist powers is feeling in its own

bowels the bleeding inflicted by a poor, backward country; its fabulous economy is strained by the war effort. Killing has ceased to be the most comfortable business for the monopolies.”⁹

When those words were written, the escalation of Washington’s aggression against Vietnam was scarcely two years old. Che did not live to see the extent of the explosion of struggle inside the United States that finally linked up with the resistance of the Vietnamese people, defeating the mightiest military power on earth and altering the course of the last quarter century. But we should note that as a result of that historic struggle by the Viet-

namese people, Washington’s preoccupation with that war gave the hard-pressed people of Cuba time to breathe, and to redeem the courage of their fellow combatants in Indochina by consolidating a socialist revolution right on the doorstep of U.S. imperialism.

Che also correctly gauged the significance of the first mass actions inside the United States against the Vietnam war and the interconnection of this growing movement with the rising Black struggle. Che saw the unavoidable economic consequences of the war, from which neither Washington nor world finance capital would ever totally recover, and the beginning transformation of the working class within the borders of the United States — a transformation still not reversed, and one that cannot be short of titanic battles whose outcome no one can today guarantee.

3. Time and again Che returned to the vanguard role of the Black struggle in the U.S. working-class movement, underscoring the courage and combativity of the masses of African-American people whose struggles were then culminating in the destruction of the Jim Crow system of segregation that still prevailed in law throughout the southern states of the United States, and in fact in much of the rest of the country as well. He had an accurate appreciation of the social weight of the Black struggle and the substantial majority proletarian composition of the Black population. His judgment was consistent with the political vanguard role the Black freedom struggle has played from the days of Radical Reconstruction following the defeat of the slavocracy in the Civil War, to the present resistance to the consequences of finance capital’s domination.

By the mid-1960s, the mass proletarian battles against Jim Crow were just reaching their successful culmination — thanks in part to the powerful example and chal-

for further reading

Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism

In *New International* no. 8

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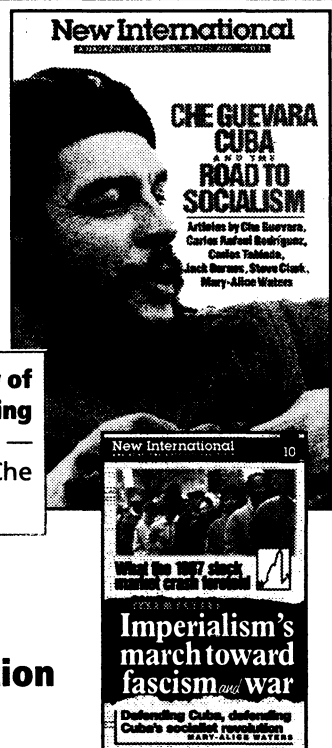
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⁶ Guevara, in *Escritos y discursos* (Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1985), vol. 8, p. 143.

⁷ Guevara, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 350.

⁸ Guevara, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 359.

⁹ Guevara, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 350.

lenge posed by the Cuban revolution, it should be said. Upon taking power in January 1959, Cuba's revolutionary government began to enforce a sweeping ban on any forms of racial discrimination — just 90 miles from the shores of the old Confederacy. Pointing to the oppressed status of Blacks in the United States, as well as of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, Che effectively unmasked Washington's pretensions to teach the world about freedom and democracy.

"The United States intervenes in Latin America invoking the defense of free institutions," Che said in addressing the UN General Assembly in December 1964. "The time will come when this assembly will acquire greater maturity and demand of the United States government guarantees for the life of the Blacks and Latin Americans who live in that country, most of them U.S. citizens by origin or adoption."

"Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the color of their skin; those who let the murderers of Blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the Black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men — how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom? . . . The government of the United States is not the champion of freedom, but rather the perpetrator of exploitation and oppression against the peoples of the world and against a large part of its own population."¹⁰

Che Guevara and Malcolm X

Che was a contemporary of Malcolm X, one of the greatest modern working-class leaders in the United States, and the two of them were drawn toward each other as kindred revolutionary fighters. Like Malcolm, Che was no disciple of any variant of the Gandhian strategy of nonviolence; they were bound by their shared courage, audacity, and commitment to win freedom "by any means necessary." Che and Malcolm were bound by their utter contempt for the prerogatives of capital and the pretensions of its personifiers; by their respect for and openness to the integrity and intelligence of every human being who stood up and fought; and by their common refusal to compromise the truth. They were bound by their unshakable confidence in the capacity of ordinary men and women to transform themselves in the process of fighting to transform the conditions of their existence and change the world. And by their disdain for the rationalizations and cowardice of the misleaders of the toilers.

During Guevara's 1964 visit to New York to address the United Nations General Assembly, he spent an evening talking with a group of journalists and writers who were supporters of the Cuban revolution. Excerpts from the discussion were later broadcast on New York radio station WBAI.

The 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer had just drawn to a close, a summer of intense civil rights battles in the South during which, among other events, three young volunteers had been brutally murdered by Mississippi small businessmen and police officers in the Ku Klux Klan. Che was asked, "Considering the events of last summer . . . the recent events in Mississippi, how do you see the struggle of the Negro people in America?" His answer was careful but clear:

"That's a very difficult question for me to answer," he said. "One would have to know all the reactions of the North American people as a whole, the relations among whites and Blacks, the capacity for response among the Black people, the capacity of the leaders. In short, we would have to know in great detail a lot of aspects that I do not know. In general, it seems that racial violence is flourishing in some North American states. In the face of that there are some means and ways. We can crouch a little more to see if the blow hurts less. We can energetically protest and then receive more blows. Or we can answer blow for blow. But that's very easy to say, and it's very difficult to do. And there must be preparation in order to do that. I don't know what the reaction would be, and what the possibilities of a reaction would be. I cannot predict it."¹¹

During that same visit Malcolm invited Che to address a rally organized by the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City. At the last minute, intelligence reports indicated that it would not be wise for Che to appear. The freedom of operations enjoyed by various counterrevolutionary Cuban outfits at that time had been demonstrated two days earlier when one of them, using a U.S. Army-issue rocket launcher, fired a bazooka shell at the United Nations building while Guevara was addressing the General Assembly. The shell fell short and landed harmlessly in the East River, but the explosion could be heard in the assembly hall. Che continued his speech without pause or notice.

Regretting that it was not possible for him to attend the OAAU meeting, Che sent greetings that were read to the appreciative audience by Malcolm. "I love a revolution-

ary," Malcolm said in introducing the message from Che. "And one of the most revolutionary men in this country right now was going to come out here along with our friend Sheik Babu [the leader of the Zanzibar liberation struggle and pioneer of Tanzanian independence], but he thought better of it. But he did send this message. It says:

"Dear brothers and sisters of Harlem, I would have liked to have been with you and Brother Babu, but the actual conditions are not good for this meeting. Receive the warm salutations of the Cuban people and especially those of Fidel, who remembers enthusiastically his visit to Harlem a few years ago. United we will win."

Then Malcolm added: "I'm happy to hear your warm round of applause in return, because it lets the Man know that he's just not in a position today to tell us who we should applaud for and who we shouldn't applaud for. And



During 1963 Battle of Birmingham, cops assaulted opponents of Jim Crow segregation in U.S. South using fire hoses, tear gas, and dogs. Over previous few years, revolutionary government in Cuba had set powerful example by enforcing ban on racist discrimination.

you don't see any anti-Castro Cubans around here — we eat them up."¹²

Malcolm had a similar sense of appreciation of what the Chinese revolution had done to shatter racist lies and assumptions about oppressed peoples of color that had been perpetuated for centuries by the major colonial and then imperialist ruling classes of Europe and North America. Shortly before the rally at which Che had been scheduled to speak, Malcolm reminded another OAAU meeting in Harlem:

"There was a time in this country when they used to use the expression about Chinese, 'He doesn't have a Chinaman's chance.' Remember when they used to say that about the Chinese? You don't hear them saying that nowadays. Because the Chinaman has more chance now than they do. . . . It was not until China became independent and strong the Chinese people all over the world became respected. . . . It's the same way with you and me."¹³

Is it any mystery why Che and Malcolm recognized and respected each other? Is it any wonder they were both hated and feared by the powerful forces whom they were determined to mobilize the oppressed and exploited to destroy?

At a time when there were few among those who called themselves socialist or communist — in the United States or anywhere else in the world — who understood Malcolm's revolutionary trajectory and worked with him to advance it, Fidel and Che both were honored and proud to stand with him.

And I can add, with equal pride, that in the English-speaking world the predecessor of Pathfinder Press was the publishing house most closely associated at that time with the publication of the speeches and writings of both Malcolm X, and of Che and Fidel.

Cuba teaches revolution is possible

4. Che was acutely conscious of the place of the Cuban revolution in world politics. He understood and lived the present as history. He knew Cuba's example was an objective factor not only in the nations oppressed by imperialism, but that the reach of this example extended into the imperialist countries themselves.

"What does the Cuban revolution teach? That revolution is possible." Those ringing words from the Second Declaration of Havana remain as true today as they were in 1962. The lesson remains the same.¹⁴

"I free Cuba from any responsibility, except that which stems from its example," Che wrote in his 1965 letter of farewell to Fidel.¹⁵ And he knew better than any the power of that example. The revolutionary course and political

character of Ernesto Che Guevara are inseparable from the Cuban revolution, and from the communist leadership he was part of and helped to forge. Che could not have become the Che we know separate from the Cuban revolution. So it is appropriate, I believe, to close by singling out five points that underscore the historic weight of that revolution in Che's lifetime and since.

• "Had we been willing to follow the schemas, we would not be gathered here today," Fidel reminded the Cuban people on July 26, 1988. "We would not have had a socialist revolution in this hemisphere. . . . [T]heory had it that no revolution could be made here; that's . . . what the manuals used to say."

"We drew our own conclusions starting from the principles of socialism," Fidel noted.¹⁶

The continuity of the Cuban revolution goes back not only to Martí and the Independence Wars but also through the October Revolution, the Paris Commune, and the origins of the modern workers movement in the rise of industrial capitalism. The leadership of the Cuban revolution broke with the self-serving theories of the international movement that looked to Moscow for political leadership, theories that were only the rationalizations of a social caste that had long beforehand abandoned the course of proletarian internationalism. The revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship was carried through to its culmination in a victory that opened the door to socialist revolution.

Rejecting "revolution is not yet possible," and substituting "*¡Sí, se puede!*," Cuba changed the course of history. As the leadership of the July 26 Movement mobilized workers and farmers in the revolution's opening year to carry out a thoroughgoing land reform and other measures in their class interests, the U.S. rulers reacted by organizing counterrevolutionary forces to overthrow the new government. Far from being cowed by escalating Yankee-organized assaults, however, Cuban working people and their leadership responded by deepening the revolution's proletarian course. On April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro — at a mass rally to honor victims of an imperialist-instigated air attack — proclaimed the socialist character of the Cuban revolution. And over the next three days the Cuban people in arms and their Revolutionary Armed Forces moved into action to crush the CIA-organized mercenary invasion at Playa Girón.

The mobilization of the Cuban toilers by the millions to realize the historic feat of opening the socialist revolution in the Americas confirmed *in practice* that revolution is possible, reknitting communist continuity back to the Bolsheviks and the founders of the modern working-class movement. For their audacity, Fidel, Che, and their comrades — like Lenin and Marx before them — were denounced as Jacobin adventurers by the majority of those who spoke as the leadership of the international workers movement.

Communist theory, Cuban workers and farmers confirmed with their lives, is the generalization of the line of march of a class. Communist practice is the fearless and uncompromising pursuit of that line of march. Because of the Cuban revolution, the danger of mistaking variants of social democracy or Stalinism for communism, or confounding petty-bourgeois radicalism with proletarian discipline, had been diminished. The revolutionary road was more clearly marked.

As Che put it in his discussion with U.S. supporters of the Cuban revolution: "The revolutionary makes the revolution. But the revolution makes the revolutionary." To put it in the words of the young Marx "the educator must himself be educated."¹⁷

• The rectification process that advanced with growing momentum in Cuba between 1986 and the end of 1989 was not simply an adjustment in priorities or an attempt to confront problems of increasing corruption. It was a "revolution within the revolution," as Fidel described it

¹⁰ Guevara, "At the United Nations," December 11, 1964, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 334. This speech, along with Che's reply at the conclusion of the General Assembly debate later the same day, is also available in Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* (Pathfinder, 1992).

¹¹ Guevara, December 16, 1964, from unpublished transcript.

¹² Malcolm X, "At the Audubon," December 13, 1964, in *Malcolm X Speaks* (Pathfinder, 1965), p. 102.

¹³ Malcolm X, "The Homecoming Rally of the OAAU," November 29, 1964, in *By Any Means Necessary* (Pathfinder, 1970), p. 136.

¹⁴ *The Second Declaration of Havana* (Pathfinder, 1962, 1994), p. 29.

¹⁵ Guevara, letter to Fidel Castro, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, p. 375.

¹⁶ Fidel Castro, *Cuba Will Never Adopt Capitalist Methods* (Pathfinder, 1988), p. 13, 14.

¹⁷ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), vol. 5, p. 7.

in November 1987,¹⁸ like a ship correcting course while it continues full sail ahead. This process — promoted by Fidel Castro and other leaders of the revolution as a return to the kind of policies Che pioneered and defended — represented another historic example being set by the Cuban revolution.

Rectification became a social movement

Rectification marked the beginning of a turn away from the political course with regard to economic policy that had predominated in Cuba since the early 1970s, a period during which Che's rich legacy of practical activity and theoretical contributions to building socialism was pushed aside. "[I]deas diametrically opposed to Che's economic thought began to take over," as Fidel put it 10 years ago in a speech commemorating the 20th anniversary of Guevara's death.¹⁹ The system of economic management and planning used in one variant or another throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had been adopted during that earlier period, finding fertile enough ground in Cuba to flourish.

Rectification was an advance made possible not only by the continuing strength of the communist leadership in Cuba but even more importantly by the 1979 revolutionary victories in Nicaragua and Grenada that ended the isolation of Cuba's workers and farmers government in the Americas. It was an advance that gained impetus from the internationalist mission in Angola and the 1988 victory at Cuito Cuanavale, with all that battle exemplified for the anti-imperialist struggle in sub-Saharan Africa.

At its height, rectification took on the character of a growing social movement led by Cuba's most conscious and disciplined working people. Just as the bureaucratic parties and regimes of Eastern Europe and the USSR were beginning to shatter in face of irresolvable economic, social, and political crises that had been fostered for decades, the Cuban revolution was gaining strength along a proletarian political course. This renewal, Fidel explained in his October 1987 tribute to Che, would have given him much joy and confidence, just as Guevara would have been "appalled" by what had preceded it. Because, Fidel noted, Che "knew that communism could never be attained by wandering down those worn capitalist paths and that to follow along those paths would mean eventually to forget all ideas of solidarity and even internationalism."²⁰

• Without rectification having been initiated and led — gaining momentum in the mass working-class vanguard before the special period became a fact of life — the Cuban revolution could never have successfully confronted and prevailed in face of its most difficult years. At the opening of this decade, the abrupt decline in aid and trade on favorable terms with the disintegrating regimes of the Soviet bloc precipitated the most severe economic crisis since 1959, compounded by ongoing and unrelenting economic warfare long ago instigated and organized by Washington in reaction to the revolution.²¹

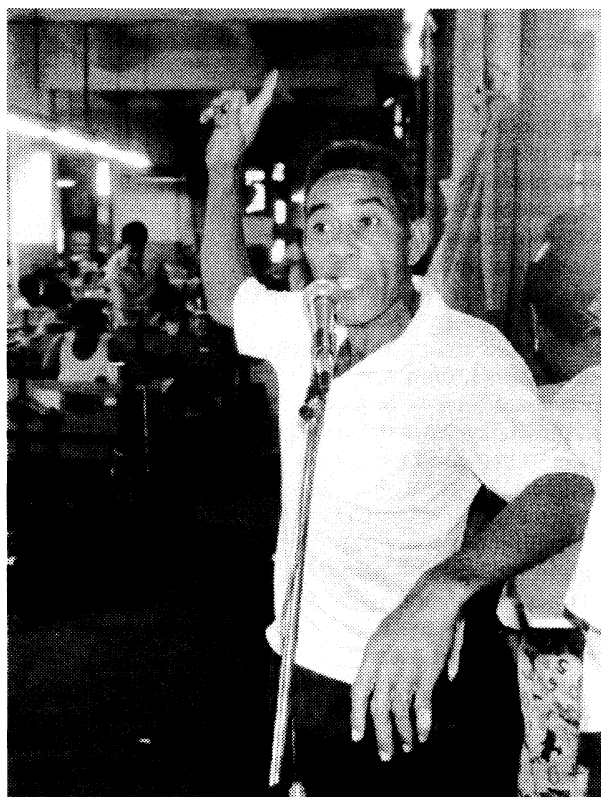
Enemies of the working class the world over gleefully predicted that the revolutionary government of Cuba would suffer a fate similar to the regimes of Eastern Europe and the USSR. But they failed to understand — as they had failed so many times before — that the proletarian internationalist course Che's name was associated with in Cuba and around the world was not his alone, but was indeed the trajectory of Cuba's communist leadership, deeply rooted among the big majority of Cuba's working people. This was not a variant of the course followed for decades in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but its antipode. In the closing decade of the 20th century, the Cuban people had once more set an example of historic import.

No other government in the world could have survived the test of popular support that Cuba's revolutionary leadership has faced in the 1990s, a support won in the course of many previous battles. Without an unblemished history of internationalism, without the broad political impact of hundreds of thousands of Cubans volunteering and taking part in missions abroad to aid and defend Grenada, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and Angola, without a new generation of Cuban youth having learned in their own

flesh and blood that "whoever is incapable of fighting for others will never be capable of fighting for himself,"²² the future of the Cuban revolution would have been different.

Without the Cuban working class having previously begun to retake ground that had been lost to the economic planning technocrats, and the "communist[s] playing at capitalism,"²³ as Fidel called them, the Cuban revolution would have been in mortal danger as the crisis of the special period opened in 1990–91.

Without the tens of thousands of apartments, day-care centers, and doctor's offices built by the volunteer labor of the minibrigades, without the contingents that had taken the first steps toward beginning to transform the organization of labor in basic industry, the workers parliaments and efficiency assemblies that helped strengthen work-



Militant/Aaron Ruby

Without rectification process in 1980s — promoted by Cuban leaders as return to kind of policies Che helped pioneer — working class would not have prevailed over revolution's most difficult years in early 1990s. Above: workers in Havana cigar factory in 1994 debate policies to confront economic crisis.

ing-class resistance might not have been born. The capacity to organize a disciplined retreat — while holding the line at not one step further than necessary to assure the survival of proletarian power, of the revolutionary government — might not have been present.

Without the proletarian dignity regained by having previously charted a course to begin to deal with the worst abuses of power and privilege — as the Ochoa, de la Guardia, and Abrantes cases of 1989 exemplified²⁴ — the reserve of proletarian confidence and audacity necessary to once more say "Si, se puede" might not have been there.

• The special period through which Cuba is living today, whatever the factors that precipitated it, is not some unique Cuban condition. It is a specific component of a reality imposed on working people the world over by the international capitalist market and an intensifying world depression.

World capitalism's 'special period'

A special period is what capitalism has in store for all of us. We need look no further than Mexico, Bosnia, or Malaysia if proof is needed. They are the first among others to come as the new century dawns. Under these conditions, Cuba's example and political weight in the world class struggle is growing once more. Cuba is showing how to fight for dignity, sovereignty, and independence, and why only a socialist course makes it possible for working people to hold their own against capital — anywhere in the world. There is no other way, as the Communist Manifesto describes, because "the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. . . . It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image."²⁵

But that is the world to which Cuban working people have said no, we will never go back. We will chart a different course, a course forward for humanity, a socialist course.

• Imperialism's growing world disorder and the "special periods" it has in store for us all are not something to moan and cry about, as stunned liberals or aging radicals do. That would not be worthy of Che, whose true legacy many such individuals seek to redefine and wear as camouflage, nor of the Cuban revolution, whose lessons and example they often misremember or distort. In the words

of the Second Declaration of Havana, "it is not for revolutionists to sit in the doorways of their houses waiting for the corpse of imperialism to pass by. The role of Job does not suit a revolutionist."²⁶

The world working class still faces what the Cuban people confronted in "the brilliant but sad days of the Caribbean crisis" of October 1962 — the same "dangers and principles," the same possibility that one day a wounded imperialist beast, in a desperate attempt to save itself, will unleash its weapons of nuclear destruction, regardless of the consequences. In those "magnificent days," as Che called them²⁷ — recalling the courage, clarity, and calmness of the toilers and communist leadership in Cuba — one thing above all stayed Washington's hand. And it was neither Moscow, nor the missiles. It was the inability of imperialism to find cracks or divisions within the command structure of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba and the sober estimate presented to the Kennedy administration by the U.S. armed forces chiefs of staff — stunned by the mobilization in a matter of days of 270,000 Cubans in arms — that U.S. forces would suffer an estimated 18,000 casualties in the first 10 days of an attempted invasion of Cuba. That's more casualties than U.S. forces were to face in the first five years of Kennedy and Johnson's intervention in Vietnam — from 1961, when the first U.S. casualty was reported, to the middle of 1966.

That, and that alone, caused Washington to blink — and continues to do so today.

The interests of the world working class — and above all of the combined interests of the Cuban and U.S. working people — were equally served by the incomparable revolutionary determination of the Cuban people to resist, whatever the price, as Che put it in his Message to the Tricontinental, "compelling the U.S. imperialists to make a decision."

As we move into the 21st century, the world capitalist rulers find their options more and more restricted. The maintenance of their social order depends increasingly on balloons of debt forced upon others and inflated and unstable paper values, both inside and outside the imperialist centers. The resulting volatility brings growing insecurity into the lives of hundred of millions, deepening social inequality and accelerating political polarization. Once again we are witnessing how the logic of their system of domination — the imperialist reality — pushes them toward fascism and war.

To get there, however, the exploiters will have to face us first and try to defeat us. And, as the Cuban workers and farmers have shown the world for almost 40 years, the outcome will be decided in struggle. Together with Fidel, in the spirit of Che and the Cuban revolution, we also say "Socialism or death!" That remains the only course of conduct that can win.

¹⁸ Fidel Castro, speech closing City of Havana provincial party meeting, November 29, 1987, in the *Militant*, January 29, 1988. Also found in *Granma Weekly Review*, December 13, 1987.

¹⁹ Fidel Castro, speech marking 20th anniversary of the death of Ernesto Che Guevara, October 8, 1987, in Carlos Tablada, *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* (Pathfinder, 1990), p. 45.

²⁰ Fidel Castro, speech marking 20th anniversary of the death of Guevara, p. 42.

²¹ The events described in this section of Waters' presentation — the rectification process of the latter 1980s, and the special period that has marked the 1990s — are discussed in substantial detail in several issues of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. See "Cuba's Rectification Process: Two Speeches by Fidel Castro" in issue no. 6; "The Politics of Economics: Che Guevara and Marxist Continuity" by Steve Clark and Jack Barnes in issue no. 8; and "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution" by Mary-Alice Waters in issue no. 10 (1994).

²² Fidel Castro, speech at the December 5, 1988, Armed Forces Day celebration, in *In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution* (Pathfinder, 1989), p. 28.

²³ Fidel Castro, "Important Problems for the Whole of Revolutionary Thought," December 2, 1986, in *New Internationalist* no. 6, 1987, p. 223. Also found in *Granma Weekly Review*, December 14, 1986.

²⁴ In July 1989 Arnaldo Ochoa, Antonio de la Guardia, and two other high-ranking officers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior were sentenced to death for drug trafficking, abuse of office, and hostile acts against a foreign state (the Angolan government). One month later José Abrantes Fernández, Cuba's minister of the interior and, like Ochoa, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was sentenced to 20 years in prison on charges of abuse of authority, negligence in carrying out his duties, and improper use of government funds and resources. For a discussion of the position of the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba on these events and their political significance as part of the rectification process in Cuba, see "Che's Proletarian Legacy and Cuba's Rectification Process" by Mary-Alice Waters in *New Internationalist* no. 8 (1991).

²⁵ Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Collected Works*, vol. 6, pp. 487-88. The Communist Manifesto is also available as a Pathfinder pamphlet, pp. 26-27.

²⁶ *The Second Declaration of Havana*, p. 33.

²⁷ Che Guevara, letter to Fidel Castro, in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, pp. 374-75.

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Britain, December 1964. Also includes his 1965 interview with the *Young Socialist* magazine. \$10.95



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CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Che Guevara: Authentic Communist Leader. Speaker: Craig Honts, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Transportation Union. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.*

San Francisco

The Crisis of the Four Tigers of the Pacific Rim and the Death of the "Asian Miracle." Speaker: Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. 3284 23rd St. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (415) 282-6255.*

FLORIDA

Miami

The Real Legacy of Che Guevara. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. *Donation: \$4. Tel:*

(305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Celebrate the Life and Ideas of Ernesto Che Guevara. Speaker: Ved Dookhum, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Oct. 11, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6:30 p.m. 803 Peachtree St. NE. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (404) 724-9759.*

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Equal Rights for Immigrants: Support Rally of October 12 at United Nations in New York City. Panel discussion including: Sarah Ullman, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Transportation Union. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-*

6772.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Defend Democratic Rights. Oppose Attack on First Amendment. Panel discussion including: Jennifer Benton, Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate for Minneapolis. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. 2990 University Ave. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.*

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Defend Immigrant Rights: Support Rally of October 12 at United Nations in New York City. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. **Behind Washington's Push for Domination of Caspian Sea Oil.** Fri., Oct. 17, 7:30 p.m.

Both events held at 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Response to the 'Promise Keepers': Why All Working People Should Oppose their Rightist Agenda. Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. NW (at 18th & Florida, entrance on Florida). *Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.*

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

The Legacy of Che Guevara on the Thirtieth Anniversary of His Death. Speaker: Joan Shields, Communist League. Fri., Oct. 10, 7 p.m. 199 High St. (Corner High and Tuam). *Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.*

Workers bear the brunt of smog crisis in Asia

Continued from front page

nity. The ruling Suharto family regime in Indonesia has close ties to those directly responsible for flouting the law. And the government has been forced to admit that it had been warned that the dry season would be prolonged.

At least four people have died of heart or respiratory failure and tens of thousands

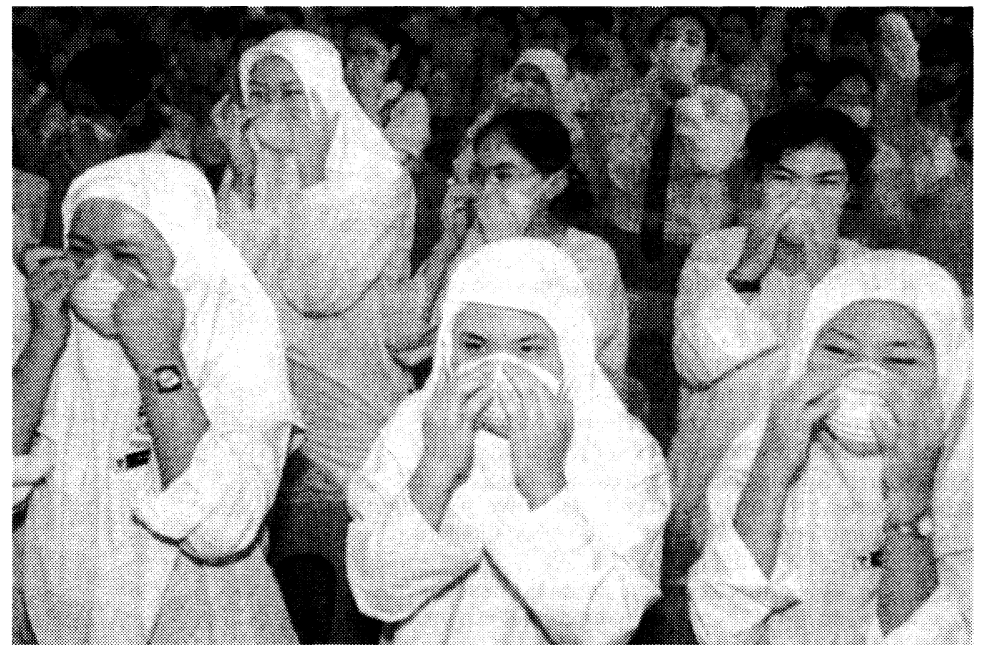
have sought hospital treatment in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Many more have no access to hospitals, because they are already full or nonexistent.

Poor visibility is the likely cause of Indonesia's worst air disaster on September 26, when 234 people died in a crash of a Garuda jet near the city of Medan. It is also the suspected cause of a collision the same day of two freighters — with 29 crew members missing and presumed dead — in the Strait of Malacca off the Malaysian coast. It was the third collision in the world's busiest sea lane in September.

World attention on the smog crisis has obscured the fact that millions of working farmers are suffering in Indonesia — with the world's fourth largest population — in the worst drought in over 50 years. Rice, which requires huge quantities of water, is a staple food and cash crop in most of Indonesia. Planting of next year's crop is also seriously affected.

Some 200,000 subsistence farmers in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG), which shares the island of New Guinea with the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya (West Papua), are facing famine due to the effects of the drought. Already, more than 80 have died in PNG and 270 have died of starvation or cholera in Irian Jaya. The drought also continues to stalk producers of food and fiber in Australia.

The devastating drought is caused by an El Niño weather pattern, which generates unusually warm surface water along the Pacific coast of Latin America that then disrupts normal evaporation patterns in Southeast Asia and Australia. But in a world dominated by capitalist social relations, every genuinely natural disaster always has a dis-



Students in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, wear masks during assembly, symbolizing the threats to health from smoke in jungle fires set by Malaysian companies in Indonesia.

proportionate effect on workers and farmers, who are unable to buy their way out of trouble.

The laws of the capitalist market have driven up food prices throughout Indonesia, hitting the toilers hardest. "Everything we eat is more expensive now — at least 20 percent more for rice, sugar, oil," village women in Pringluan, Java, told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Tanks of water are selling for more than a week's wages.

Australian imperialism has used the looming famine in Papua New Guinea, the jewel in its former colonial crown, to pose as having humanitarian concern for the peoples of

PNG. Australian Air Force transport planes have recently begun flying missions into the Highlands to deliver disaster management teams and some food and other supplies. But Alexander Downer, Canberra's foreign minister, angrily denied reports that Canberra had made Kiunga — the main Highland town that supports the now closed, water-starved giant Ok Tedi copper and gold mine — its main priority. The mine is owned by BHP, one of the biggest Australian companies.

Doug Cooper is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union.

CALENDAR

COLORADO

Denver

Celebrate the Life and Ideals of Che Guevara. Thurs., Oct. 9, 7-9 p.m. Potluck 6-7 p.m. GANAS/Auraria Community Center, 1212 Mariposa St. Sponsored by Coloradans for Cuba. For more information, call (303) 333-7936.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Come to the March and Rally for Immigrant Rights in New York October 12. The local Coordinadora 96 — 2000 is organizing buses to go to New York. The round trip to New York is \$90 per person. Possible departures are October 10 and 11. To reserve your space, call Connie Olvera (Casa Aztlan) at: (312) 666-5508.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Political Prisoner Conference: A Call to Action. Featured speaker: Geronimo ji Jaga (formerly Geronimo Pratt), former Black Panther, won his freedom after 28 years in prison on frame-up charges. Oct. 10 — 12. Registration begins Fri., Oct. 10 at 6 p.m. Rally at 7 p.m. Registration: \$5 donation. For more information call, Nzinga (410) 276-7221; Karen (410) 655-4405; Sarah (410) 243-7950. Marshall E. Conway support Committee, P.O. Box 41144, Baltimore, MD 21203-6144.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

End the U.S. Embargo! Repeal Helms-Burton! Lift the U.S. Travel Ban! March: Wed., Oct. 8. Meet at 4:15 p.m. at the University of Minnesota Law School (West Bank). March to the old Federal Bldg. (4th and Marquette in downtown for a 5 p.m. rally). **Film:** Thurs. and Fri., Oct. 9 and 10. 7:30 p.m. 125 Willey Hall, University of Minnesota (West Bank). **Teach-In:** Sat., Oct. 11, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Mississippi Room, Coffman Memorial Union, University of Minnesota. For more information, call (612) 728-0112 or write the coalition c/o Resource Center of the Americas, 317 17 Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Che Guevara Commemoration. Che Lives! 30th anniversary Commemoration of life and ideas of Che Guevara. Talks, poetry, film footage, songs. Sat., Oct. 11, 7 p.m. Bldg. 4, University Hall, University of Technology, Harris St., Ultimo, Sydney. For more information, call (02) 9565 1197 or (2) 9690 1240

Gerry Adams Visa Campaign Fund-raiser. Sat., Oct. 11, 8:30 p.m. Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St., Surry Hills. *Donation: \$10. For more information, call (02) 9740 5572 or (02) 9636 9021.*

BRITAIN

London

Hands Off Cuba. National Demonstration. Sat., Oct. 18. **Assemble:** 12 noon at Speaker's Comer, Hyde Park. **March:** 1 p.m. to Trafalgar Square via U.S. Embassy. **Rally:** 3-4 p.m. Trafalgar Square. For more information call: CSC Office 0171 263 6452.

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There you go — An elite 18-member Mexican team responsible for intercepting drug-running planes was busted for smuggling cocaine across the border with Guatemala.



Harry Ring

Reportedly, some of the team members were trained by U.S. Customs.

That's capitalism — Transco, the British gas company, wants to

reduce the odorant added to gas to warn people of a leak. This will increase the danger of undetected leaks, but, Transco responds, it will reduce the number of emergency calls. The company is in the process of slicing its payroll.

Not just a U.S. thing — In England women workers are paid 80 percent of the average wage of men. And with nursery care available to but one in nine children under the age of eight, 45 percent of women workers are part-timers, compared to 8 percent of men.

He's catching on — Oil shark Roger Tamraz told a Senate panel

he had coughed up \$300,000 to the Democratic National Committee to get into a presidential coffee klatch. He wants White House support for a plan to build an oil pipeline in Central Asia, but all he got was coffee.

"I think next time I'll give \$600,000," he judiciously declared.

And who watches the watchmen? — The bureaucratic gang that runs the so-called Communist Party of China proudly reported that in a five-year "anticorruption" campaign 37,492 members were punished for criminal acts, and 121,500 were expelled for corruption.

Young Socialists, anyone? — In Tampa and West Palm Beach, Florida, new youth curfews are being implemented. West Palm Beach minors are barred from downtown areas after 10 p.m. weekdays and 11 p.m. on weekends. In Tampa, city authorities are proposing that youth must be in school or at home between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. And in the Miami area, officials considered an ordinance to make it illegal for minors to carry a cell phone or pager without written parental consent.

He's budgeted the other \$2 billion — "To really rich people, I say, 'Keep any money that you have any reasonable idea what to do with and

give money away that you have no idea what you're going to do with." — Cable mogul Ted Turner on his plan to give \$1 billion, an estimated third of his personal fortune, to the United Nations.

That was a CIA agent, stupid — The newly released pages from John Lennon's FBI dossier include a 1972 informer's report on a meeting of people planning a demonstration at the Republican convention. It stated that the Beatles star would participate providing the action was peaceful. The memo also advised that the host of the meeting had a parrot which, at appropriate moments, chirped, "Right on!"

How Bolsheviks led October 1917 insurrection

We continue to take this space to mark the 80th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, with an excerpt from Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*. In February 1917, a revolutionary upsurge that began with an insurrection by workers in the industrial center Petrograd toppled the tsarist monarchy in Russia. Soviets — councils elected by workers and soldiers first formed in 1905 — reemerged, and constituted a dual power counterposed to the series of

BOOK OF THE WEEK

unstable bourgeois governments that followed. At first, the soviets were dominated by the reformist Menshevik and Social Revolutionary parties. By October, however, the majority of deputies elected to the Petrograd soviet were from the Bolshevik party. The selection below is from the chapter "The October Insurrection."

BY LEON TROTSKY

The peculiarities of the October revolution can best be understood by contrasting it with the February revolution.... The two Petrograd revolutions, historically completing each other in the course of eight months, seem in their contrasting traits almost predestined to promote an understanding of the nature of insurrection in general.

The February insurrection is called spontaneous. We have introduced in their due place all the necessary limitations to this description. But it is true in any case that in February nobody laid out the road in advance, nobody voted in the factories and barracks on the question of revolution, nobody summoned the masses from above to insurrection. The indignation accumulated for years broke to the surface unexpectedly, to a considerable degree, even to the masses themselves.

It was quite otherwise in October. For eight months the masses had been living an intense political life. They had not only been creating events, but learning to understand their connections. After each action they had critically weighed its results. Soviet parliamentarism had become the daily mechanics of the political life of the people. When they were deciding by a vote ques-

tions of strikes, of street manifestations, of the transfer of regiments to the front, could the masses forego an independent decision on the question of insurrection?

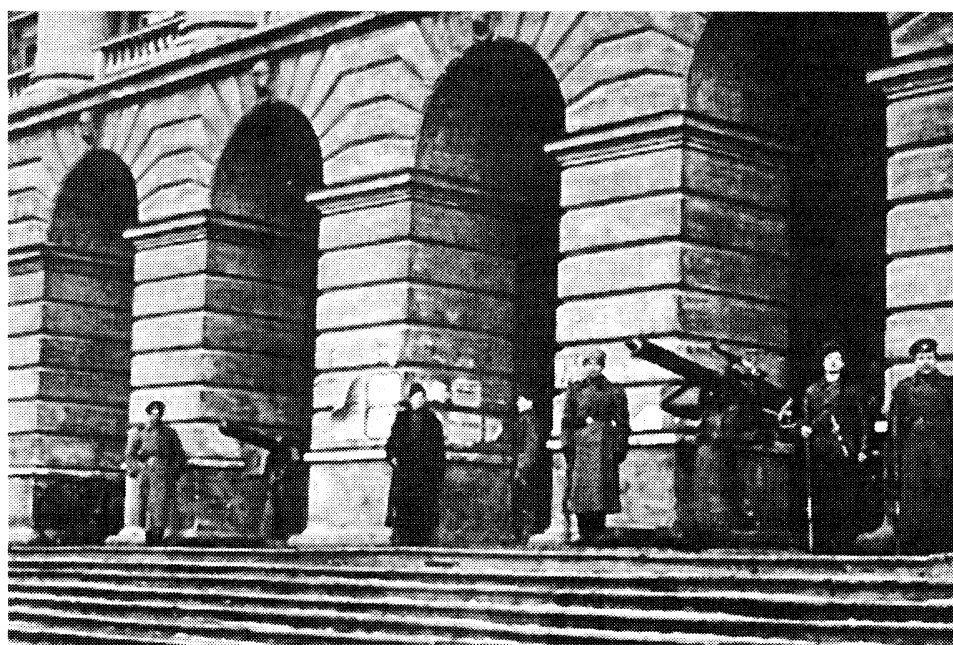
From this invaluable and sole substantial conquest of the February revolution there arose, however, new difficulties. It was impossible to summon the masses to battle in the name of the Soviet without raising the question formally in the Soviet — that is, without making the problem of insurrection a subject of public debate, and that too with the participation of representatives of the hostile camp. The necessity of creating a special, and to the extent possible a disguised, soviet organ for the leadership of the insurrection was obvious. But this too demanded democratic procedures, with all their advantages and all their delays. The resolution on the Military Revolutionary Committee adopted on the 9th of October was carried out only on the 20th. But that was not the chief difficulty. To take advantage of the majority in the Soviet and compose the Committee of Bolsheviks alone, would have provoked discontent among the non-party men, to say nothing of the Left Social Revolutionaries and certain groups of anarchists....

Would it not have been simpler in that case to summon the insurrection directly in the name of the party? This form of action undoubtedly has weighty advantages. But its disadvantages are hardly less obvious. In those millions upon whom the party legitimately counted it is necessary to distinguish three layers: one which was already with the Bolsheviks on all conditions; another, more numerous, which supported the Bolsheviks insofar as they acted through the soviets; a third which followed the soviets in spite of the fact that they were dominated by Bolsheviks.

These three layers were different not only in political level, but to a considerable degree also in social ingredients. Those standing for the Bolsheviks as a party were above all industrial workers, with the hereditary proletarians of Petrograd in the front rank. Those standing for the Bolsheviks insofar as they had a legal soviet cover, were a majority of the soldiers. Those standing for the soviets, independently and regardless of the fact that an overplus of Bolsheviks dominated them, were the more conservative groups of workers — former Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who dreaded to break away from the rest of the masses — the more conservative parts of the army even including the Cossacks, and the peasants who had freed themselves from the leadership of the Social Revolutionary party and were adhering to its left flank.

It would be an obvious mistake to identify the strength of the Bolshevik party with the strength of the soviets led by it. The latter was much greater than the former. However, without the former it would have been mere impotence. There is nothing mysterious in this. The relations between the party and the Soviet grew out of the disaccord inevitable in a revolutionary epoch between the colossal political influence of Bolshevism and its narrow organizational grasp. A lever correctly applied makes the human arm capable of lifting a weight many times exceeding its living force, but without the living arm the lever is nothing but a dead stick.

At a Moscow regional conference of the Bolsheviks at the end of September, one of the delegates reported: "In Yegorevsk the influence of the Bolsheviks is undivided.... But the party organization as such is weak. It is in complete neglect; there is neither regular registration nor membership dues." This



Bolshevik soldiers and members of the Red Guard guarding the Smolny Institute—the party's headquarters in Petrograd—from which their leaders organized the uprising in October, 1917.

disproportion between influence and organization, although not everywhere so marked, was a general phenomenon. Broad masses knew of the Bolshevik slogans and the soviet organization. The two fused completely in their minds in the course of September and October. What the people were waiting for was that the soviets should show them when and how to carry out the program of the Bolsheviks.

The party itself systematically educated the masses in this spirit. In Kiev, when the rumor went round that an insurrection was

preparing, the Bolshevik Executive Committee immediately came out with a denial: "No action without the summons of the Soviet must take place.... Not a step without the Soviet!" In denying on the 18th of October the rumors of an insurrection alleged to have been appointed for the 22nd, Trotsky said: "The Soviet is an elective institution and... cannot make a decision which is unknown to the workers and soldiers...." Repeated daily and reinforced by practical action, such formulae entered into the flesh and blood of the masses.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



October 13, 1972

Recently I was able to interview Jacob Khamalata and Paulo Jorge, two leaders of the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola — People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in Lusaka, Zambia. Khamalata is MPLA chief representative in Lusaka; Jorge is chief of the MPLA's Department of Information and Propaganda. MPLA is one of several organizations now carrying out armed struggle for the independence of Angola.

Khamalata and Jorge outlined the background to Portuguese colonialism in Angola: "The Portuguese arrived in Angola at the end of the fifteenth century — 1482 to be exact. Only in 1922 did the colonists succeed in totally subjugating and pacifying Angola.

"For three decades the colonial regime was largely unchallenged, but in 1953 Angola's first political party was formed. It sought to organize and mobilize the people against Portuguese domination, making political and economic demands.

They stressed the importance of Portuguese membership in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) because this military alliance provides most of the equipment Portugal uses in Africa. Portugal which "won't even be able to produce an automobile until 1974," would be completely incapable of waging three colonial wars at the same time without this aid.

South Africa, they said, also provides the

Portuguese with troops in Angola and Mozambique. They stressed the importance of uniting the different independence movements in Southern Africa to fight against their common enemies, South Africa and Portugal.



October 13, 1947

The capitalist press, following the lead of the State Department, is trying to whip up war hysteria over the "Information Bureau" set up by the Kremlin in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. They picture it as a revival of the Communist International and a turn toward the revolutionary socialist program followed by Lenin and Trotsky. They say it is a provocative move, a "declaration of political war" that demands warlike retaliation.

The truth is that Stalin has not made a turn toward revolution. He is only reviving the pro-capitalist People's Fronts of a decade ago, directing them this time against Truman and American imperialism instead of Hitler and German imperialism.

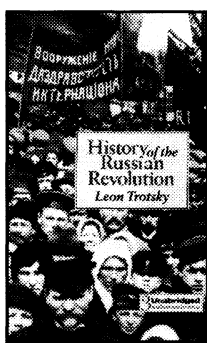
All Stalin wants is a deal with Wall Street. He seeks to continue the wartime partnership. In return for a non-aggression pact and dollar credit he offers the services of his agents to derail and wreck working class revolutions throughout the world. Stalin's formation of an "Information Bureau" is only the frightened defensive reflex of a bankrupt bureaucrat against the menacing advance of Wall Street's war machine.

from Pathfinder

The History of the Russian Revolution

by Leon Trotsky

The social, economic, and political dynamics of the first socialist revolution as explained by one of the principal leaders of this victorious struggle that changed the course of history in the twentieth century. \$35.95



Available from Pathfinder; see Page 12.

Defend ballot rights!

Socialist Workers candidates and their supporters are waging a number of fights across the United States to defend ballot access, most recently in Houston where city officials claim that Patti Iiyama is 34 signatures short of what is needed to be on the ballot.

In Washington State, Scott Breen, candidate for Seattle mayor, and other socialist candidates are mounting a political campaign to protect freedom of speech and association, through their efforts to overturn a Seattle Ethics and Election Commission ruling demanding that the names of contributors to the campaign be made public.

SWP candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, Jennifer Benton, and her supporters have opened a free-speech fight against the city for citations given to campaign supporter Doug Jenness for distributing campaign material and posting it on a street light post.

The *Militant* has also reported on several recent cases of company and FBI harassment of socialist candidates and their supporters, such as The Boeing Company's attempt to intimidate Breen, a member of the International Association of Machinists and a production worker at the company, from publicly explaining his political positions as part of his campaign.

As working people stiffen their resistance to the employers' offensive, the ruling rich and their representatives strike back and attempt to deal some blows of their own. The attacks on the Socialist Workers campaigns are part of this political polarization. They are part of the battle between the labor movement and the capitalist class. These probes are aimed not just at the candidates' campaign activity outside work, but are an attempt to narrow what the socialists can do on the job, in their union, and among co-workers.

But recent events also show that the working class can fight back. In all these cases, the socialist candidates are winning the backing of fellow unionists and youth, defenders of democratic rights, and activists in important struggles. Some are joining the effort because they want to see a working-class alternative to the two parties of the

ruling rich on the ballot. Others see the various probes against the socialists as an opening shot against the broader rights of all.

In Atlanta, an attempt to keep Doug Nelson, the socialist candidate for mayor, off the ballot failed. Earlier, the socialist candidates in New York City pushed back an attempt orchestrated by layers in the Democratic Party to drive them off the ballot. In Iowa, supporters of Thomas Alter organized an effective response to an editorial in the *Des Moines Register* that scoffed at Alter's mayoral campaign and called for making access to the ballot more difficult.

We urge our readers to join in the battles to defend ballot rights.

Socialists call for an open ballot and the widest possible discussion and debate in the elections on the issues facing working people today. At the same time they organize where possible to meet undemocratic and onerous ballot requirements, such as collecting large numbers of signatures, turning it into an opportunity to reach thousands of people with a working-class program to fight against the economic crises, wars, and racism bred by capitalism.

The goal of ballot restrictions is to prevent all but the major capitalist parties from running official campaigns. Bourgeois politics in the United States is built around the two-party system, and the alternatives are supposed to be within what is offered between the Democrats and Republicans. Parties that advance a perspective for working people become a special target of the ruling rich and their parties when they challenge this framework.

The socialist campaigns provide an example for the entire labor movement of independent working-class political action: the need to break from support to the parties of the bosses, Democrats and Republicans, and to chart a course to build a movement of working people that can challenge the twin parties in the political arena as part of the fight to replace the capitalist government with one of workers and farmers.

AFL-CIO convention draws to close

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

PITTSBURGH — The four-day convention of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) ended September 25 with a rally of up to 200 people outside the convention center featuring AFL-CIO president John Sweeney and Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson. Like the rest of the convention, the rally and the deliberations of the last day reflected the impact of the UPS strike and recent union organizing victories.

Among other speakers featured at the convention was Kweisi Mfume, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He urged closer ties between labor and civil rights organizations.

Elisa Sánchez, leader of MANA, a national Latina organization, gave a special presentation calling on delegates to advance women, especially those of color, into the AFL-CIO leadership bodies.

Jaime Martínez, an delegate from the International Union of Electrical Workers in San Antonio, Texas, took the floor on several occasions, condemning the racism and indignities faced by immigrant workers from Mexico. "We need to work across borders," he said, explaining why unionists should support demonstrations for immigrant rights like the Oct. 12, 1996, march in Washington, D.C.

A resolution entitled "Civil and Human Rights" was approved that stated, "Affirmative action continues to face unrelenting attacks in the courts, in Congress and in state legislatures across the country." It went on, "if there are flaws in the execution of these methods, then by all means we should correct them. But let us not use them as a pretext for returning to the complacent and degrading policies of the past."

President William Clinton spoke to the convention September 24. As his motorcade arrived he was met by several Boilermakers Union members carrying signs opposing extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to Latin America. Inside, Clinton got a cool response from delegates to his speech defending renewal of "fast-track" authority to draft trade deals, which must be voted up or down by Congress without amendment. His speech was interrupted briefly by heckling from a few delegates.

Describing the U.S. capitalist rulers' interests in such trade negotiations with other countries Clinton said, "We have 4 percent of the world's population and we enjoy 22 percent of the world's wealth. If we want to keep that 22 percent of the wealth we have as 4 percent of the world's people, we have to sell something to the other 96 percent."

The convention approved an amendment to the AFL-CIO constitution titled, "Modernizing the AFL-CIO's Policies Regarding Anti-Democratic Influences and Movements." This amendment replaced all direct references to excluding from union membership or office those who are members of the Communist Party, communists or fascists.

New language was inserted calling for the exclusion of those who support "authoritarianism, totalitarianism, terrorism and other forces that suppress individual liberties and freedom of association."

International greetings to the convention were given by Robert White, president of the Canadian Labor Congress, and Margaret Prosser of the Trades Union Congress of Britain.

Other business taken up by the delegates included the election of all of the top officers of the 13 million-member organization. None of the posts were contested, and all of the current officers were reelected. A constitutional amendment passed earlier in the convention extended the term of office from two to four years.

Ernie Mailhot is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

NATO forces to stay in Bosnia

Continued from front page

at putting pressure on the Serbs." He claimed the program distorted the statements of UN tribunal prosecutor Louise Arbour at a September 26 news conference. In the footage, Arbour chided Pale residents for not capturing Karadzic, who was indicted for alleged war crimes by the imperialist tribunal, and called for NATO troops to step up their efforts to hunt down Karadzic.

That same day, a German court convicted Nikola Jorgic, a Bosnian Serb, on 11 counts of genocide and 30 counts of murder. The so-called war crimes tribunal court in The Hague, Netherlands has requested authorities in other countries to assist in trying alleged war crimes suspects.

Hours after the NATO troops seized the transmitters October 1, television broadcasts were resumed by sup-

porters of Plavsic from her base in Banja Luka, as U.S. troops along with Russian, French, Italian, and other soldiers set up road blocks at some sites to prevent protests. Washington has thrown its weight behind Plavsic, herself a chauvinist Serb leader who supports aspects of the Dayton "peace" agreement imposed on Bosnia in 1995.

The military assault occurred a few hours before NATO defense ministers began a two-day meeting in Maastricht, Netherlands, to discuss how to maintain the imperialist occupation force in Bosnia.

The government officials will also discuss how to merge the armies of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO's military structure. The governments of the three countries are scheduled to join the military alliance in 1999.

Rally for immigrant rights

Continued from front page

important for all immigrant rights."

Losawa Mestedel, a Haitian worker who has lived in the U.S. for seven years, told the *Militant*, "This country has not been good to immigrants, and that is why I am

here, because I want justice!"

The only candidates for public office who participated in the picket were Janet Post and Rolande Girard, Socialist Workers Party candidates for Miami mayor and City Commission. A campaign statement by the socialist candidates, available in French, Spanish, and English, called for full rights for all immigrants, and raising the minimum wage to \$10 an hour.

Leslie Belizaire, who is unemployed, said that fighting for decent-paying jobs is part of the fight for immigrant rights. "The U.S. government lies about how good it is here," he explained. "But we know better — we must fight for good jobs!"

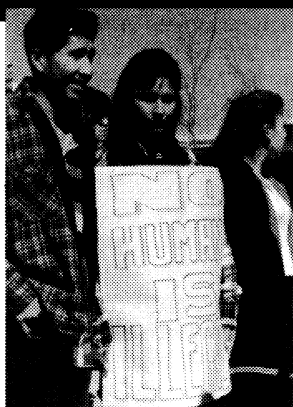
Speakers at the protest included Samedi from Veye-Yo, and Angel Domínguez from UNITE, who invited people to attend the New York march.

Girard, who addressed the demonstrators in Creole and English, said, "We need to unite against those who exploit us. The rulers always try to divide us. We are here because we believe all human beings should be treated as equals."

During the protest several Black and Haitian-born Miami cops escorted an INS "community-relations" officer who attempted to give out business cards to demonstrators at the rear of the picket line. Most protesters ignored her and kept their attention directed at the INS office in front of them.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR IMMIGRANTS October 12 March and Rally at the United Nations in New York City

- No more police abuses
- Amnesty for the undocumented
- Education for our children
- Labor protection
- Increase the minimum wage
- Citizenship without bureaucracy
- Respect for human rights



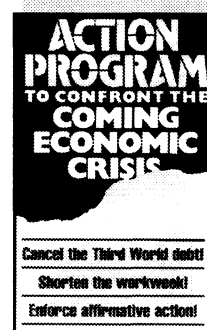
Other regional actions will be held the same day.

March in Austin, Texas

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Havana conference on relevance of Che's work

Continued from front page

the interests of workers and peasants. In the process, they sought to create the conditions out of which could be forged the leadership of a Latin America-wide movement of toilers capable of winning the battles for land reform and independence from imperialist domination and initiating the socialist revolution on the continent.

On Oct. 8, 1967, the Bolivian military, in close collaboration with Washington, captured Guevara after he was wounded in battle and murdered him the next day.

The conference also marked the 30th anniversary of the magazine *Tricontinental*, which in a special inaugural issue in April 1967 published what was to be Guevara's last major political article, "Create Two, Three... Many Vietnams — That Is the Watchword." The article had been written in November 1966, prior to his departure for Bolivia. OSPAAAL was founded at the Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, held in Havana in January 1966 and attended by anti-imperialist fighters from around the world.

The Message to the Tricontinental, as Guevara's article is widely known, contained Che's assessment of the world political situation. It called on revolutionary forces everywhere to come to the aid of the Vietnamese national liberation fighters and outlined the prospects for revolutionary struggle, especially in Latin America.

The 30th anniversary meeting here brought together more than 100 people from Cuba and 35 other countries. They included members of Cuba solidarity groups, representatives of political parties and organizations, academics, and individuals from Gua-

temala, Bolivia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Italy, Austria, Ireland, the United States, Angola, Libya, Australia, Malaysia, and China, and elsewhere.

The opening event of the conference was attended by some 200 people, among them José Ramón Balaguer, member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party; Manuel Piñero, member of the party's Central Committee; and Aleida Guevara, daughter of Che Guevara. Former Egyptian foreign minister Murad Ghaleb, currently president of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia and Africa, and OSPAAAL general secretary Ramón Pez Ferro welcomed participants to the event. Pez Ferro and *Tricontinental* editor Ana María Pellón were the main organizers of the three-day gathering.

The keynote talk was given by Eusebio Leal, head of the historical office of the city of Havana. Leal pointed to the 30-year-long efforts by capitalist spokespeople, from Washington on down, to falsify Che Guevara's record as a revolutionary internationalist leader and to separate him from the Cuban revolution, in which he played a central leadership role and which forged him as a communist. In today's world, Leal stressed, anti-imperialist fighters "must read and study Che's writings and works."

Cuba's aid to liberation struggles

The conference celebrated the publication of the 30th anniversary issue of *Tricontinental*, devoted entirely to Che Guevara. The issue features an extensive interview with Piñero. A commander of the Rebel Army by the end of the revolutionary war, the magazine notes, Piñero served for a number of years after the 1959 victory as "the head of the General Directorate of Intelligence [DGI] of the Interior Ministry, which among other responsibilities was in charge of ties to revolutionary movements in the Third World." In this work he collaborated closely with Cuban president Fidel Castro and Guevara. Later Piñero was head of the Americas Department of the Communist Party's Central Committee until his retirement several years ago.

The special issue of *Tricontinental* also features articles by and interviews with a number of other prominent figures whose lives and struggles crossed paths with Guevara's. This includes Víctor Dreke, second in command of the Cuban revolutionaries who fought with Guevara in the Congo in 1965, and Manuel Cabieses, editor of the Chilean magazine *Punto Final*, who recounts the details of how Che's field diary, captured by the Bolivian army, was smuggled out of that country to be published in Cuba and around the world.

The anniversary issue had quickly sold out and was reprinted in a larger run prior to the conference.

One of the highlights of the meeting was a session at which Piñero spoke briefly and then for an hour and a half answered questions about Cuba's aid and participation in anti-imperialist struggles in the Congo and throughout Latin America, including Argentina, Paraguay, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. He responded to numerous questions related to the Bolivian campaign, in which he was closely involved.

'Bolivian campaign a political victory'

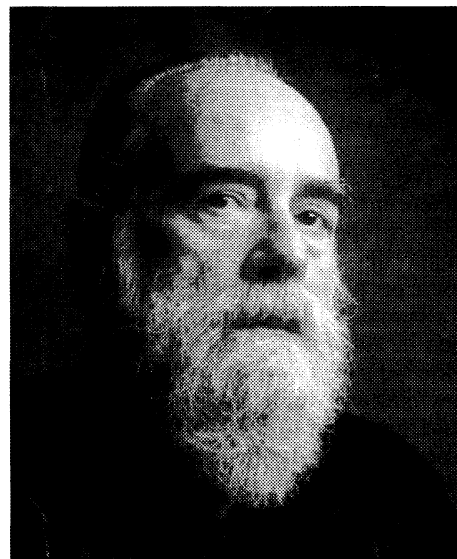
Asked whether the *guerrilla* led by Guevara in Bolivia was a debacle because of the capture and murder of many of its combatants by the U.S.-backed Bolivian army in 1967, Piñero replied, "It was a failure in concrete military terms. But politically it was a great victory. Che set an example of internationalism in aiding other peoples in their fight to free themselves from Yankee domination, an example that still resonates around the world to this day."

Another highlight was the launching of the new reprint of *Pombo: un hombre de la guerrilla del Che* (Pombo: A Man of Che's *Guerrilla*) by Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas, a firsthand account of the Bolivian campaign published by Havana-based Editora Política. Villegas, still known by his *nom de guerre*, Pombo, vividly recounted parts of that experience in 1966-68, including how the group of combatants he led after Che's assassination eluded the Bolivian army's encirclement and lived to continue the revolu-

tionary struggle.

Several panel discussions took place during the conference. They took up the themes of "Solidarity, anti-imperialism, and Che's ethics before the challenge of the third millennium," "The role of the alternative media in face of disinformation and globalization by the dominant transnational corporations," and "Che and the FBI."

Among the panelists were Fernando Martínez Heredia, author of the book



Che, socialismo y el comunismo (Che, socialism, and communism); Luis Suárez, a professor associated with the University of Havana; Delia Luisa López, chair of the Che Studies program at the University of Havana; U.S. attorneys Michael Ratner and Michael Steven Smith; former *Tricontinental* editor Mirtha Muñoz; and Chilean writer Marta Harnecker.

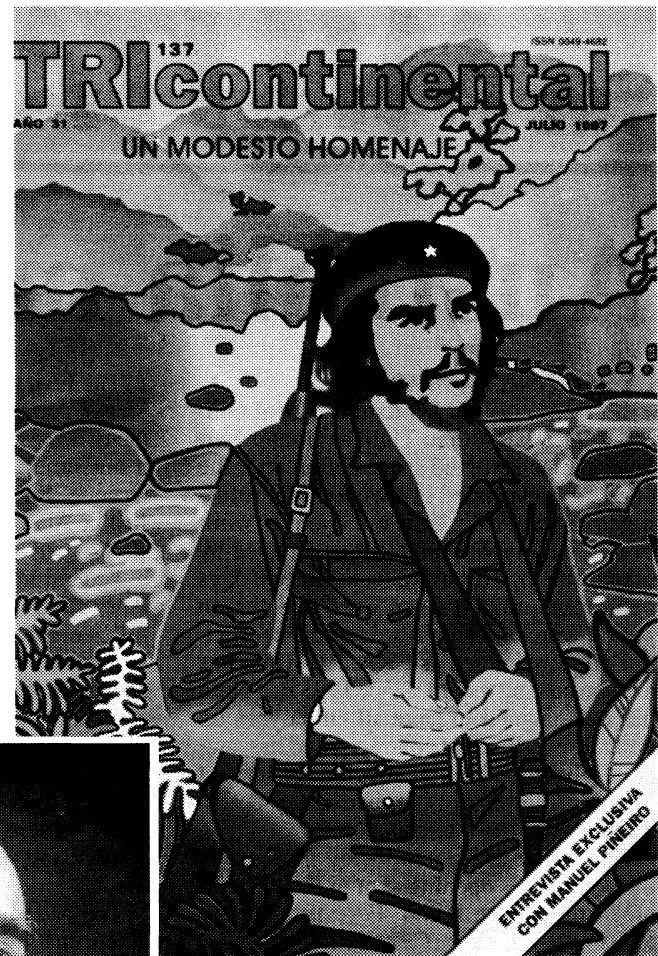
Is imperialism stronger today?

The opening panel, on "Solidarity, anti-imperialism, and Che's ethics before the challenge of the third millennium," was the one that elicited the most lively discussion among conference participants, who expressed differing views on the evolution of world capitalism. Taking up points made by panelists, some conference participants argued that the world Guevara acted in and wrote about no longer exists, that Che's political course is no longer an alternative because imperialism is much so stronger today.

Kiva Maidanik, a Latin America specialist from the former Soviet Union, expressed this view most sharply. While Guevara's ideas deserved to be studied for the future, he said, the disintegration of the Soviet Union was such a colossal defeat for the forces of progress in the world that "we are living in a new historic epoch," different from the one Che knew. The rise of "neoliberalism and globalization" has shifted the relationship of forces to the disadvantage of those fighting for socialism, Maidanik stated. Later in the discussion, a member of the Bolivian Communist Party returned to this point, insisting that it was dangerous to underestimate the strength of imperialism, which he asserted was now more powerful than ever.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a speaker on the opening panel, had presented a different perspective and responded in her summary remarks to some of the points made during the discussion. "Are we living in a new era? No," she replied. "Ours is fundamentally the same world order that has existed since the beginning of the century. This remains the imperialist epoch. What has changed is that imperialism is weaker than ever, not stronger."

Waters noted that the question of our epoch is the question of communist leadership in struggle. "There are no hopeless situations for imperialism," she said, if the working-class has no communist leadership to lead it in conquering power from the capitalist exploiters and war makers. World War II was a horrible example of an imperialist slaughter made possible by the absence of



Tricontinental, the magazine of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, published a 30th anniversary issue devoted to Che Guevara. "Che set an example of internationalism in aiding other peoples in their fight to free themselves from Yankee domination," Manuel Piñero (inset) told the conference.

communist leadership in the world working class in the face of what seemed to be terminal crises for major capitalist powers in the 1930s.

"That is why Che's course is more necessary than ever to chart a road forward for humanity," Waters said. (The presentation that Waters summarized in her opening remarks, "Che Guevara and the Imperialist Reality," appears elsewhere in this issue.)

Che's hatred for imperialism

Another highlight of the conference was an evening with several individuals who were family members or had worked with Che. It was held at La Cabaña, a Spanish colonial fortress — now a military museum — that served briefly as Che's headquarters following the triumph of the revolution.

The speakers — Villegas, Aleida Guevara, Enrique Oltuski, and Oscar Fernández Mell — painted a vivid portrait of Che as a person. Aleida Guevara, who was only a child when she last saw him, spoke about her memories of Che as a loving father and what she had learned about him from her mother and others of his closest comrades in arms, including those on the panel.

Fernández Mell, a doctor by profession, fought with Guevara in the Rebel Army and later worked with him in other responsibilities, including the Congo guerrilla campaign. In addition to Che's love for and confidence in the capacities of men and women in struggle, Fernández Mell said, Guevara had an abiding hatred for imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism, based on his concrete knowledge and experience throughout the Americas.

Oltuski, leader of the July 26 Movement in Las Villas at the end of the Cuban revolutionary war and later a close collaborator of Guevara in the Ministry of Industry, spoke about the crucial role Che played during the mass working-class mobilizations in 1960 that led to the expropriation of Cuba's domestic- and imperialist-owned industries.

When the revolutionary leadership embarked on these measures, Oltuski noted, Guevara was barely 31 years old and Oltuski himself was 29. "We were a bunch of kids," he said. "We had studied *Capital* and other works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, but we had some big questions to answer: how exactly are we going to go over to socialism? The books didn't tell us what to do. We spent hours discussing these questions into the early hours of the morning as we figured out how to go forward."

The conference closed with the reading of the final declaration adopted by the participants and a speech by Tomás Borge, a leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

Other events mark Guevara's death

HAVANA — The OSPAAAL conference was one of several events taking place around the 30th anniversary of Che Guevara's death. The Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), for example, sponsored a "Meeting to Study Ernesto Che Guevara: Socialism and the Roads to Efficiency" here on September 25-26. The 200 participants, including academics and workers, also heard presentations from relatives and former associates of the revolutionary leader.

Other events are being organized on university and college campuses. One is an October 1-4 conference sponsored by the Che Studies Program at the University of Havana.

Cuban youth and others are participating in a number of international commemorative events. One is a ceremony that will take place in the village of La Higuera, Bolivia, site of Guevara's assassination. Two caravans of youth, initiated by the Continental Organization of Latin American Students (OCLAE) are converging on La Higuera, one starting from Mexico City and the other from Buenos Aires. This coincides with a conference on Che's legacy in Rosario, Argentina, sponsored by the magazine *América Libre*.

The major political event in Cuba in the coming weeks is the fifth congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, scheduled for October 8-10 to coincide with the 30th anniversary. Following the congress, ceremonies to honor Guevara and his fellow combatants are planned in Havana October 11-13. A procession will travel from Havana to Santa Clara, where the combatants' remains — recently returned from Bolivia — will be buried, during a major ceremony that will take place October 17.

An international conference on socialism and Guevara's legacy is scheduled here October 21-23, sponsored by the Communist Party of Cuba.

— M.K.

Australia miners go on strike again

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

SYDNEY — On September 8 coal miners at RTZ-CRA (Rio Tinto's) Hunter Valley #1 mine resumed strike action after the company suspended two workers for refusing to transfer from their usual jobs to work in the coal preparation plant as directed by management. The strike resumed two days before the end of a seven week negotiation period which had not resolved the conflict.

Formerly known as CRA, Rio Tinto has a union busting record. Since 1993 Rio Tinto has campaigned to have all employees on nonunion individual contracts, and has successfully eroded union coverage at its vast iron ore, diamond, gold, bauxite, and aluminum smelting interests.

The strike at Hunter Valley #1 mine is the company's opening shot in their war to break the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) in the coal industry. Rio Tinto has made clear its goal to wrest back union-controlled seniority and work practices at the mine. Only seven union members there have signed non-union individual contracts. The remaining 430 miners have no intention of giving up hard won gains.

On September 15 Rio Tinto charged the miners with sabotage, intimidation, and physical obstruction as the company initiated legal action to attempt to remove pickets from blocking the export of coal. The CFMEU responded by threatening to widen strike action beyond the Hunter Valley #1 mine if the company pursued legal action.

On September 16, after a two-hour stand-off, 300 striking miners, their wives and children cheered after succeeding for the fourth time in the past few months in blocking a coal train from entering the mine site. The train driver refused to cross the picket line for safety reasons even though he was under pressure from FreightCorp management and the local Police Commander, Mike Sullivan who accompanied him in the locomotive's cab.

The New South Wales (NSW) state Labor government intervened September 18, urging the Industrial Relations Commission to arbitrate a settlement because of damage to the state economy. NSW premier Robert Carr said, "There's no doubt in my mind that this dispute has been brought on by an aggressive, confrontationalist company that's seeking to rewrite the rules and to deny workers' basic rights."

The CFMEU and the ACTU president, Jennie George called instead for "consent arbitration" that would permit the union to continue legal strike action while a settlement was reached in the commission.

The Federal government's legal counsel, Steven Amendola, told the commission that the two warring sides were meant to "battle it out" and the commission should not intervene. Subsequently, on September 19, Justice Alan Boulton ruled that the commission would not intervene "at this stage."

Federal Minister for Workplace Relations Peter Reith urged the company to use the full weight of the new federal antiunion Workplace Relations Act to sue the miners union for damages. He also urged other companies that might be caught in sympathy strikes to use sections of the law enabling them to sue for damages after interference with trade. He said on Meet the Press, "There is a very strong law there to be used and we would expect the parties to use it."

The mood at the picket lines is one of determination. Nathan Thomson, one of the strikers reported that faxes arrive every day supporting their fight. He said, "More and more people realize that this fight is not just for Hunter Valley #1 miners but for everyone in Australia's rights. With Reith and Howard's new laws the awards don't mean anything and we all have to fight," Thomson said, referring to the workplace relations minister and to Prime Minister John Howard.

The CFMEU organized a protest on October 1 in Sydney to support the Hunter Valley #1 miners. Striking miners' wives have organized a family support group. Jackie Evans, who is active in the group,



Militant/Joanne Kuniansky

Strikers, joined by thousands of other mine, construction, and maritime workers, marched to Prime Minister John Howard's office October 1 to protest union busting.

said they were organizing a busload of miner's wives and children to protest at Rio Tinto's offices in Sydney on October 1. Afterwards CFMEU miners and construction workers marched on Howard's Sydney office. "What we are trying to make people understand is that this strike has nothing to

do with money. The issue is seniority, safety and the right to a union," Evans said. "Morale is high on the picket line. If we lose where will our kids be in the future?"

Joanne Kuniansky is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union.

Apple pickers win raise, get laid off

BY CHRIS RAYSON

SEATTLE — About 120 farm workers walked off the job at Auvil Fruit Co. near Vantage, Washington, September 1 protesting mistreatment from supervisors and a "bonus" system that cheats them out of wages they earn.

The farm workers struck the apple orchard for four days, despite a massive police presence and strong arm tactics, including escorting scabs through picket lines. On September 5, about 40 strikers went back to work. Auvil laid them off out of seniority a few days later, replacing them with those who crossed the picket line.

Guadalupe Gamboa, director of the Washington State United Farm Workers, told the *Militant* that the strike did force Auvil to raise wages for picking Granny Smith apples.

The Auvil Fruit Co. walkout was the fourth wildcat farm worker strike this summer in the orchards of the Mattawa area of eastern Washington. Auvil is directly across the Columbia River from Mattawa, where farm workers and their supporters marched 1,500 strong on August 10 demanding a wage raise and the right to organize into unions and negotiate a contract.

The Auvil strike was sparked when the company laid off eight workers for "bruising" apples. Picker José Nevarez, of Mattawa, told the *Tri-City Herald* September 5, "If they find two bruised apples in three bins in a row, you can be fired."

One bin can hold as much as 2,000 apples. Prior to the strike, farm workers at Auvil Fruit got \$17 for a bin of Granny Smith apples, with \$5 held until the end of the season and paid as a "bonus." For a bin of Fuji apples \$20 of the \$35 wage is withheld. Workers who are fired or laid off for "bruising apples" are not paid the "bonus," giving company supervisors license for arbitrary mistreatment of pickers.

Gamboa was quoted in the September 4 *Daily Record*, published in Ellensburg, Washington, as saying, "In one case going back to 1996, a worker had earned over \$1,000 in bonus money, but was fired before the season ended and did not get what he was entitled to."

After the strike, Auvil raised the wage for picking a bin of Granny Smith apples to \$18 and is no longer withholding any part of this, Gamboa told the *Militant*. Auvil also announced it was reconsidering the wage it pays for a bin of Fuji apples.

In the afternoon of the first day of the Auvil strike, 26 patrol cars from the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office, the Grant County Sheriff's Office, and the Washington State Patrol were sent to keep Huntzinger Road, adjacent to the struck orchard, open. In a letter to the Washington State Patrol chief, Gamboa wrote that the troopers and deputies "participated in actions that chilled the workers' rights to organize for better job treatment.... The specific intimidating actions engaged by these officials included displaying rifles and pointing video cameras at peaceful protesters and stopping and harassing protesters who were returning to the picket lines."

One worker was detained and then arrested after he tried to return to the picket line after going to a nearby store. Police then jailed him on an outstanding traffic violation.

The police mobilization to help break the strike at Auvil Orchard is complemented by stepped up Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) arrests of immigrant workers throughout eastern Washington. The *Yakima Herald-Republic* reported that on September 23, INS border agents assisted local police in arresting 36 men in sweeps through the towns of Wapato, Sunnyside, and Grandview in the lower Yakima valley. All but one chose "voluntary departure" to Mexico rather than going through a formal hearing.

The *Herald-Republic* added that, "Agents also picked up a few men who ran when approached by a Border Patrol vehicle. After one suspect was arrested he led agents back to the apartment where seven more suspected illegal aliens were arrested."

The INS raid arrested the largest number of suspected illegal immigrants since July, when 38 workers were arrested at a Wiley City fruit storage facility.

Chris Rayson is a member of United Transportation Union Local 845.

US Air workers vote in union

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Some 10,000 passenger-service workers at US Airways voted to join the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the National Mediation Board announced September 29. Union officials called the vote the largest union organizing victory in ten years.

"People are finally waking up to the fact that they need protection and that means a union," declared Josie Esposito, a reservations agent in San Diego. "The company's stock has been going up ... and our wages haven't gone anywhere."

The company had imposed a wage freeze on the workers, while cutting their pensions and sick days over the past four years.

The CWA, which lost the election last year by some 280 votes, will organize gate, reservations and ticket agents. The board ordered a new election citing company misconduct during the election process.

US Airways officials have challenged the ruling in court and said they would appeal the board's decision to overturn the previous election.

A CWA spokesman said the union would use this victory to launch an organizing campaign for the 14,000 passenger-service workers at United Airlines.

There about 60,000 of these workers in the airline industry who are not unionized. The only ticket, reservation, and gate agents who belong to unions work at Northwest Airlines and Trans World Airlines.

Just as the CWA won its victory, US Airways is demanding lower "labor costs" from members of the Air Line Pilots Association.

Stephen Wolf, the company's chief executive, threatened to cancel a deal to buy some 400 jets from Airbus and reduce the airline to a smaller, regional carrier if the pilots don't cave in to US Airways' demands.

Jon Bryan, chairman of the union's management executive council, said the union had offered \$70 million worth of concessions, including cuts in vacations and sick leave, as well as accepting a 33 percent pay cut for pilots who would fly the company's new low-cost airline called US2.

Union officials reached an agreement over the weekend of September 27 - 28 with the company to pay US Airways pilots about 1 percent more than pilots flying for the company's main rivals. The deal also allows US Airways to contract with other airlines to fly its passengers.

However, the union is still fighting for some 140 pilots' jobs, who were or would be laid off due to the downsizing agreement.

Fight for union rights

Rally to support apple workers organizing drive

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