

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Havana conference discusses world struggle for socialism

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61/NO. 41 NOVEMBER 24, 1997

Stop U.S. war moves against Iraqi people!

Working people the world over should denounce the latest resolution by the United Nations Security Council, engineered by Washington, that bans Iraqi officials from traveling abroad because they exercise their sovereign right to expel U.S. "inspectors." These U.S. government stooges are at the center of provocations against Baghdad used to justify maintenance of a draconian embargo that has crippled the Iraqi economy

EDITORIAL

for seven years and has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and suffering by the Iraqi people.

The labor movement should also protest the threat of further punitive measures mentioned in the Security Council resolution and the more explicit threats by Washington of possible military strikes.

The goal of the Democratic/Republican bipartisan war threats is to reverse Washington's failure to accomplish one of its central goals during the 1990-91 assault on Iraq: bolster U.S. dominance in the Arab-Persian gulf region, which has some 65 percent of the world's known oil reserves. To accomplish this aim, the U.S. rulers used their military might at the opening of this decade to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime and replace it with one that for all practical purposes would be an imperialist protectorate, subservient to Washington. That's what the purpose of the U.S. war drive against Iraq was all about — not to liberate

Continued on Page 14



In the days leading up to the November 12 UN resolution against Iraq, thousands of youthful protesters in Baghdad chanted slogans against U.S. imperialists.

Washington steps up war threats

BY MEGAN ARNEY

The United Nations Security Council approved a resolution November 12 imposing a travel ban on some Iraqi officials until Baghdad reverses its decision to expel U.S. representatives from the UN arms inspection teams in Iraq. Washington engineered the resolution as part of its effort to lay the groundwork for a possible military assault

on Iraq. The document warns of "further measures" if the Iraqi government does not comply, but does not include an explicit threat of military force.

The next day the Iraqi government announced it was moving ahead with the expulsion of the U.S. inspectors. Speaking at the White House, U.S. president William

Continued on Page 12

Clinton is forced to retreat on 'fast track' trade plan

BY GAETAN WHISTON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — William Clinton's administration suffered a sharp blow when it was forced to postpone until next year a vote on legislation that would have given the U.S. president greater powers in negotiating trade deals. Early on the morning of November 10, supporters of the bill announced that they were six to eight votes short of a majority in the House of Representatives, despite weeks of heavy campaigning and deal-making to convince legislators to vote for the proposal.

The bill would require Congress to vote up or down trade agreements negotiated by the president with no amendments. The White House is seeking this "fast track" authority, which every president has had since the 1970s, in order to more easily develop a "free trade" zone throughout the Americas. The goal is to expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), established in 1993, between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, throughout the hemisphere by 2005.

House minority leader Richard Gephardt, a probable contender for the Democratic Party nomination for president in 2000, led the charge against the "fast track" authority. He had the backing of the AFL-CIO officialdom, who campaigned vigorously for the bill's defeat on the basis that the U.S. government needs to utilize other trade mea-

Continued on Page 4

Dominicans strike for two days demanding utilities, lower prices

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Thousands of workers in the Dominican Republic participated in a two-day general strike November 11-12 demanding higher wages, better electricity and water services, and lower food and gasoline prices.

The government responded to the strike with a militarization of the capital, Santo Domingo, mobilizing troops from the Army, the Marines, and the Air Force, as well as the police. Some 7,000 soldiers took up positions at markets, gas stations, bridges,

buses, and major intersections.

One person was killed on the first day of the strike during a confrontation with the troops in the working-class neighborhood of Capotillo in the capital. Jim Padilla Valdez died when he was shot in the head. In the same incident two other protesters were seriously wounded, also shot in the head. Overall, some 24 people were injured and 340 detained that day. The cops had arrested about 500 activists before the strike began.

In the southern part of the country, shops, banks, public and private offices, schools, and universities were completely closed, especially in the provinces of San Juan de la Maguana, Azua, and Barahona. Elsewhere the work stoppage was partial.

Organizers of the protest called the action to demand that the regime of President Leonel Fernández keep its promise to improve government services throughout the country. About 30 percent in this country's 8 million people are unemployed and the official poverty rate is 70 percent. Capitalists have jacked up food prices, citing the effects of a drought, and residents experience power failures that last up to 18 hours a day.

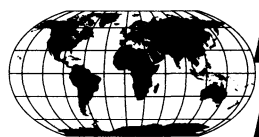


200 people rallied in New York November 11 to support Dominican strike.

Caterpillar workers hold one-day walkout in defense of union rights



At least 36 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 974 walked off the job at Caterpillar's engine plant in Mossville, Illinois, November 7 when a worker was denied his request to talk to a union steward after being forced to work overtime. Local 974 vice president George Boze told the *Militant*, "The picket line grew to as many as 200 workers" as unionists reporting for other shifts refused to cross the line. According to the *Decatur Herald-Review*, by 8 a.m. November 8 only three of more than 250 workers had shown up to work. The walkout ended 20 hours after it began. According to Boze, the company "agreed to our right to union representation and agreed to take no disciplinary action against the picketers and those who honored the picket line."



Venezuelan workers: 'raise now'

On November 5 some 80,000 workers belonging to Venezuela's largest oil union threatened to hold a 12-hour strike November 13 or 14 if the state oil company Petróleos de Venezuela refuses to accept their contract demands, which include wage and pension increases. Municipal government workers struck throughout Venezuela November 3 to demand their bonus pay. Public sector workers from the western Venezuelan town Maracaibo planned a protest march for November 4. In Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledesma called off the work stoppage in that city with the stated aim of working out a deal with the finance minister. Municipal government officials around the country are criticizing Venezuelan president Rafael Caldera for not providing additional funding for bonus pay.

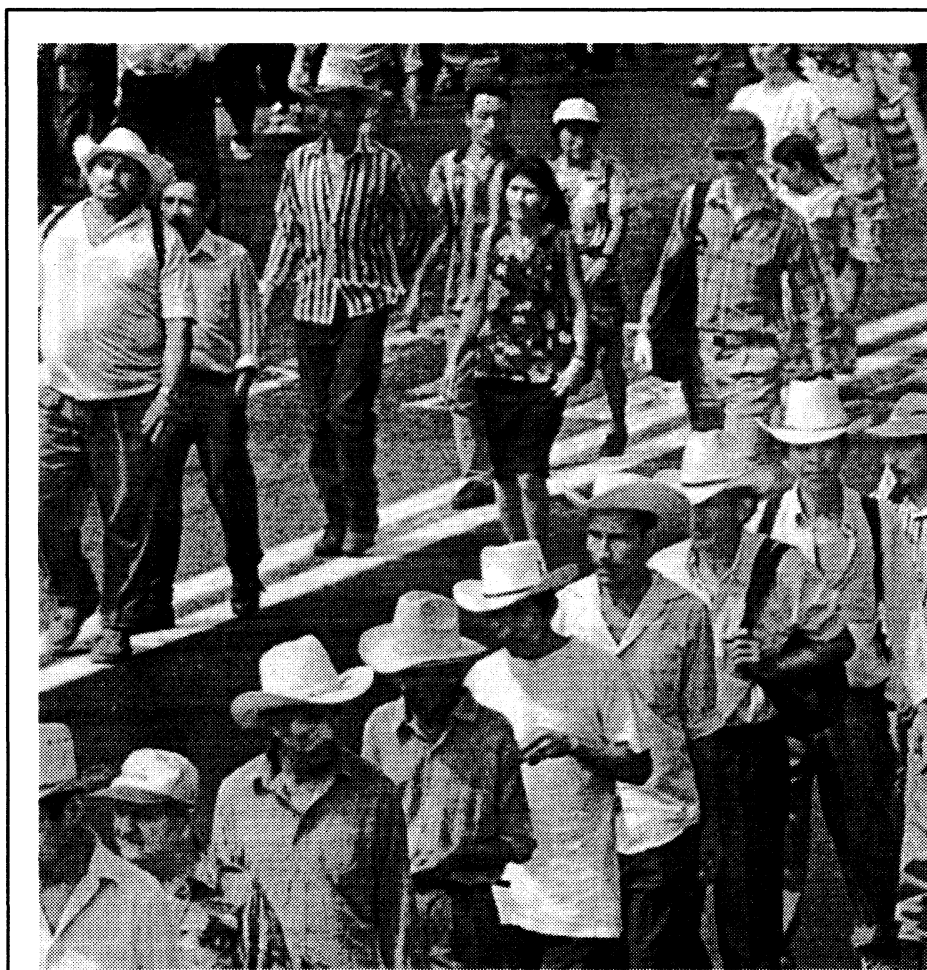
In other news, up to 8,000 soldiers and cops are being deployed in Porlamar, the capital of the small Venezuelan island of Margarita. They are preparing for the arrival of 23 representatives from Latin America, Spain, and Portugal to attend a weekend summit entitled "Ethical Values in Democracies." All demonstrations have been prohibited and government officials are severely restricting travel to the island.

Indian cops kill four in Kashmir

On November 7 Indian security forces leveled a home in Srinagar, in the state of Kashmir, with rocket fire, killing at least four residents. Top Kashmir police official P.S. Gill, whose forces surrounded the house in Sprigar, India, claimed they were responding to a Kashmir guerrilla gun-fire attack on forces patrolling the neighborhood. When residents responded to the siege with gun-fire, the cops annihilated the place.

Egyptian peasants face land loss

The Egyptian government on October 1 began to implement a policy that will authorize landowners to double the rent paid by some 904,000 tenant farmers. State protections on production quotas are also being dropped, so peasants will now face the competition of the open market. Saad Nassar, the economic adviser to the agriculture minister said, "When rent is low, the tenant doesn't have any interest in increas-



More than 5,000 farmers from across El Salvador demonstrated in the capital city, San Salvador, November 6, demanding the president sign a law canceling more than \$168 million in farmers' debts. The debt, according to legislators, has left more than 100,000 peasant families impoverished. On October 30 the Congress adopted a law partially canceling the debt, but there are no guarantees the government will implement it.

ing output. Before the change, it was sufficient to cultivate one crop a year. Now," he continued, "the farmers will be paying up to three times the previous rents, so they will have to work harder."

N. Korea called, Cuba answered

In response to the appeal for international food assistance from the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), socialist Cuba sent a shipment of

10,000 tons of sugar. Agriculture in north Korea has been hard hit by floods and drought over the last few years. The Cuban government's solidarity package, which arrived October 27, was well received in the Pyongyang press. In sharp contrast, Washington continues to demand that the DPRK accept "market reforms" and renounce its near half-century fight to reunify Korea in exchange for any substantial relief.

Yugoslav dinar down 10 percent

The Yugoslav dinar fell 10 percent against the German mark the first week of November. The dinar is officially set at a rate of 3.3 to the mark, but black marketeers will now give up 4.4 dinars. Overall, the currency has dropped 33 percent since August. The government has nearly doubled the amount of paper money in circulation over the last month. Aleksandra Posarac, an economist and vice president of the pro-capitalist Civic Alliance, said, "It seems the government is really in trouble. They are running out of funds." The party of Slobodan Milosevic, the president of the coalition government in Yugoslavia, lost a majority of the Serbian parliament in recent elections, and almost

lost the presidency to Vojislav Seselj of the Serbian Radical Party. The vote was invalidated, however, because the turnout fell short of the 50 percent required voters. A new election is scheduled for December 7.

Currency wavers in Greece

On October 31, in a move to stabilize the wavering Greek drachma, Athens's central bank raised its short-term interest rates for commercial banks to 150 percent. Stocks in Athens fell 13 percent the same day. This was precipitated by international investors selling off Greek bonds. The Bank of Greece sold about \$2 billion in foreign exchange reserves to prevent the drachma from falling. A November 4 *Financial Times* article contributes the currency crisis in Greece to the "slide in emerging markets worldwide."

'No foreign hands on our land'

Three hundred farmers in Budapest, Hungary, demonstrated November 3 against the plan to open arable land to foreign ownership. Farmers were also incensed by the low prices they receive for their goods. Police detained one of the demonstrators who they said was a leader of the protest.

Bonn: joblessness hits new high

Unemployment in Germany has reached over 4.5 million workers for the first time. About 3 million people in eastern Germany are jobless, and in the west some 1.5 million are without work, according to official figures. The government also released seasonally adjusted figures showing a 1.6 percent decline in industrial production for September, following a 4.9 percent drop in August.

U.S. 'diplomat' caught spying

A U.S. intelligence official left Austria after being arrested for wiretapping the phone of a diplomat of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Vienna, a U.S. government official said November 5. That same official said the exposed operation was part of a larger effort by Washington to recruit and spy on north Korean officials worldwide. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had no comment on the incident.

N.Y. cop gets jail sentence for assault, walks until appeal

Ex-cop Francis Livoti, who was acquitted in the choke-hold killing of Anthony Baez, was sentenced November 7 to seven months in prison for choking and smacking Steven Resto in 1983. Judge Megan Tallmer called the assault "consistent with a pattern of abuse of your [Livoti's] position." Livoti, who was allowed to walk free pending an appeal, said in court, "How much more must I pay ... before I'm allowed to ... be productive again as I've always been?" Resto filed a \$3 million law suit against Livoti for civil rights violations. After the trial Resto said, "We need to stick together more" to fight against cop brutality.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Labor can lead fight for safety

In their drive for profits, the bosses let trains, planes, and buses deteriorate and force speedups and overtime to maximize production—increasing safety hazards and accidents. The 'Militant' explains why the labor movement must lead the fight for safety. Don't miss a single issue!



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

RENEWAL

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$12 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 375 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,500 • New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 61/No. 41

Closing news date: November 13, 1997

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

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

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant

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

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/pubs/militant

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

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

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

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year sub-

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

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4.

Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. **Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East:** £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address. **France:** Send FF300 for one-year subscription to Militant, MBE 201, 208, rue de la Convention, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U. **Belgium:** BF 1,900 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of 1Mei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp. **Iceland:** Send 5,400 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. **Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark:** 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9. **New Zealand:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Currency storm rocks Japanese economy

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The currency typhoon rocking Southeast Asia threatens to push a teetering Japanese economy over the brink into an economic recession. The country is still recovering from its worst economic slowdown since the end of World War II and has the highest budget deficit among the so-called Group of Seven major capitalist countries.

Tokyo's gross domestic product shrank 2.9 percent in the April-June quarter, and industrial production continued to decline in July, falling 2.2 percent. In September construction orders declined for the eighth time in 11 months, and total orders in September were 31.7 percent lower than a year earlier. The official unemployment rate is now close to its record high of 3.5 percent.

A financial collapse in Japan, whose economy totals \$5 trillion, would have a sharp impact in the United States and the rest of the world. Japanese capitalists, who own some \$291 billion in U.S. Treasury bonds, could start selling them to generate cash if one or more of Japan's largest banks faced bankruptcy.

Robert Hormats, vice president of the investment firm Goldman Sachs International, voiced anxieties held by the U.S. rulers that such a sell-off could trigger a recession in the United States. Currency devaluations have already set off a regional slowdown in Southeast Asia that could deepen into a recession. Some 40 percent of Japanese exports are sold in that region.

Many commentators in the bourgeois press express concerns that this development will exacerbate deflationary pressures, intensify price competition, and increase excess industrial capacity — that is the capitalists' ability to produce more commodities than they can sell at a high enough profit to justify further expansion of their production facilities and equipment.

Severe banking crisis stalks Japan

Japanese bankers are jittery about the \$265 billion in loans and bank deposits they have extended to various countries in the region and the \$250 billion in problem domestic loans. Bad loans have soared 18 percent since March as bankruptcies increased.

"The fear is that since bankruptcies are on the rise, and banks have to foot the bill, one day it'll be too much for them to bear," explained Ken Tsubouchi, general manager of the Nomura Asset Management Company.

Sanyo Securities, Japan's seventh largest brokerage house in Japan, went belly up November 3 with a \$3 billion debt. Nine of its main creditors had refused to roll over loans totaling \$160 million due for payment on October 31, 1998. Sanyo was the first brokerage house in Japan to file for bankruptcy since World War II.

On November 6 Yamaichi, the fourth largest broker, was warned by the U.S. credit rating agency Moody's that its status could be downgraded to "junk bond." The move



Kim Chul Hong, leader of a union on strike against a bank in south Korea, carries a sign that reads: "We can't live with this anxiety. Guarantee our job security." The so-called tiger countries in southeast Asia are facing pressure to devalue their currencies as the economic crisis sweeps throughout the region, causing a slump in sales of automobiles and threatening massive failure of banks in Japan.

would make Yamaichi the first Japanese brokerage firm demoted to this category. This follows a wave of financial failures and corruption scandals across the country.

Meanwhile, the Nikkei-225, Tokyo's stock market index, dropped to 15,836 November 7, the lowest in more than two years. According to *Business Week*, if the Nikkei fell to 14,000 Japan's 20 largest lending institutions would face a combined \$96 billion loss.

The banks invested hundreds of billions of dollars in speculative loans to build golf resorts, high-rise office towers, and other real estate ventures dating back to the 1980s, which remain on the books as assets. Vastly inflated commercial real estate prices plummeted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sending the economy into a decline. The recent currency crisis has worsened an already stagnating economy.

The Japanese capitalists could face defaults on the loans they extended throughout Southeast Asia due to the string of currency devaluations that was triggered when the government of Thailand released the baht's peg to the U.S. dollar on July 2. The Thai baht has dropped 40 percent against the dollar since then, and currencies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines suffered similar declines. Now currencies in the stronger so-called tiger countries, such as south Korea and Singapore, are under growing pressure for devaluation.

The currency devaluations will make it more difficult for these regimes to pay back loans and the compounded interest. On November 7, CMIC Finance and Securities, one of Thailand's 58 suspended finance companies, announced that it would not be able to pay the \$400,000 annual interest on its \$50 million in Eurobonds (bonds denominated in European currencies) that was due

the next day.

Another company, Bangkok Land, was expected to miss a scheduled payment of \$2.43 million. Somprasong Land, a Thai real estate company, missed a \$3.1 million payment on Eurobonds in February.

Through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the U.S. capitalist rulers are attempting to impose "bailout" schemes that include stepped-up austerity measures on the regimes in the region, similar to the \$50 billion loan package foisted on the Mexican government in 1995, as a way to guarantee their investments.

There is working-class resistance to the effects of this, however. The austerity program pushed on working people in the Philippines received a blow when the country's Supreme court declared November 5 that a law deregulating the oil industry was unconstitutional. Mass protests had earlier forced the court to impose a 30-day freeze on oil prices. Bosses in the oil industry had pushed for the deregulation law, which would allow them to raise prices.

Tokyo is probing to counter Washington as the dominant imperialist power in the region, while it presses to guarantee investments for the wealthy class in Japan. The Japanese regime is pushing to set up a regional fund to rival the IMF. This scheme is similar to the proposed \$100 billion Asian Monetary Fund squelched by Washington at a September conference in Hong Kong. An inaugural meeting of banking officials from the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) led by the Japanese government established a central bank forum in early November.

Devaluations hit auto industry

Mitsubishi Motors said it anticipates losses this year of \$328 million instead of

an expected net profit, partly because of the higher cost of having to service a dollar-denominated debt of some \$500 million in devalued currency at a joint venture in Thailand. The auto factory was reported to be "clogged with inventory as early as July."

Toyota announced November 5 a shutdown at its two plants in Thailand from mid-November until the end of the year, citing poor sales. The company had announced a week earlier that it was raising production from 4.67 million vehicles last year to more than 6 million by 2000.

"I'm very worried. There are lots of rumors and the news keeps changing every day," said Tinakorn, one of the 2,000 workers at the company's flagship plant in Samrong, Thailand.

Four Japanese car companies have dominated the market in Thailand, with over 80 percent of sales. Toyota alone has 30 percent of the market.

According to London's *Financial Times*, the impact of the devaluations "caught the industry by surprise." Japanese auto manufacturers stuck with unsold vehicles had to chop production in August by 10.4

percent. Total car sales in Thailand are forecast to drop by 39 percent to 360,000 units from 589,000 last year.

In mid-September, the Swedish Volvo Car Co. announced a 10-week shutdown of its assembly plant in Thailand because of the currency instability in the region. "The plant will be shut for 10 weeks and then we will have to evaluate the situation again," declared Volvo spokesman Ingemar Hesslefors.

With the falling demand for automobiles and other commodities, numerous articles have appeared in the big-business media over the past several months noting a growing concern about excess capacity, especially in the auto industry. The May 10 *Economist* pointed to the "Global pile-up" of cars and an article in the September 10 *Wall Street Journal* reported that a recent study by the Coopers & Lybrand Consulting firm estimated a "global excess capacity of 19.8 million vehicles in 2001."

In Japan and other parts of the world, goods prices have been falling combined with a worldwide overcapacity in industries. The wealthy class is worried that the deflationary pressures, which result from the long-term tendency of capitalist profit rates to fall, will intensify price competition among rival capitalists.

At the annual meeting of the World Bank and IMF in Hong Kong on September 20, U.S. treasury secretary Robert Rubin chided Japan's finance minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, demanding that Tokyo not attempt to pull out of its economic stagnation by driving down the yen to boost its exports to the United States.

In a reference to these developments, the October 27 issue of the big-business weekly *Barrons* warned that if the Asian currency turmoil continues to spread, it could lead to the "triad of conditions — deflation, competitive devaluations and rising protectionism — that characterized the global Depression of the 1930s."

Smoldering crisis will mark APEC summit

BY MIKE BARKER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "Asian financial crisis will not derail forum's aim of bringing down area's trade barriers," declared an optimistic headline in the October 28 Vancouver *Sun*, referring to the upcoming summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

But the stock plunge on Wall Street and Toronto's Bay Street the day before, triggered by currency devaluations across much of Asia and the stock market dive in Hong Kong, laid that illusion to rest. Canadian Trade Minister Sergio Marchi announced October 28 that the APEC summit will have to be reorganized to deal with the Asian currency crisis.

The 18 heads of state meeting in Vancouver November 21-25 will find it all but impossible to gain a consensus on how to deal with the crisis. The rulers of the five imperialist countries that dominate APEC — the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand — may be united in their desire to expand exploitation

of the semi-colonial countries, but as competitors in the world market their interests frequently collide.

The smaller imperialist powers within APEC tend to line up with the U.S. government against Tokyo, although they have disputes with Washington as well. The so-called salmon war between Ottawa and Washington is but one of a growing number of trade conflicts between these two rivals.

For Canada's rulers, the Vancouver summit was to be the crowning event in a year-long trade offensive in the region. After declaring 1997 to be "Canada's Year of Asia Pacific," Prime Minister Jean Chretien set out in January on his third "Team Canada" trade mission to Asia. During the trip the delegation announced a string of business deals worth a total of Can\$2.13 billion (US\$1.7 billion). Most of the deals, however, were in the form of memorandums of understanding, with no guarantee that a solid contract would follow.

Ottawa's efforts to diversify its trade and lessen its dependence on the U.S. market

have been a failure. Exports to the Asia-Pacific region have declined as a portion of total Canadian exports, while the share of exports destined for the U.S. market has increased to more than 80 percent.

Nonetheless, as this year's APEC chair, Ottawa hoped to provide Canadian capitalists with a competitive advantage selling to Asian countries. On behalf of Canadian manufacturers, Ottawa planned to push for a reduction in tariffs and other trade barriers in areas such as wood products, fish, environmental technology and chemicals. In addition, Ottawa planned to join with Washington in calling for an end to all restrictions on the operations of imperialist banking and financial interests.

Underlying all the discussions about the Asian crisis at the APEC summit will be imperialism's fear that billions of dollars in outstanding loans owed to their banks are at risk of default.

Mike Barker is a member of British Columbia's Hospital Employees Union.

from Pathfinder

LENIN

Imperialism:
The Highest Stage
of Capitalism

Imperialism:
The Highest
Stage of
Capitalism

V.I. LENIN
\$3.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Ontario teachers end protest strike

BY VICKY MARSHAL
AND ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO — After dealing a blow to the provincial government's austerity campaign by garnering widespread support for their fight, 126,000 Ontario teachers returned to work November 10 after union leaders called off their work stoppage. The protest strike against education cutbacks began October 27.

On November 6, some 22,000 students, teachers, and parents rallied in front of the Ontario legislature in Toronto, in a demonstration organized by the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Hours afterwards, leaders of the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario, the Ontario Public School Teachers Federation, and the Franco-Ontarian Teachers Association announced that the members of those unions would return to work on November 10.

The teachers had walked off the job against Bill 160. This proposed legislation would give the Ontario government, presently headed by Conservative premier Michael Harris, arbitrary powers to set working conditions such as class size and preparation time, more easily cut thousands of teaching jobs, and slash hundreds of millions of dollars from education.

Momentum had been swinging solidly behind the teachers in the wake of the November 3 refusal by Ontario judge James MacPherson to grant the Ontario government an injunction ending the strike. The

day after the judge's decision, a poll commissioned by and published in the right-wing daily *Toronto Star* showed that 59 percent of Toronto-area parents supported the teachers in their struggle. This level was higher than before the strike began.

Toronto Catholic School teacher Sean Gorman told the *Globe and Mail* during the strike that public support was incredible. "We have three picket shifts at the school and we get six dozen donuts a shift," he declared.

Teachers' unity remained strong during the walkout. The Metro Toronto Separate School Board, for example, asked teachers who didn't want to strike to work at the Catholic Education Center. Of the board's 5,927 teachers, no more than 124 did so.

The announcement by union officials calling off the strike sparked outrage from a large layer of elementary school teachers. Some 2,800 elementary school teachers from the Toronto Teachers' Federation met November 7 and demanded their own vote on whether to return to class. They organized a meeting for two days later to take such a vote.

"A moral victory isn't enough," one teacher told a *Globe and Mail* reporter, when rumors began appearing in the press that union tops might be wavering. "I didn't give up two weeks' pay for a moral victory. We have come this far, we are in a position where we can effect some change, with the help of other unions." The need for visible support from other unions was a common comment given to strike supporters who vis-



Militant/John Steele

Teachers picket in Toronto. Protest strike won broad support among other workers.

ited the teachers' picket lines.

About 15,000 teachers and supporters from as far away as Windsor, Thunder Bay, and Kitchener-Waterloo rallied in front of the legislature November 8. The action was supported by unions in the Ontario Federation of Labor (OFL).

Modest contingents from OFL unions such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the United Steelworkers of America, Ontario Public Service Employees Union, and Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) were present.

Jim Lee, a CAW member from the Pillette truck assembly plant in Windsor, said seven buses were organized by CAW Local 444 there to attend the rally. "At the plant, we're firmly behind the teachers. I think they did the right thing walking out," said Lee.

Anne Blackshaw, a member of the Fed-

eration of Women Teachers from Waterloo, told the *Militant*, "We may be returning back to school, but we will continue the fight."

Moments after the end of the November 8 rally, leaders of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association decided to call off the strike. The next day officials of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation also urged their members to return to work. Faced with these developments, the Toronto elementary school teachers voted to go back as well.

Commenting on the outcome of the strike, *Toronto Star* columnist Thomas Walkom wrote, "In a broader political sense, the teachers triumphed...they threw [the government's] entire education agenda into sharp relief....[T]hose who have lost most are the Harris Tories. From this, the teachers can take grim satisfaction."

Clinton forced to drop plea for 'fast track' trade

Continued from front page

sures to protect jobs in the United States.

Around this question there is an increasing convergence between the union tops, liberal Democrats, and ultrarightists such as Patrick Buchanan. Writing on the "fast track" debate in September, Buchanan stated, "If I sound like [John] Sweeney on the issue of protecting the wages of our workers and keeping manufacturing at home, it is because, on this issue, I agree with the AFL-CIO leader." In his November 12 syndicated column, Buchanan declared, "'Global free trade' has lost its allure, and economic nationalism is now in the saddle." He hailed Clinton's forced retreat as a victory for "Middle America and working men and women."

Forum discusses 'fast track' debate

The issues involved in this debate were discussed at the Militant Labor Forum here November 7. The panelists included Steven Suppan from the Minneapolis-based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Mark Adams, member of the executive board of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union, Local 6-75, which is affiliated to the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition, a loose formation of labor, environmental and women's rights groups; and Doug Jenness, author of *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s*, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of St. Paul in the recent elections, and a member of United Steelworkers of America

Local 9198.

Suppan stated that the expansion of NAFTA is aimed at strengthening Washington's hand in the World Trade Organization. He said that big-business interests are part of trade discussions, but "civil society" is not and needs to be represented at the negotiating table. He urged everyone to immediately call their representatives to urge them to vote against the "fast track" legislation.

Adams, who works at a 3-M plant in St. Paul, stressed the importance of pressing the Clinton administration to include clauses for the protection of workers rights and the environment in all trade deals. He has visited border towns in Mexico a number of times and described the difficult conditions workers face in the plants there. He said NAFTA and "fast track" are "agreements for capital" where workers from the United States and Mexico are pitted against each other. He proposed raising the "wages of workers in Latin America as a way to stop corporations from destroying jobs in the U.S."

Jenness also explained why he opposes NAFTA and its expansion. "This has nothing to do with free trade," he said. "It has more to do with setting up a protectionist fortress in the Western Hemisphere, to strengthen the competitive edge of U.S. businesses over their rivals in Europe, Japan, and other countries."

He also pointed to the wrenching effects of NAFTA in Mexico, where a violent trans-

formation is taking place. "Peasants are being driven off the land at an accelerated pace and into the cities in search of jobs," he said. The goal of U.S. capitalists, Jenness explained, "is to transform Mexico and other countries in Latin America into platforms for exporting manufactured goods. In Mexico both U.S. and Mexican capitalists have profited, while the conditions of millions of Mexicans have worsened."

It's also false that a hemispheric free-trade zone is going to solve the problem of jobs as Clinton and others claim, Jenness said. "This has already been shown in Mexico where the jobless rate has gone up." Moreover, support to this perspective would tie workers to helping big sectors of the capitalist class increase their profit rates, undermining the development of independent working-class resistance.

Solidarity, not 'protect U.S. jobs'

Jenness said he thought the union officialdom's campaign against "fast track" and NAFTA has many problems that are an obstacle to the struggle of working people. "I reject the idea," he said, "that there can be 'fair trade' as long as the world is dominated by big capitalist monopolies and is divided between a handful of oppressor nations and a great many oppressed nations." As long as these conditions exist, he stated, trade relations are going to be unequal and no legislation or trade sanctions are going to alter that.

"A central problem with the campaign waged by labor officials," he explained, "is that it is an obstacle to developing and deepening solidarity among workers of different countries. By accepting the use of tariffs, quotas, and other such measures to 'protect U.S. jobs,' they put 'our jobs' ahead of advancing a course that can help forge a common struggle. The argument sort of comes down to this: 'You workers in Mexico are so miserably exploited and face such horrible antiunion conditions, and corporations pay no attention to protecting the environment, so U.S. businesses shouldn't set up shop there and keep the jobs in the United States where standards are higher.' Couldn't Mexican workers turn around and say, 'Unemployment is higher here so we should have the jobs here.'"

Jenness also explained that even when the capitalists agree to environmental and labor safeguards, these get cynically turned into mechanisms for protecting U.S. manufactured goods. He cited the example of how U.S. packinghouses have fought to keep European meat products out of the U.S. market on the usually spurious grounds that they don't live up to the "high" U.S. inspection standards.

The problem with many union officials' approach, Jenness continued, is looking at workers of Mexico and other countries "as victims and not as fellow combatants. Workers on both sides of the border are exploited — often by the same companies. We should get together and fight together against our common plight."

To wage a united fight, Jenness proposed organizing around the demands of a shorter week with no reduction in pay in order to spread the available work. "This is a demand that doesn't pit 'our' jobs against 'yours' but can help draw workers closer. The fight for a shorter working day had historically been an international fight and there's no reason it can't be again," Jenness said.

Jenness also called for canceling the foreign debt of countries oppressed by the economically advanced imperialist countries. "This would help establish links between workers of the United States and Canada on one hand and those of oppressed countries like Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil on the other," he argued.

Both these demands, Jenness summed up, can be the basis of the labor movement organizing a struggle that it is not tied political and economically to policies of one or another section of the ruling capitalist class.

For further reading from Pathfinder

An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis
A Program for International Working-Class Struggle Today

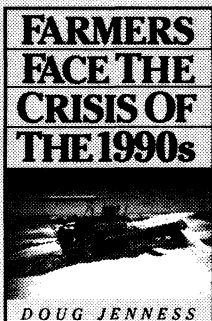
EDITED BY DOUG JENNESS

How a program to fight for jobs and affirmative action, and to combat imperialism's pillage of the Third World, is crucial to uniting working people internationally. Also available in French, Icelandic, Spanish, and Swedish \$3.00

Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

DOUG JENNESS

Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain. \$3.50



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Pathfinder books are a hot item at bookfair in Sweden

BY ANITA ÖSTLING
AND JUAN FIGUEROA

GOTHENBURG, Sweden — "This is my favorite publishing house. I was here last year and now I have come to buy more," said a young man who visited the Pathfinder booth at the Gothenburg bookfair here. He was Turkish in origin, but preferred books in French. Since he already had all the French titles he was interested in, he bought Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* and two issues of the Marxist magazine *New International* in English.

This was the sixth year Pathfinder was represented at the Bookfair. Tens of thousands of people attended the event, which took place October 30–November 2. The first day and a half was open only to publishers, librarians, and other professionals; after that the general public was admitted.

Pathfinder supporters sold 104 books during the fair, worth about \$1,000 dollars. A number of visitors were pleased to hear that the Pathfinder bookstore in Stockholm has a home-page on the Internet, and took Pathfinder catalogues to place orders.

While the bigger publishing houses in Sweden did not participate in the fair this year, smaller publishers and libraries plus universities and colleges had a substantial presence. Nearly all of them got a visit from a Pathfinder sales representative and were introduced to its stock or in many cases kept updated with the news since last year.

At the center of the Pathfinder booth were two big displays, one featuring *Che Guevara Speaks* and the other *Ny International* no. 2, the Swedish edition of *New International* containing the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."

Books by Ernesto Che Guevara were best-sellers. All 30 copies of the Swedish-language Pathfinder edition of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* were sold, as well as five copies of *Che Guevara Speaks*. The two copies of the new Spanish-language edition of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada were both snapped up, along with various other titles on the Cuban revolution.

A number of events took place throughout the fair, including half-hour presentations of books and topics in the "Speakers Corner." Pathfinder had two slots, presenting *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'Guerrilla'* by Harry Villegas and *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956–58* by Che Guevara. The first was attended by 25 people, the second by around 50.

The second biggest seller was *Ny International* no. 2. In addition to the lead article

"Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," interest was particularly sparked by "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold." The fair took place as the impact of the currency crisis and stock market unrest in Asia rippled throughout the world, including Sweden.

Visitors at the Pathfinder booth were in their majority young and a number of them wanted to read basic works on socialism and Marxism. Two youth in their early teens were overwhelmed at the sight of the *The Communist Manifesto*. They said they had been looking for it in used-book stores. A couple of hours later they returned to buy it, declaring, "Now we have it." Three copies of that pamphlet in different languages were sold.

Other young people wanted to know what socialism is. Three of them bought copies in Swedish of *Socialism on Trial* by James P. Cannon, who was a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. One high school student stayed around the booth all Sunday, the last day of the fair, to make sure he got the last copy of it.

One of the young women staffing the information desk at the fair also came to the booth. "There are so many people asking what Pathfinder is and where it is located that I wanted to come and see for myself to be able to tell them." She liked what she saw.

There was also considerable interest in books on the question of women's liberation. Sales included five copies of different titles by Evelyn Reed. In addition, four people bought the newly reissued pamphlet *Europe and America* by Leon Trotsky, and four bought *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* in Swedish.

Anita Östling is a member of the Transport Workers Union and Juan Figueroa is a member of the Young Socialists in Stockholm. Dag Tirsén and Ernesto Oleinik contributed to this article.

October Sales of Pathfinder Books to Non Pathfinder Outlets

OCTOBER

CITY	GOALS	SOLD	%	SEP	AUG	JUL
UNITED STATES						
LOS ANGELES	95	190	200%	288	209	137
BOSTON	50	54	108%	414	223	174
ATLANTA	32	34	106%	29	63	22
WASHINGTON, D.C.	42	37	88%	13	76	141
SEATTLE	60	36	60%	9	30	16
SAN FRANCISCO	74	25	34%	25	128	243
TWIN CITIES	67	22	33%	121	18	15
NEW YORK	190	59	31%	160	292	364
HOUSTON	32	9	28%	59	87	23
MIAMI	42	3	7%	69	61	48
CHICAGO	60	2	3%	129	30	83
BIRMINGHAM	50	1	2%	0	55	22
CLEVELAND	40	0	0%	146	13	60
DES MOINES	35	0	0%	0	0	18
DETROIT	60	0	0%	50	16	73
NEWARK	133	0	0%	2	0	0
PHILADELPHIA	49	0	0%	0	19	15
PITTSBURGH	49	0	0%	16	64	0
U.S. TOTAL	1160	472	41%	1530	1384	1454
CANADA						
MONTREAL	41	12	29%			
VANCOUVER	35	10	29%			
TORONTO	60	0	0%			
CANADA TOTAL	136	22	16%			

Socialist candidate visits Amtrak workers

BY J.B. PAYNE

NEW YORK — On October 23, Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate Olga Rodríguez made a campaign stop at Amtrak's Pennsylvania Station in New York. For an hour or so myself and a number of co-workers had an opportunity to speak with the candidate. Olga was eager to hear our views on a number of issues and explained how the goal of her campaign was to implement changes beneficial to working-class men and women.

In an age when most candidates surround themselves in a media circus, with "photo-ops" being the first order of business, her visit proved a pleasant deviation from the norm. The candidate took time to answer many questions "one on

one" and showed a genuine concern when speaking with several members of the BMW (track workers) regarding their impending strike at Amtrak. As an act of solidarity she vowed to "walk the line" with the workers should they be forced into a strike.

The visit had a most positive effect on those present. They found in Rodríguez not just another candidate but rather a fellow worker expressing some solid ideas for much needed change to improve the city for everyone, not just the few. It was a small step on a long road that more and more working people see as the path to follow.

J.B. Payne is a conductor at Amtrak.

U.S. court denies bail to Irish prisoners

BY CATHLEEN GUTEKANST

SAN FRANCISCO — On October 27, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a U.S. District Court ruling that Kevin Artt, Pól Brennan, and Terrence Kirby are denied bail while they appeal an August 11 ruling ordering their extradition to Northern Ireland.

The Irish activists, part of the "H-Block

4," remain in jail. Brennan and Kirby are currently being held in opposite wings of the Federal Detention Center in Pleasanton, California, while Artt has been transferred to the North Oakland Jail.

The three men, along with Jimmy Smyth, who was extradited to Northern Ireland a year ago, are Irish political prisoners who escaped from the H-Blocks of Long Kesh Prison outside of Belfast in 1983. Each had lived in California for a decade before their arrests by the FBI in 1992. None of them has received credit toward their UK sentences for the four or five years of jail time that they have served in the United States.

John Fogarty, regional vice-president for Human Rights of the Irish-American Unity Conference (IAUC), stated, "The prison authorities have considerably stepped up the level of harassment of these men. Pól Brennan has been placed in solitary confinement three times, twice for refusing to do prison work. He refused because he's never been convicted of any crime in U.S. court. Terry Kirby has received his mail in tatters, with pictures from his three-year-old daughter torn up.

"They transferred Kevin Artt to North Oakland Jail," Fogarty continued. "Kevin has been denied medical and dental care. He has been in custody since August and has been having difficulty eating because his teeth are falling out. I understand that he's lost quite a bit of weight."

H.B. O'Keady, president of the East Bay chapter of the IAUC, added, "Legal material sent to Terry Kirby for his defense, which he was to review and pass on to his lawyer, was never delivered to him and was returned

'refused.' Other personal mail has also been returned for no apparent reason. The prison guards are harassing Terry and Pól. Guards have said to them 'We're going to send you home in a box. You're nothing but a terrorist.'" O'Keady stated that there will be a demonstration to protest the denial of bail and continued harassment of the men, tentatively set for Sunday, December 14, near the Federal Detention Center.

In the Irish Republic, another 1983 Long Kesh escapee, Tony Kelly, was arrested at his home in Letterkenny, County Donegal, on October 22.

Kelly, 36, had been living openly in Donegal with his wife and two children since 1993. He had been sentenced to Long Kesh at the age of 17 with no release date at the "Secretary of State's pleasure."

Martin McGuinness, a leader of the Irish nationalist party Sinn Féin, stated, "The arrest of Tony Kelly is designed to undermine the peace process.... The British government should immediately withdraw the extradition warrant."

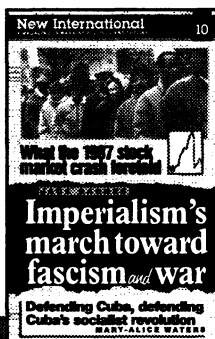
In the past, Dublin courts refused to return two other H-Block escapees, Dermot Finucane and Jim Clark, to Northern Ireland. In March 1990, the Supreme Court in Dublin ordered the release of the two men, asserting the right to immunity from extradition for political, not criminal, prisoners.

The court also ruled that, in the face of evidence of brutality in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and the failure of the British authorities to take any action against those responsible for torturing republican prisoners, the safety of Finucane and Clark could not be guaranteed.

In New International No. 10

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War Jack Barnes

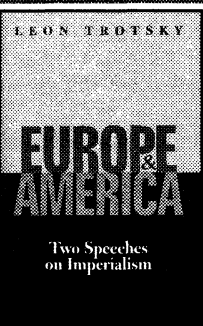
How the working class and its allies respond to the accelerated capitalist disorder will determine whether or not imperialism's march toward fascism and war can be stopped. Available in English, French, Spanish and Swedish. \$14.00



Europe and America Two speeches on Imperialism

Leon Trotsky

The United States, "the most highly concentrated capitalism in the world, is now entering the epoch of open struggle for its autocratic rule over the planet," Leon Trotsky explains in this pamphlet, written in the 1920's. Two speeches assess the roots of mounting conflict between Washington and its competitor/allies in Bonn, Paris, and London. \$6.00



Available from bookstores listed on page 12, or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax: (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

available from Pathfinder

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

Seattle free speech fight strengthens YS

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY ALARIC DIRMEYER

SEATTLE — The Seattle chapter of the Young Socialists is taking steps to lay a solid political foundation for its work and reach out to other young fighters. A major campaign of the organization is the current fight to defend free speech and the demand that the Seattle Ethics and Election Commission (SEEC) reverse its decision to deny the 1997 Socialist Workers campaign an exemption from giving the names of campaign contributors. As part of this attack on democratic rights, the SEEC has fined the campaign \$6,040 for not disclosing the names.

The first organizing meeting of the Seattle Committee to Defend Free Speech was held November 1. Autumn Knowlton of the Young Socialists is a co-chair of the committee, along with Scott Breen, the Socialist Workers 1997 candidate for mayor of Seattle. The initial meeting decided on the committee's two purposes: to publicize the fight to regain the Socialist Workers exemption and to raise funds for publicity and legal defense. A lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union will be representing the Socialist Workers Campaign in this case.

As part of the publicity work for this campaign, members of the Seattle Committee to Defend Free Speech, and supporters of the fight from around the country, spent time talking to unionists at the Coalition of Labor Union Women conference held in Seattle November 6-9. Dozens of trade unionists discussed the case with committee members and took literature about it.

The Young Socialists' work with the Seattle Committee to Defend Free Speech has strengthened the chapter's ties with democratic rights activists at Seattle area schools.

A leader of the Students for Democracy at Shorecrest High School, Jason Welling, has joined the committee and helped in getting endorsements for the committee at a recent rally for gay rights in Seattle. A month ago a Young Socialists member spoke at a meeting of the Students for Democracy in a talk entitled "Imperialism versus Internationalism," which was an explanation of the dynamics of the worldwide struggle between workers and bosses.

An important part of this talk was explaining that the only way forward for humanity is international, working-class solidarity in all struggles against capitalism. Besides furthering ties between the Young Socialists and the Students for Democracy, this meeting put the YS in contact with the Black Student Union, a new student group at Shorecrest. A YS member will be speaking at one of their upcoming meetings about the legacy of Malcolm X and the relevance of his ideas for fighters today.

Another activity of the Young Socialists is holding weekly classes on topics like the revolutionary potential of the working class, abortion rights, Stalinism vs. Bolshevism, and the ideas of Malcolm X. The classes have been a good way for the chapter to reach out to young activists involved in student groups, as well as young workers.

On October 29 the YS held a class on

Send letters of protest

The latest development in the free speech fight is the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission's scheduling of a December 10 hearing where the Socialist Workers Campaign's appeal of the \$6,040 fine will be heard. The fine was issued October 21 to penalize the campaign for not disclosing the names of its financial contributors and vendors.

Letters and statements protesting the SEEC's decision and fine are urgently needed between now and the December 10 hearing. Letters can be sent to the Seattle Ethics and Election Commission, 226 Municipal Building, 600 Fourth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104, or fax: (206) 684-8590.

"The F.B.I.'s War on Political Freedom," using the reading, "Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation" from *New Internationalist* no. 6. Nan Bailey of the Socialist Workers Party kicked off a discussion about the history of government harassment against fighting workers, against Blacks fighting for desegregation, and against revolutionary organizations like the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance.

Another aspect of the YS's work in Seattle was building a November 8-9 socialist educational weekend featuring a forum and class by Martín Koppel, who just returned from a month-long reporting trip in Cuba for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Koppel's forum, "Che Guevara, the Cuban Revolution, and the Twenty-First Century," related current strengthening of the socialist course of the revolution, which remains strong in the face of U.S. imperialism.

Koppel also led a class, "Marxism & Terrorism," which drew an audience of many young fighters into a discussion about the class nature of individual terrorism, as opposed to the collective effort to defeat capitalism. The educational weekend ended with a "Meet the Young Socialists" session featuring a report-back by YS members from



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

YS members in New York, at right, speak with other youth at meeting with Cuban leader Ricardo Alarcón at Casa de las Américas November 8.

Vancouver, British Columbia, on the recent founding convention of the Young Socialists in Canada. Seattle YS members gave reports about their participation in various fights, including defense of the Cuban revo-

lution and the free speech case.

The YS chapter has taken a goal of \$500 towards the national fund drive. The chapter plans to raise this money through an educational weekend in December, movie showings, pledges by YS members, an auction, and a raffle. The raffle, which was held on November 8-9 as part of the events around Koppel's visit, featured items from Cuba, as well as a few items picked up by a supporter on a recent trip to Ireland. The Seattle YS raised \$100 at this event. The chapter will use the fund drive as a way to explain the politics of the YS to young people who are interested in a socialist alternative.

YS launches national fund drive

BY VERÓNICA POSES

CHICAGO — Young Socialists members across the country are making plans to raise \$4,400 for a national YS fund drive launched November 7. The drive will last six weeks, ending December 19.

YS members in Newark, New Jersey, got off to a good start raising \$222 through an auction and refreshment sales after a forum on "The Myth of Emerging Markets: What's Behind the gyrations on the stock market?" November 9. The forum was held in conjunction with a national conference of socialist workers who are also members of the United Transportation Union.

"YS members here are already discussing raising their goal after this immediate success," said Kevin Johnson from Newark. Johnson is co-director of the fund drive in that city. Initial pledges to the fund by members of the Newark chapter account for \$210 of the \$500 goal, and YS members there plan to hold another fund-raising event around the Thanksgiving holiday.

"The criteria for measuring the success of this fund drive will be how well we establish fund-raising as an ongoing activity of the Young Socialists," said Jack Willey, organizer of the YS National Executive Committee. "We need to raise money year-round to finance the organization and be able to reach out to political developments and opportunities in the United States and around the world," he added.

The money raised during the drive will

help pay for basic things needed to maintain a national office, such as phone, fax, postage, and travel. A key factor in making the drive will be regular weekly payments from chapters.

Rebecca Arenson from Philadelphia reports that YS members there are thinking of how to make the fund drive a central part of their political work. "We are setting up weekly literature tables at college campuses," said Arenson. "We're going to have a donations can on the table and ask the students that stop by to make a contribution," she said.

In Chicago, the weekly Militant Labor Forum has given the YS its space for a Young Socialists forum to be held on the weekend of November 22. Mick McDonald, a member of the Central Committee of the Young Socialists in Canada, will be speaking on the fight for Quebec independence and reporting on the recent founding convention of the Young Socialists in that country held earlier this month.

A fund-raising dinner before the forum will maximize the political discussion with those attending. Participants at the event will also have the opportunity to make pledges and contributions towards the drive.

The YS still needs \$85 to be pledged to insure that the national fund drive goal will be met. All contributions towards the fund should be sent to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, IL 60622.

Young Socialist Fund Drive November 7-December 19

CITY	GOALS
Atlanta	165
Chicago	700
Des Moines	250
Houston	300
Los Angeles	350
Miami	200
Minneapolis, St Paul	300
New York	500
Newark	500
Philadelphia	100
Pittsburgh	450
Seattle	500
Total	4,315
Should be	4,400

Louise Woodward trial sparks controversy

BY ANDREA MORELL
AND MARY NELL BOCKMAN

BOSTON — After a series of contradictory legal decisions Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old *au pair* who stood trial here accused of killing an infant in her care, was freed from jail November 10. That day the same judge who on October 31 sentenced the youth to a mandatory life sentence, after a jury convicted her of second-degree murder, reduced the verdict to involuntary manslaughter and sentenced her to time served — nine months.

The original guilty verdict and sentencing of Woodward sparked an outcry. Protest rallies were held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in her home town of Elton, England. A Massachusetts legislator voted against a death penalty bill, citing Woodward's conviction as his reason.

At the trial Woodward said she never harmed the infant. She denied having told police that she may have been "a little rough" with the child on the day she telephoned emergency services because he was having difficulty breathing. She testified that those were the words of the police officers, not hers. There were no eyewitnesses.

As medical experts for the opposing sides rebutted each other, the district attorney

painted Woodward as an irresponsible working-class teenager interested only in going out at night, resentful of her physician employers, and therefore a child abuser and, ultimately, killer.

The courtroom proceedings, carried live on television, provoked a wide discussion on the issues surrounding the case: working women and child care, the causes of child abuse, the exploitation of domestic workers, and the injustice working-class defendants face in court. The overwhelming response was that the ruling was unjust.

The Woodward trial unfolded as the state legislature debated a bill to reinstate the death penalty. Proponents of a bill mandating the death penalty for a broad range of crimes took advantage of a string of grisly murders of women and a child to try to push the measure through. Opponents of the death penalty held several public rallies, vigils, and protest meetings. The measure passed handily in the state Senate, but a slightly different version only squeaked by in the House by a two-vote margin. The bills then went to a committee to come up with a common version for final passage.

As the votes of the jury and the State legislature approached, the two questions became increasingly intertwined. On November 7, one

week after Woodward began serving her life sentence, the revised death penalty bill died in a tie vote after Rep. John Slattery switched his vote of a week earlier from yea to nay. He said Woodward's conviction was evidence that "Mistakes can be made."

Judge Hiller Zobel's decision to alter the jury's verdict was permitted by a rarely utilized section of Massachusetts law that allows judges to overturn jury verdicts by reducing or voiding the charge. After weeks of debate in the press and on the street, Zobel ruled, "After intensive, cool, calm reflection, I am morally certain that allowing this defendant on this evidence to remain convicted of second-degree murder would be a miscarriage of justice."

While many working people supported this decision, the right-wing press had a sharp response. The *New York Post*, for instance, dubbed Woodward the "killer nanny."

Both the prosecution and the defense in the Woodward case have vowed to appeal the judge's decision. Meanwhile, Woodward is out of jail, but confined to the boundaries of Massachusetts pending the outcome.

Proponents of the death penalty, including the governor, say they plan to reintroduce the capital punishment bill next year.

'Che Guevara was energetically devoted to anti-imperialist solidarity'

This week we reprint the first half of an interview with Manuel Piñero, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, that was featured in a special 30th anniversary issue of the Cuban magazine *Tricontinental* devoted to Ernesto Che Guevara. The rest of the interview will appear in this space next week. Translation, subheadings, and footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BY LUIS SUÁREZ SALAZAR,
IVETTE ZUAZO,
AND ANA MARÍA PELLÓN

A tremendous downpour broke out right as the tape recorder began. Jokes were in the air. "You're going to take my virginity away," our subject warned us, alluding to the fact that though he has met with journalists before, this is the first time in 30 years he has agreed to be interviewed about Che Guevara.

He has received many requests from Cuban and foreign journalists. The reason is that Manuel Piñero, nicknamed Red Beard in the 1960s by friend and foe alike, is a key witness in reconstructing Che's entire internationalist course, from 1959 up to his murder in Bolivia in 1967.

During those years Piñero was no less than the head of the General Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior of Cuba, which among other responsibilities, was in charge of relations with revolutionary movements in the Third World. Insurgencies were then in full bloom. Among Che's multiple tasks within the leadership of the Cuban revolution were promoting anti-imperialist solidarity and preparing himself to fight in "other lands" — efforts he devoted himself to energetically. Piñero worked very closely with him in this.

Piñero earned the trust that got him this post in the Sierra Maestra primarily. He went there in May 1957 after making a request to the leadership of the July 26 Movement in Havana. Prior to that he had been one of the leaders of the Movement in his native province of Matanzas. From there he had to move to the capital, his cover blown due to his sabotage and propaganda activities. After organizing various arms shipments to the Sierra, he reached the eastern mountains.

There he joined Column no. 1 commanded by Fidel. In March 1958 he passed over to the column led by Raúl Castro, who founded the "Frank País" Second Eastern Front. There Piñero was made head of the Territorial Personnel and Inspection Directorate, the Intelligence Service, and the Rebel Police. He ended the war with the rank of commander. He participated in founding the Ministry of the Interior in 1961, and remained there until 1975. He served almost a decade as central leader of the Technical Vice Ministry; and later, as head of the General Directorate of National Liberation.

Beginning in 1975 he spent more than a

decade and a half heading the Americas Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. He has been a member of that committee since its establishment on October 3, 1965. That was the very day in which Fidel made public Che's farewell letter.

Today, at 64 years of age, with his beard and hair turned gray, Piñero has not abandoned his preference — or custom — for working into the early hours of the morning. He does so whether in the Central Committee building, which he enters every day shortly after noon, or in the simple terrace of his home, where we are now meeting. The normal work environment of the "distinguished" individual is revealed: mounds of publications and documents on Latin America cover the furniture; at the foot of a plastic table is a lamp; there is a hammock and lush greenery in the small yard. But one also has to say that amid the intense activity as a revolutionary, he has reserved a place for family: his wife, Chilean Marxist writer Marta Harnecker; Camila, their daughter; and his eldest son Manuel, who is a lawyer.

Almost four hours of discussion have gone by and he is as fresh as when he started. He has fallen short in only one promise he made, to himself above all: to be brief. But he does not have to apologize for forgetting details; his memory is as sharp as ever.

He granted this interview after so many years not for himself, but as "my modest homage to Che Guevara."

Q: When and under what circumstances did you meet Che?

A: The first time I saw him was in passing, when our columns crossed after the battle of Pino del Agua (September 10, 1957). Through other combatants who had spoken of him with much respect and affection, I already knew he was a courageous and daring Argentine with a broad cultural background and solid political ideas.

Later I met him again in El Hombrito, another place in the Sierra Maestra, where his command post was located. It had an armory, bakery, and medical and dental services, in which he himself was the dentist, with a pair of pliers as his only instrument. Coincidentally it was the same date as today (June 10). I had a tremendous toothache, but when I went to find Che I heard shouts and moans, and I saw him working inside a peasant's mouth, pliers in hand, extracting a tooth. I told myself I'd never allow myself to fall into that man's hands. I don't believe I'll ever forget that image.

Q: Beyond that impact, what impression did you have of his personality?

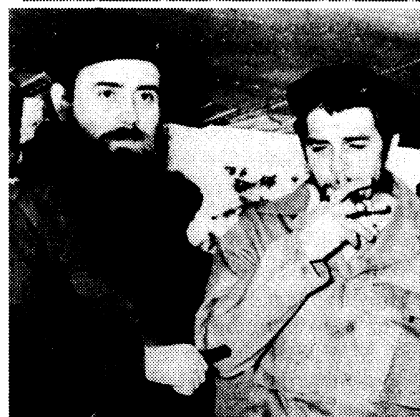
A: He gave the impression of serenity, of a great deal of self-confidence, which inspired respect. At first he could seem serious or introverted, but once personal contact was established he became very com-

munative, with a sharp sense of humor, often laced with irony. I believe that some comrades, with a different psychology, different cultural backgrounds, and different personal traits did not understand his jokes, saying they were "Argentine," with a very biting edge. In reality, his jokes often had a certain critical tone, but they were always courteous and educational, never meant to give offense to any comrade, always appealing to their personal honor.



Top: Bohemia. Left: Tricontinental

Above, Cubans and international supporters rally in Havana to support nationalization of imperialist-owned properties in Cuba, August 1960. Banners include quote from Nicaraguan revolutionary Augusto Cesar Sandino. At left, Manuel Piñero with Che Guevara (right).



Q: After the triumph of the revolution, when did you meet him again?

A: On May Day 1959 he attended the march in Santiago de Cuba, capital of the former province of Oriente. At the time I was in charge there militarily, so I met him and we held a meeting in my office in the Moncada garrison. But my close ties with Che began in the second half of 1959.

Solidarity with revolutionary struggles

Q: Was that when you began to work together in activities connected with solidarity with revolutionary struggles in the Third World?

A: Yes. That year I transferred from Oriente to Havana, to join in founding the security and intelligence structures leading up to the creation, on June 6, 1961, of the Ministry of the Interior [MININT], which Comrade Ramiro Valdés headed. These incipient structures, and later the Technical Vice Ministry of MININT — which I was assigned to lead — were also responsible for attending to revolutionary and political leaders from other countries of the Third World, who came to learn from the experience of the Cuban revolution. Naturally, they wanted to talk to the revolution's principal leaders, above all Fidel and Che. Che made available the little time that he had, above all the nights, as he used to do with any peasant or rebel combatant in the Sierra who wanted to speak with him. The meetings with those leaders, the majority them from Latin America and the Caribbean, extended into the early morning, and sometimes to sunrise. They were held in safe houses, in Che's offices first in the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, and then the National Bank and the Ministry of Industry, and occasionally at his house.

Q: Did you participate in all of them?

A: Almost all. If not me, then some other comrade attending to the visitor.

Q: What do you remember most about those meetings?

A: Invariably they were "presided over" by a thermos of hot water, a sipping tube, maté, and a cigar in Che's mouth. I was always struck by his capacity to listen, his respect for the opinions of the person speaking, even when these did not coincide with his own views. This did not signify, however, that he didn't express his point of view, with very convincing arguments. Even without his visitor realizing it, Che could create a climate of relaxation, trust, and a fraternal spirit, which enabled both of them to speak in a direct and frank way.

Although he remained on top of the political situation and the emergence of revolutionary movements in the Third World, especially Latin America, Che would read all the material we had about the political, economic, and social conditions of the country in question prior to the meetings. It was inexcusable not to have a map laid out on the table, because as a man of detail, he liked to make inquiries analyzing the geography, the topography of the territory, the characteristics of the rural population, the forms of land ownership, social struggles and their antecedents, the movements of peasants, workers, and students, the political organizations, the intellectual world. He was extremely meticulous in seeking facts and figures on these topics.

In a pedagogical manner, free of schemas and dogmas, he would explain the Cuban revolutionary experience, and within it not just his own experience, but that of the other leaders, like Fidel and Raúl Castro, Juan Almeida, Camilo Cienfuegos. He did not fail to point out to the visitor that one must take advantage of the smallest opening that existed for legal activity, but without creating illusions, keeping fully in mind the indispensable need to accumulate the maximum amount of forces, and to prepare oneself militarily to confront the repression of the popular and revolutionary movement, to the degree that it became a dangerous challenge to the ruling system. Likewise, he would warn them of the probability of an aggressive reaction by imperialism to the advance of the revolutionary struggles. Sometimes he would also enter into philosophical and cultural matters.

Q: Could you mention some of the Latin American leaders who came to make contact with him?

A: It's impossible to mention them all,

Continued on Page 11

This selection is part of a series marking the 30th anniversary of the death in combat of Ernesto Che Guevara. Argentine by birth, Guevara became one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution that brought down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959 and, in response to mounting pressure from Washington, opened the socialist revolution in the Americas. Che, as he is popularly known, was one of the outstanding Marxist leaders of the 20th century.

In 1966-67, he led a nucleus of revolutionaries from Bolivia, Cuba, and Peru who fought to overthrow the military dictatorship in Bolivia. In the process, they sought to forge a Latin America-wide movement of workers and peasants that could lead the battle for land reform and against U.S. imperialist domination of the continent and advance the struggle for socialism. Guevara was wounded and captured on Oct. 8, 1967. He was shot the next day by the Bolivian military, af-

ter consultation with Washington.

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

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

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

Communist Party of Cuba hosts forum on road to world struggle for socialism

BY JACK BARNES
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA — "In the present international conditions, we reaffirm that socialism is a necessity," said Cuban leader José Ramón Balaguer. "Not only is it the logical result of the development of productive forces on an international scale, it is also the only alternative to guarantee the survival of humanity."

Balaguer, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, gave the keynote address to the October 21–23 international workshop here on "Socialism as the 21st Century Approaches."

On a world scale, Balaguer emphasized, the growing global contradictions of capitalism — economic, social, and political — and internal class conflicts do not point toward increased stability and accommodation to the needs of working people. Rather, these are more and more weighty factors "stimulating the struggle for a new social order," he noted.

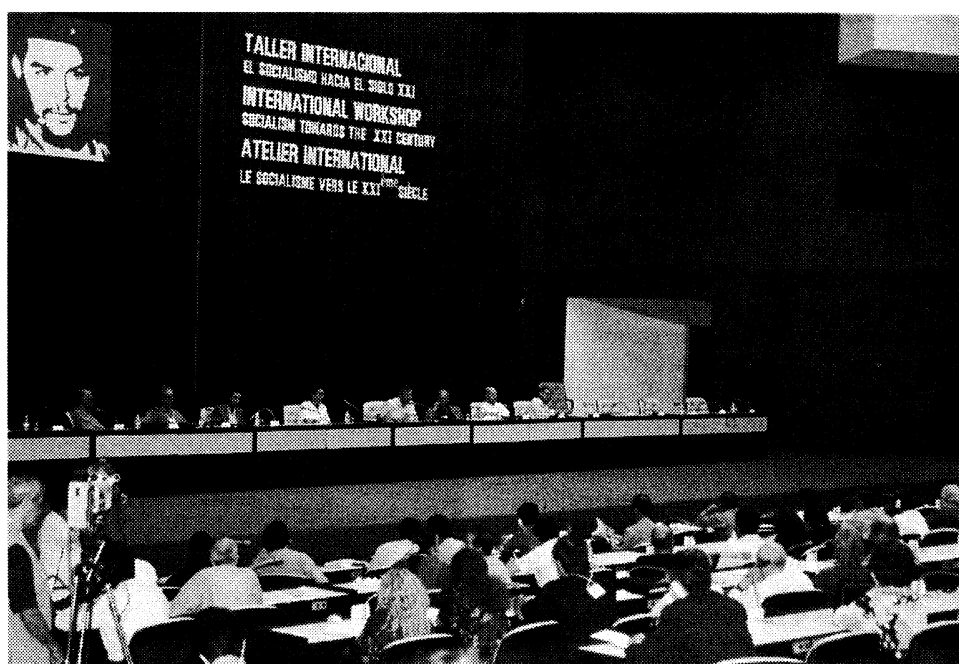
"The contradiction between capital and labor is increasingly internationalized," he continued, "making imperative an in-depth study of socialism, beyond national borders and contradictions, and confirming the relevance of that slogan of classic Marxism: 'Workers of all countries, unite!' — which, far from being outdated, could be extended, drawing in other social sectors and movements that are also subjected to the barbarity of capital."

Emphasizing that socialism is not simply a matter of economics, Balaguer underlined the critical need for the revolutionary workers movement to take the moral high ground falsely claimed by the ideologues transfixed by the aura of the exploiters and oppressors. He stressed the obligation "to show not only the possibility and viability of socialism, but also its desirability."

"For us, socialism is the only possible and valid option for placing social relations on a moral footing," he noted. "We cannot relax our efforts to demonstrate on a theoretical and practical level its superiority in fact in developing the highest of human values: justice, equality, fairness, freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, national sovereignty, solidarity."

The conference, attended by more than 200 participants from around the world, was one of a series of political gatherings that have taken place in Cuba over the last months. These began with the 12,000-strong International Festival of Youth and Students last July. It continued through the August international meeting of trade unionists sponsored by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers under the rubric of Workers Against Neoliberalism and Globalization; conferences on the legacy and relevance of the work of Argentine-Cuban leader Ernesto Che Guevara; the fifth congress of the Communist Party of Cuba; and the solemn ceremonies in mid-October during which Cubans and others around the world paid tribute to Guevara and the revolutionists who fought and died with him 30 years ago in Bolivia, as their remains were transferred to and interred in the city of Santa Clara.

Above all, the character and content of these conferences and other events began to confront the political confusion that has



Militant/Mary-Alice Waters

Socialism is "the only alternative to guarantee the survival of humanity," José Ramón Balaguer told participants in international workshop on Socialism as the 21st Century Approaches.

marked the leadership of broad popular movements in recent years, in Latin America and throughout the world. They reflected the broadening social and economic struggles that offer real possibilities of moving forward.

Overawed by the seeming wealth and power of the world capitalist order, and disoriented by incomprehension of the implosion of the bureaucratic regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the crisis of leadership within the workers movement has manifested itself, country after country, in the tendency toward worship of the existing fact. Radical rhetoric and accommodation, not revolutionary resistance and organization, has prevailed — even as the crisis of the imperialist system has deepened and the decline of popular struggles has bottomed out.

The initiatives taken by the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba, however, have pointed in the opposite direction from this centrist capitulation, advancing efforts to find concrete points of agreement in common struggle out of which new alliances can be forged.

The leadership time and material resources that have gone into these important events would have been impossible in Cuba even a year ago. It is only now, as the worst years of the economic and political crisis precipitated by the collapse of the regimes and parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union begin to recede, that such an effort can be sustained. The relief from the extreme tensions of the last years, when all energies were concentrated on the battle for beans and potatoes, is palpable to returning visitors.

The year of the 30th anniversary of the death in combat of Ernesto Che Guevara and his comrades has become the occasion to celebrate, in a dignified and deeply determined manner, the fact that a corner has been turned, the worst of what is known in Cuba as the special period has been faced and conquered. Even more, it has become the moment for the communist vanguard of Cuba's workers and farmers to solemnly reaffirm the revolutionary socialist and in-

ternationalist course that the entire Cuban leadership, Guevara included, have fought to defend for more than 40 years, and to draw revolutionists worldwide into the international leadership responsibilities they shoulder in a world where new battles are on the horizon.

World gathering

Some 97 parties and other political organizations, as well as a number of academic or independently sponsored think tanks, responded to the invitation of the Communist Party of Cuba and its cadre school, the Níco López School of Higher Learning, to take part in the international workshop. Its purpose was "to discuss socialism as a real alternative to the existing capitalist society."

The largest participation came from South America, with representatives of parties from every country where Spanish or Portuguese is the main language. From most countries, there were delegates from several political organizations with whom the Communist Party of Cuba maintains fraternal relations. Central America and the non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean were underrepresented by contrast, and there were no delegates from parties in Guatemala, Honduras, or Nicaragua.

From the United States, delegates represented the Socialist Workers Party, Workers World, Committees of Correspondence, All African Peoples' Revolutionary Party, Socialist Action, and Freedom Socialist Party. From Canada, the Communist League, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), and Socialist Action took part.

From Africa, delegates came from Zimbabwe, Angola, and Ghana. Representatives of governing parties in China, Vietnam, Laos, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea took part, as did political organizations from South Korea, India, Turkey, and Palestine. There were no delegates present from Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, or Japan.

The Communist parties of many countries of Europe, including Russia and the Czech Republic, were represented by one, and in a few cases more, delegates, but only a sprinkling of other political organizations in Europe were present. From the United Kingdom, the Communist League and Revolutionary Communist Group sent delegates. Denmark was the only Nordic country represented.

Balaguer's opening remarks on behalf of the Communist Party of Cuba introduced the main themes of discussion and offered a sharp political focus for the commission sessions that followed. The topics for the three different commissions were broadly defined as "Realities of Contemporary Socialism," "The Relevance of Marxist and Leninist Thought and Contemporary Marxists," and "Imperialism at the End of the Millennium."

For the most part, divergent political views held by the wide array of parties and

individuals in attendance were addressed in an indirect exchange through 15-minute summary presentations made by spokespeople for each of the organizations. Over the course of the three days, however, a number of the questions introduced by Balaguer in his keynote became the center of more direct exchanges in some of the commissions.

Globalization and nation-states

After calling attention to the fact that many phenomena are bundled together under the "fashionable" banner of "globalization," Balaguer noted that from the beginning of the modern workers movement Marxism has "alerted us to the fact that the growth of the network of international economic relations is an objective process of capitalism. The international character of capital — one of its defining features — made it possible for capitalist rule to take on, as one of its ingredients, the establishment of a world system, the first, to be exact, in the history of humanity. That same international character, backed today by colossal advances in science and technology, has resulted in a very high degree of internationalization of capital."

But globalization does not imply the diminished importance of the state, he emphasized. "In the name of some future 'global village,' an image that brings to mind turn-of-the-century arguments regarding 'superimperialism,' we are told of a new world economy — where an atmosphere of permanent harmony will be possible, both between countries and within them — resulting from the end of the Cold War. Moreover, it is assumed that, as a result of universal tendencies that have been making the functioning of the system more uniform across the board, nation-states have virtually dissolved and national sovereignty has lost its meaning."

But the opposite is the case, Balaguer pointed out. "Globalization does not imply an automatic mechanism for solving the contradictions and unevennesses that have accompanied the development of capitalism." A new level of interimperialist rivalry, and the widening of the gap between the developed and underdeveloped countries and within them, means that the world is today "more unstable, more prone to disintegration, and more politically explosive than ever."

A work group of four Cuban participants from the University of Havana and the research department of the party Central Committee took up the discussion on this theme in the commission on imperialism. In their summary remarks they argued that the monopoly state capitalism of Lenin's time, on which his analysis of imperialism was based, has today "metamorphosed" into transnational capitalism. As capital circulates more and more massively across borders, they insisted, it "increasingly abandons any national basis."

The debate on this theme and its political implications continued on and off over the three days. One of the clearest replies came from another of the Cuban participants in

COMING SOON IN NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11

Socialism: a Viable Option by José Ramón Balaguer

Complete text of the opening talk at the October 1997 international workshop, "Socialism As the 21st Century Approaches," sponsored by the Communist Party of Cuba in Havana on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Ernesto Che Guevara's death in combat.

NEW INTERNATIONAL
A MAGAZINE OF
MARXIST POLITICS
AND THEORY

New International no. 11 will be available soon at one of the Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12, or by writing New International at 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Phone (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0690. Distributed by Pathfinder Press.

AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER

Tricontinental
MAGAZINE SPECIAL ISSUE
ON CHE GUEVARA

Features interview with Cuban leader Manuel Piñero and articles by Harry Villegas (Pombo), Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano), and other figures on Guevara's internationalist efforts in the Congo, Bolivia and other parts of the world. In Spanish, \$5.00

Available at Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12, or from Pathfinder.

the commission, Central Committee member Jorge Risquet Valdés. Risquet used his two-minute intervention to refute the implication that major capitalist enterprises no longer depend on one or another state to defend their property and interests. "Big capital still needs a state," Risquet replied. "With their growing crisis, each capitalist power — now more than ever — needs an army against its foreign competitors and a police force against its own working class."

To confront the power of imperialism, he emphasized, revolutionists need to take and wield state power, as they have done in Cuba. He reminded participants in the conference that he was speaking on October 22, 35 years to the day since the U.S. government brought the world to the brink of nuclear war and threatened the annihilation of the entire Cuban people over the issue of Soviet missiles that were installed in Cuba in an act of sovereign self-defense.

Other delegates, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party in the United States and the National Democratic Front of South Korea, also replied to the political implications of the position that "globalization" represents something qualitatively new in the history of capitalism and that nation-states have diminished importance in today's world.

The south Korean delegate reminded participants of the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in his country and the permanent threat of war their presence brings.

Rectification

In the commission on Realities of Contemporary Socialism, a discussion unfolded around the character of the rectification process that was initiated by the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party in 1986. Manuel Monereo, education secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, and a member of the federal leadership of the Izquierda Unida (United Left), questioned the assessment put forward by Darío Machado, director of the Havana-based Center for the Study of the Americas, who explained that Cuba had been able to confront the challenge of the special period following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, because of measures taken during the rectification process that had strengthened the revolution. The spirit of internationalist missions had been brought home, voluntary work brigades expanded, and the involvement of workers in making decisions on production deepened, Machado said.

Monereo challenged this assessment, asking whether rectification and volunteer work brigades had not in fact exacerbated the economic problems Cuba faced because of their "inefficiency," and argued that there was nothing inherently revolutionary in involving workers in production decisions — that is what Toyota does to increase productivity.

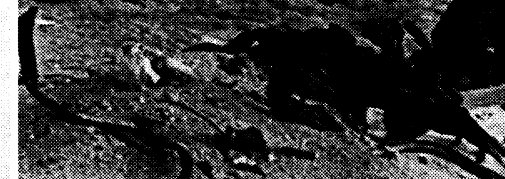
Machado had presented a report that expanded on another of the themes in Balaguer's opening remarks.

Noting that at this conference he had "no desire to spend time in an analysis of the collapse of socialism" in Europe, Balaguer called attention to the fact that "the so-called domino effect" did not extend to Cuba. "The liquidation of socialism in Eastern Europe and the USSR had its historic, socioeconomic, and political causes, which we have been clarifying among ourselves," he remarked. "But one thing has been well demonstrated: that European process did not mean the failure of socialism as a system."

Nor did it imply, Balaguer continued, "that Marxism and Leninism are useless as guides for our actions. It did mean the crumbling of a dogmatic and vulgar type of Marxism, which in those countries came to hold the strength of an official theory, burying many of the central principles of our classics and elevating to the position of univer-

sal law certain theses that only served to justify political positions and that had barely any scientific basis."

We all know, Balaguer added,



Left: Granma

Capitalist crisis will lead to further slaughters of working people like U.S.-led war against people of Iraq in 1991, above. To confront imperialism, Balaguer stressed, revolutionists need to take and wield state power. He was speaking 35 years after Washington brought the world to the brink of nuclear war over Soviet missiles in Cuba, installed in self-defense. At left, Cuban militia members with anti-aircraft guns in front of Hotel Riviera in Havana during October 1962 missile crisis.

"that the classics did not present us a blueprint of the socialist society; rather they elaborated fundamental theses. The socialism that succumbed had been moving away from the socialist ideal envisioned by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and other Marxists."

As that was happening, Balaguer noted, "Cuba was going through a process of rectification of errors and negative tendencies initiated in 1986 by the leadership of our party. We had arrived at the conclusion that the model of economic management, copied in large measure from the Soviet experience, had to be deeply transformed," because it had "diverted the construction of socialism into paths that were in no way revolutionary."

"We began a process on a social scale, which started in the economic arena and spread to the political life of the country. We began a process of rectification and perfecting of our socialism, based on socialist positions."

In answering the challenge to rectification raised by the representative of the Communist Party of Spain in the commission discussion, Machado insisted that the involvement of Cuban working people in solv-

ing the basic economic and social problems they confronted — as the workers parliaments during the special period had done — meant recovering the most "indigenous" element of the Cuban revolution.

Alliances, principles, and the ranks

A third discussion, and one with even more direct political consequences throughout the world, took place informally around the question of what kinds of alliances revolutionists should negotiate with other political parties that oppose capitalist austerity offensives (and the temporary relationship of forces that make them possible) often referred to, throughout Latin America especially, as "neoliberalism." This strategic question too had been raised by Balaguer in his keynote remarks.

Because of the "increasing transfer of sovereignty and decision-making toward the centers of world power and the transnational bodies," Balaguer noted, "state power, one of the objectives that revolutionary struggles are fought over, begins to be undervalued. That is why it is a priority to reassess the question of struggles for power, as well as the instruments and forms of political par-

ticipation by the left in society."

In pursuing a policy of alliances in response to capitalist policies aimed at driving down the wages and living standards of working people and at curtailing democratic rights, Balaguer argued, "in our opinion, an agreement of revolutionary forces with other sectors around short-, medium-, or long-term objectives should be a process in which the parties put forward their own essential interests with total clarity. It does not seem acceptable to renounce socialism or revolutionary positions in order to be accepted.... The one thing that is not negotiable is principles."

Balaguer also stressed the importance of nonexclusion — not reproducing "on other levels the old traditions of sectarianism that leave us so vulnerable in the face of imperialist domination." The great diversity of new social forces, along with the reshaping of others, he noted, creates new possibilities for a broad policy of alliances involving environmentalists, peasants, those without land or without a roof over their heads, forces organized against gender, religious, racial, or ethnic oppression, and others.

Alliances negotiated as deals between leaders without the support and understanding of the rank and file, moreover, are unacceptable from a revolutionary standpoint, Balaguer noted. "The essence of any alliance that claims to have a left perspective is

Continued on Page 14

FOR FURTHER READING



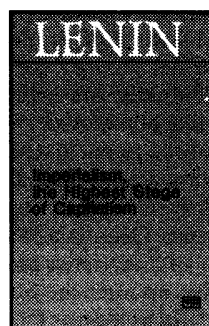
New International no. 8

- The Politics of Economics: Che Guevara and Marxist Continuity STEVE CLARK AND JACK BARNES
- Che's Contribution to the Cuban Economy CARLOS RAFAEL RODRÍGUEZ
- On the Concept of Value and The Meaning of Socialist Planning TWO ARTICLES BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

\$10.00

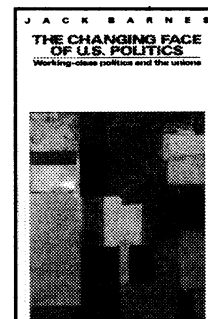
Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism

V.I. LENIN



"I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism," Lenin wrote in 1917. "For unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise

modern war and modern politics." Booklet, \$3.95



The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

JACK BARNES

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. \$19.95

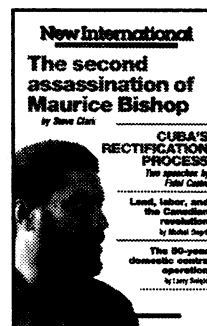
New International no. 6

- Renewal or Death: Cuba's Rectification Process TWO SPEECHES BY FIDEL CASTRO

Also:

- The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop STEVE CLARK
- Land, Labor, and the Canadian Revolution MICHEL DUGRÉ

\$10.00



Available from bookstores listed on page 12, or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax: (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

L.A. symposium debates Che and Cuban revolution

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

LOS ANGELES — About 150 people attended a symposium at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) October 24–25 titled “Thirty Years Later: A Retrospective on Che Guevara, Twentieth-Century Utopias, and Dystopias.” The main speakers were university professors from the United States and Mexico.

Carlos Alberto Torres, director of UCLA’s Latin American Center, which sponsored the gathering, had also invited Harry Villegas, a brigadier general of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces who fought with Ernesto Che Guevara in Cuba’s 1956–58 revolutionary war and subsequent internationalist missions in the Congo and Bolivia. But the U.S. State Department denied Villegas a visa.

The panelists expressed counterposing views on the record of Guevara and the Cuban revolution and the relevance of Che’s legacy for today. The discussion sessions were marked by sharp debate, which was especially polarized because a few dozen counterrevolutionary Cubans took part. Several of them attempted to heckle panelists or members of the audience they disagreed with. *20 de Mayo*, a right-wing Spanish-language weekly here, had published a front-page appeal in its October 18 issue to “the Cuban exile community” to come to the event and protest against those “celebrating the criminal life of the Argentine mercenary Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara.”

Participants included several dozen students, professors, and others.

José Moya, a professor at UCLA’s Department of History, chaired the first session on the afternoon of October 24. “We are not here to praise Che Guevara or to bury him for that matter,” he said in opening the conference. “We prefer inquiry and doubts.” The 30th anniversary of Guevara’s death in Bolivia is “an appropriate occasion to look upon ideological dreams and nightmares,” Moya said, “at a time when what Guevara stood for, communism, is basically moribund everywhere except Cuba.”

The first two speakers were Maurice Zeitlin, who teaches at UCLA’s Department of Sociology and visited Cuba in the early years of the revolution, and Peter McLaren, a professor at the university’s Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. They both made favorable comments on Guevara’s political course. “Che above all was a revolutionary socialist and a central leader of the first socialist revolution in this hemisphere,” Zeitlin said. “His legacy is embodied in the fact that the Cuban revolution is alive today despite the collapse of the Soviet bloc — a revolution that has withstood assassination attempts against its leaders, poisoning of its cattle, biological warfare, an invasion at the Bay of Pigs, threats

of nuclear annihilation, and a draconian embargo by the most powerful country in the world. Che taught us all that freedom, democracy, and socialism are inseparable.”

In concluding his talk, Zeitlin said that in today’s world those who extol the virtues of the capitalist market appear to be triumphant. “But as utopian as Che’s dreams may have been, as utopian as a world of peace and plenty for all may seem, no social justice is possible without a vision like Che’s.”

Opponents of Cuban revolution speak

The third panelist, Jorge Castañeda, is a political science professor from Mexico who teaches at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and at New York University. He began his speech by promoting his recently published book *Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara*. Castañeda said he only considers Guevara an object of study and that his biography is neither pro- nor anti-Guevara. He then proceeded to repeat some of the main themes in his book, which regurgitate slanders against the Cuban revolution.

Castañeda claimed that Guevara had no qualms about using capital punishment against opponents of the Cuban revolution. He said that in early 1959, while Guevara headed the La Cabaña military camp in Havana, where hundreds of prisoners were held, he signed orders for the executions of about 700 people. When a Cuban right-winger interrupted his remarks claiming the professor underestimated the killings Guevara allegedly ordered, Castañeda replied, “You should be quiet. On this point, at least, I am on your side.”

Castañeda also said that he has documented a political divergence between Cuban president Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, especially on the Soviet Union. He claimed that Che was an “unconditional admirer” of the Stalinist regime in Moscow during the war against the Batista dictatorship but that he later became an open critic of the Soviet government, “while Fidel and Raúl Castro led Cuba in a firm alliance with the Soviet Union.” In his book, Castañeda argues further that these alleged differences were behind the Cuban leadership’s actions to conceal from Che facts about the Bolivia campaign, implying that Castro was partly responsible for Guevara’s death in Bolivia.

In his summary remarks at the end of that session, Castañeda made explicit a point he touched on during his presentation. Che and the Cuban revolution have to do only with the past, he said, “they are completely irrelevant to Latin Americans today.” This comment drew loud applause from the Cuban counterrevolutionaries in the audience.

Sebastián Edwards, a professor at the UCLA Department of Economics, of Chil-

Mothers of Plaza de Mayo tour U.S.



Militant/Nancy Rosenstock

Hebe de Bonafini, president of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo of Argentina, and Sergio Schoklender, a lawyer for the organization, are on a tour of New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to speak about human rights abuses in Argentina. The group is also “opposed to the militarization of the U.S. government,” and joined others in protesting William Clinton’s visit to Argentina last month, Bonafini told reporters at a November 11 news conference in New York. While there, the activists joined a rally to support striking workers in the Dominican Republic and spoke at Boriqua College and Casa de las Américas.

ean origin, exalted the social democratic regime of Salvador Allende in Chile in the early 1970s “as the other side of the left, the non-communists, who were closer to the people and used humor and irony unlike the ascetic, heavy-handed, and authoritarian Guevara.” He concluded by saying that the outcome of the guerrilla campaigns Guevara led in the Congo and Bolivia “showed that Che’s course was a failure.”

Che is about the present, not past

Early on in the discussion, Zeitlin took issue with Edwards’ comparison between Allende and Guevara. “You conveniently omitted to say how and why Allende’s government fell,” Zeitlin stated, referring to the U.S.-backed military coup in 1973 that overthrew the Socialist Party government that had been elected in Chile three years earlier. Allende refused to arm the people and organize them to defend the reforms his government tried to implement, Zeitlin said, unlike the revolutionary regime in Cuba and despite Castro’s advice to Allende to do so.

Speaking from the audience, Carole Lesnick, a member of the United Auto Workers, pointed to the victory Cuban volunteers, Namibian liberation fighters, and the Angolan army scored in Angola at the end of the 1980s against the invading forces of the racist apartheid regime in South Africa that was backed by Washington. “As Nelson Mandela pointed out, he would not have gotten out of prison without the help of the Cuban revolutionaries,” she said. “That was the fruit of the internationalism of Che and his comrades — from Algeria to the Congo and Bolivia.”

While the chairperson gave ample time

to the Cuban rightists to express their views, a few more supporters of the Cuban revolution got the chance to take the floor.

A number of participants took on the arguments of Castañeda and other opponents of the Cuban revolution. They explained that those who faced the firing squad right after the triumph of the revolution, at La Cabaña military camp or elsewhere, were the henchmen and torturers of Batista, the U.S.-backed dictator who fled in the early morning hours of Jan. 1, 1959. Many were officers in Batista’s hated police. They were tried and found guilty by popular tribunals, which included Rebel Army officers, and several hundred of them were given the death penalty for their crimes against working people.

Someone from the audience pointed out that the historic record, including Che’s *Bolivian Diary and Pombo: A Man of Che’s ‘Guerrilla’* by Villegas, shows that no fundamental political differences existed between Castro and Che Guevara. To the contrary, the government and the leadership of the Communist Party in Cuba did everything possible to collaborate with Guevara and his comrades during the Bolivia campaign.

“The communist perspective of Che and his comrades,” noted garment worker Gale Shangold from the floor, “far from being a failure, is more appealing today to thousands of young people because of the miserable conditions capitalism continues to generate 30 years later. The course of Che and of the Cuban revolution is about the present, not the past. That’s why people like Castañeda go to great lengths now to do a character assassination of Che and divide him from the communist leadership in Cuba.”

Tide turns towards supporters of Che

Attendance dropped to about 100 the second day of the conference. Speakers included Ralph Schoenman, of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, who said Guevara was “a revolutionary without a party or an international” and claimed that the current government in Cuba is “a totalitarian regime”; and Richard Harris, professor of Global Studies at California State University, Monterey Bay, who spoke favorably of Guevara’s course.

During the last session, the tide turned toward supporters of the Cuban revolution. A number of students who opposed Washington’s economic war against Cuba and had not spoken earlier took the floor.

Fabian Wagmister, who teaches at UCLA’s Department of Film and Television, was the last panelist. He got the best response from a majority in the audience, especially the students, when he said, “Six hundred million children today live under the poverty line, and the number is growing. That’s why many of us are here and find a great deal of interest in Che and Cuba. The system Che fought to change is still around and is failing miserably. You can see that today if you walk the streets of La Paz or Mexico City. One of the best things about Che is that he inspired confidence in others to dedicate their lives to fighting for a better world, just like he did.”

Cuban leader blasts embargo at N.Y. forum

BY SHOGHI FRET AND SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — “There is no question that the Cuban revolution will move forward and that Cuba will continue to be an independent, revolutionary, and socialist country,” Ricardo Alarcón told a meeting of some 150 people at Casa de las Américas here November 8. Alarcón, president of Cuba’s National Assembly, was in New York to represent Cuba at what has become an annual debate in the United Nations General Assembly on the U.S. economic embargo of the island (see article on page 11).

Defenders of the U.S. blockade argue that it is an instrument to “achieve a democratic transition and human rights” in Cuba, Alarcón said. But when the U.S. government launched its economic war in May 1959, “democracy was a bad word in Washington.” He reviewed the long list of U.S. interventions in Latin America to install and support bloody dictatorships, from Bolivia to Chile, and Argentina.

The Cuban leader noted that unlike the UN Security Council — where Washington and four other governments hold veto power — the General Assembly only has the

power to make recommendations. In past decades the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly against the apartheid regime in South Africa, against Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique, and for independence for Namibia, he said, only to have Washington scuttle similar resolutions in the Security Council. “But in the end history forced them to comply with these resolutions. And it will in this case as well.

“No one has anything to teach us on democracy,” Alarcón said. “As Fidel [Castro] said ‘ask our children who have an infant mortality rate that is just a dream for the children of Latin America.’ Ask our workers, who have social dignity and justice, and who discuss, analyze, and decide the questions affecting them. It is the workers, peasants, youth, students, and women who in fact, not just in words, participate in the leadership of their society. That’s what happens in Cuba. That’s our national reality.”

This is in stark contrast to the situation in other countries where confidence in elected officials is at an all time low, the Cuban leader said, pointing to the high participation of the Cuban people in elections compared to the United States, where the most

popular candidate is “none of the above.” Working people vote in Cuba because they have “a system of their own that belongs to them,” Alarcón said. He noted that elected officials in Cuba are not paid for their services, but take the responsibility voluntarily. “The struggle is still on to perfect our democracy, our economy, and all aspects of Cuban life,” he stated. “But we in Cuba are not in a transition to the past. When we say more democracy we mean more socialism.”

While many of those in attendance were longtime supporters of the Cuban revolution, a number of young people came who are more recently attracted to its example. Liam Flynn-Jambeck, 19, for instance, participated in the world festival of youth and students held in Cuba last summer. He was struck by how problems that are endemic in the United States, like homelessness, are difficult for many Cubans to understand.

This was the first time Ricky Genao, 18, had heard a leader of the Cuban revolution speak. He came because Cuba is a “small island standing up to an imperialist power. Too many people gave up after the Soviet Union fell,” he said. “But as long as there is struggle there is hope.”

UN votes against U.S. embargo of Cuba

BY HILDA CUZCO

UNITED NATIONS — Condemning Washington's embargo against Cuba for the sixth consecutive year, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution November 5 entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." The resolution passed by the largest majority vote yet, 143 to 3 with 17 abstentions.

Ricardo Alarcón, head of the National Assembly in Cuba, who addressed the General Assembly on behalf of Havana, was pleased with the higher outcome. "Not only did the number of votes in favor of the resolution increase, but we were very happy to

see that they crossed all geographical and economic lines," said Alarcón in a news conference. Voting against the resolution with the United States were the governments of Israel and Uzbekistan, which is seeking U.S. aid. Washington's main allies in Western Europe and Canada voted for the resolution, as did Tokyo, who abstained last year.

"The number of nations voting against U.S. unilateral sanctions on Cuba has grown steadily over the years," said Fernando Remírez, chief diplomat of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. "U.S. sanctions against Cuba violate the Cuban people's human rights and function as a blockade, making it very difficult to get the basic goods we need," he added.

The resolution calling for an end to the embargo took particular aim at the "Helms-Burton Act," the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation." This refers to the misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act signed by U.S. president William Clinton in March 1996, which tightens the embargo against Cuba and includes U.S. sanctions against foreign companies that invest in or trade with Havana. Governments in the European Union maintain that these aspects of the law violate World Trade Organization rules on international trade and infringes on their sovereignty.

In his speech to the UN General Assembly, Alarcón criticized the Clinton administration for not carrying out its pledge to press Congress to eliminating provisions that affect European corporations. Under the Helms-Burton law, corporate executives that invest in Cuban property that was expropriated from U.S. capitalists after the 1959 revolution are denied visas to the United States. U.S. officials "announced with great fanfare the understanding signed with the European Union last April 11, but they have done nothing to honor it," Alarcón said.

Representing Washington, Victor Marrero declared that the U.S. government's policy against Cuba advances "a democratic transition on the island."

Interview with Manuel Piñeiro

Continued from Page 7

but among the many, I recall the Nicaraguans Carlos Fonseca, Tomás Borge, Rodolfo Romero, and the former officer in the Somocista Army, Somarriba, who headed an attempt at armed struggle in Nicaragua — which was eventually defeated and in which Cuban comrades Omelio Hernández and Marcelo Fernández died. I also recall the Guatemalans Turcios Lima, Yon Sosa, Rolando Ramírez, Pablo Monzanto, and Julio Cáceres (Patojo), a very dear friend of Che's. There were the Peruvians Luis de la Puente Uceda, Héctor Béjar, and Javier Heraud; the Peronists William Cooke and Alicia Eguren; the Colombians Fabio Vázquez (who would later head the National Liberation Army — ELN), the liberal guerrilla leader Franco, the La Rota brothers (founders of the Colombian Worker-Student Movement) and the general secretary of the CP in that country, Gilberto Vieira. There was also the secretary of the Uruguayan CP, Rodney Arismendi; the principal leaders of the Chilean Socialist and Communist parties, above all Salvador Allende, then a senator of the republic, and Jaime Barrios; the principal leaders of the Venezuelan CP, Fabricio Ojeda; and various Haitian and Dominican leaders.

In general, all the leaders of left-wing and Communist parties of the continent who passed through Havana, met with him. It should be recalled that Che participated in the Conference of Communist Parties of Latin America, held in Cuba in 1964.

Q: Can it be said that ever since the triumph of the revolution, Cuba's policy of solidarity with Latin America began to converge with Che's idea of becoming a part of the battle for liberation in other countries of Latin America?

A: Two things should not be forgotten. As far back as *History Will Absolve Me* [1954] Fidel has pointed to the Latin Americanist thrust of the revolution. He himself had participated in the *Bogotazo*, in activities of solidarity with the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico, for [Argentina's] sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, for the recovery of the Panama Canal, and there was the failed expedition of Cayo Confite to overthrow the Dominican dictator Leónidas Trujillo.¹ In Che, Fidel met someone who already had the same determination; he was marked by the experience of the defeat of President Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954.² In that country Che met many revolutionary leaders of the continent, which strengthened his anti-imperialist and Latin Americanist feelings

and convictions.

The other thing to recall is that before leaving for Cuba on the *Granma*, Che raised with Fidel that as soon as he could be freed of his responsibilities with the Cuban revolution, and whenever the time was most opportune, he wanted to be free to join the revolutionary struggle in another country of Latin

struggle had not been exhausted.

One basic idea of Che's should be stressed: all the conditions do not necessarily have to exist before the revolutionary struggle can begin; the struggle itself can create them as it develops.

Che is therefore not responsible



America, preferably Argentina. He was always alert to any opportunity that presented some perspective for the development of revolutionary armed struggle, such as Nicaragua, Venezuela, or Colombia. He was always interested in the possibility of being accepted as a participant in the struggles of other countries.

For example, as early as 1959, Che sent a Cuban emissary with a note to the anti-Somoza Nicaraguan Somarriba, expressing his willingness to join the struggle as soon as the guerrilla column was able to create the conditions in that country. The effort failed, to Che's sorrow.

Q: How did Che conceive of the development and spread of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America?

A: His conception, rooted in the Cuban war of liberation, consisted in founding a *mother column*, composed of revolutionaries of various Latin American countries. Once the stage of survival was overcome, the combatants forged, the leadership cadres formed, then as this column developed and grew it would create the conditions for separating off other columns. In this way it would expand the battle to other countries of the continent; above all toward those that had united with imperialism to defeat the popular cause.

As the Cuban experience demonstrated, the original guerrilla nucleus, if it were well led, would be the *little motor* that through political and military action would set into motion the *big motor* of the masses. This was the basis of the continental and anti-imperialist conception of Che on revolutionary armed struggle. It is essentially a political and military conception based on the masses, in opposition to the interpretation that reduced things to the "guerrilla foco," a view that has been attributed to Che. He spoke of an insurrectional foco rooted in the masses, not a small group of armed men who act separate and apart from the popular movement and the people in general.

He also said that the guerrilla struggle could not develop in countries whose governments were the result of some form of elections, and where the possibilities of civic

for the oversimplifications of the Cuban experience and of his conceptions that were developed by various revolutionaries in Latin America, albeit with the best of intentions.

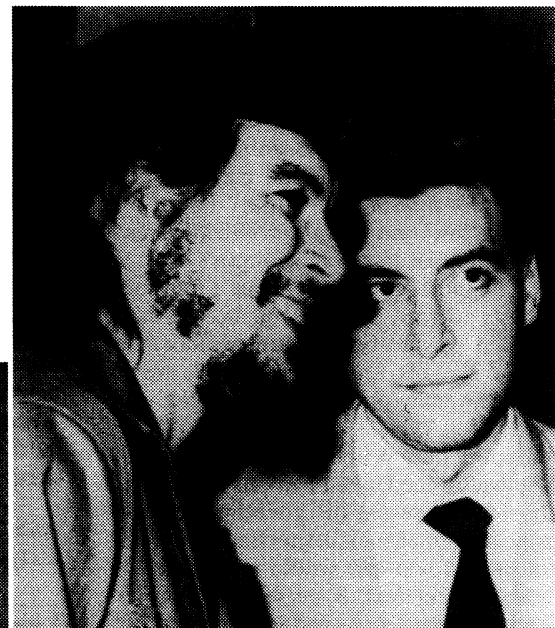
Q: Was Che's preference for Argentina at the root of the guerrilla effort commanded by his compatriot Jorge Ricardo Masetti in 1963? What was Che's role in that?

A: Che had known Masetti as a journalist in the Sierra Maestra. After January 1959 Masetti returned to Cuba; he carried out a few missions of support to the revolution in Algeria with the National Liberation Front (FLN). In addition he acquired some combat experience, attending military school in our country. Che then gave him the task of organizing a guerrilla column whose principal mission was to install itself in an area in Argentina along the border with Bolivia, specifically Salta, with the idea of Che himself joining as soon as a minimum of conditions was created, to use that as a base to lead the beginning of the armed struggle in Argentina. He paid special attention to the preparation of that detachment, named the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), which Masetti was to be part of together with other comrades, including the Cubans Hermes Peña (killed in action) and Alberto Castellanos, who fell prisoner and remained in Argentine jails for four years without their being able to discover his true nationality.

Q: When Masetti left for Salta he called himself "Segundo" [Number Two]. Was this an allusion to the fact that he was heading it only temporarily?

A: Yes, because Number One was Che. That's the significance of Masetti's pseudonym. Che wanted to be the initiator, but Fidel was able to persuade him to enter Argentina only after an advance group had created the conditions. In other words, Che would not be there during the most difficult and risky stage of any guerrilla movement, that of survival. During this stage the guerrilla unit depends fundamentally on its own forces.

This view has its precedent in the cadre policy Fidel developed in the Sierra Maestra.



Top: Tricontinental

There was revolutionary ferment throughout Latin America in 1960s. At left, peasants demonstrate in Peru, 1964. Above, Guevara with Jorge Ricardo Masetti, who organized 1963 guerrilla effort in Argentina in collaboration with Che. Most revolutionary leaders from other countries who passed through Havana met with Guevara.

He always tried to preserve intermediate leaders who stood out as heads of columns. This policy was proven correct in our war. Fidel did not want to risk a cadre of Che's experience and continental stature during the first stage of the guerrilla struggle.

Q: Nevertheless, that effort had Cuba's solidarity.

A: It was necessary to establish a base of logistical support beforehand on the Bolivian side, and several Cuban cadres were designated for this: Abelardo Colomé Ibarra (Furry), today a corps general of the army, and José María Martínez Tamayo (Papi) who would die several years later in the Bolivian guerrilla movement. They went to Bolivia to provide assistance to Masetti and his group, with the aid of the Peredo brothers and Rodolfo Saldaña (members of the Bolivian CP), in coordination with a group of comrades we sent to La Paz. Simultaneously, on Che's request the married couple William Cooke and Alicia Eguren were responsible for support work in Argentina, even though they did not know the plans totally, nor the eventual participation of Che in that guerrilla movement.

It's also necessary to recognize here the cooperation given at that time by the leadership of the Algerian FLN.

Q: Masetti's insurgency was eventually discovered and almost all its members died or disappeared. What impact did this have on Che?

A: A deeply emotional and human impact. Comrades had been killed with whom he had been tied by many years of comradeship and struggle. As he said more than once, what upset him was the idea that while this was occurring he was here sitting in an office. When contact with Masetti was lost in April 1964, Che made all possible efforts to clarify the circumstances of those events, to learn if there were survivors, and in case they existed, to reorganize them. In those efforts he had the collaboration of William and Alicia. Since then, other Argentine friends have continued looking for the remains of Masetti and his comrades, trying to reconstruct the events, but up to now they have not been able to find indications of how that guerrilla effort ended and the circumstances of Masetti's death.

(To be continued next week.)

¹ The *Bogotazo* was a popular uprising in Bogotá, Colombia in 1948. Castro was in Bogotá to help organize a Latin American student congress, and he participated in the uprising.

In 1947, an expedition was organized from Cuba to overthrow the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. It was aborted when the expeditionaries were dispersed by the Cuban army at Cayo Confite. Fidel Castro was a participant.

² Seeking to crush political and social struggles in Guatemala accompanying a limited land reform initiated by the regime of Jacobo Arbenz, mercenary forces backed by the CIA invaded the country in 1954 to oust the government. Arbenz refused to arm the people and resigned, and a right-wing dictatorship took over. Among those volunteering to fight the imperialist-organized attack was Ernesto Guevara, who had been drawn to Guatemala by the upsurge in struggle there.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Railroad Crisis. Speakers: Barry Fatland, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Transportation Union; other rail unionists. Fri., Nov. 21, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.*

FLORIDA

Miami

The Cuban Revolution Today and the Legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara. Sat., Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. (Between NE 1st and NE 2nd. Aves.) *Donation: \$4. Translation into Span-*

ish and French. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Gyrations of the Stock Market: What's the Cause and Meaning for Working People. Fri., Nov. 21, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. *Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Hear the Socialist Alternative. Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers candidate for D.C. City Council. Fri., Nov. 21, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. NW (at 18th & Florida, entrance on Florida).

Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Union and Popular Resistance in North America and Europe—Prospects for Building the Revolutionary Movement. Speakers: Sam Manuel and Joshua Carroll from the United States will discuss recent events in Europe and North America. Fri., Nov. 21, 7 p.m. **Cuba's Workers and Peasants Strengthen Socialist Course of Revolution.** Eyewitness report from events in Cuba marking the 30th anniversary of Che Guevara's death. Speaker: Marcella FitzGerald, a leader of the Communist

League in the United Kingdom; Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League in Canada. Mon., Nov. 24, 7 p.m. *Both events held at 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9281 3297.*

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

North America and Europe - Union and Popular Resistance. Speakers: Sam Manuel and Joshua Carroll from the United States will discuss recent events in Europe and North America. Wed., Nov. 19, 7 p.m. 199 High St. (Corner High and Tuam). *Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.*

Washington steps up war moves against Iraq

Continued from front page

Clinton declared Baghdad's decision to be "clearly unacceptable and a challenge to the international community."

In the UN vote, the governments of France, China, Russia, and Egypt refused to go along with the military threat and Washington conceded a watered down resolution in order to get a unanimous vote.

"The message has been clear: Iraq must comply or face the consequences," stated William Richardson, U.S. ambassador at the United Nations, after the vote. "We are not precluding any option, including the military option."

Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz, who was at the United Nations but was not allowed to present his government's case to the Security Council, said Baghdad would not back down and would not rescind its order to expel the U.S. inspectors. "Iraq will continue to present its just case and this resolution will not scare it," Aziz said in a statement issued in New York.

The same day, 4,000 Iraqis marched in Baghdad to protest Washington's war moves. The boisterous demonstration — the largest in a series of such actions — ended at the office of a UN Development Program. Protesters, who included youth carrying banners with anti-imperialist slogans, handed over a letter condemning UN resolutions against Iraq since 1990, when the first U.S.-organized sanctions were imposed. Hundreds of Iraqis joined crowds already camped on the grounds of the presidential palace in Baghdad to shield it from any possible U.S. attack.

Hundreds of people also protested Washington's moves in the Gaza Strip, Hebron, and the West Bank November 10. In Gaza Palestinians burned a U.S. flag outside UN offices.

In addition to demanding Baghdad's full cooperation with the UN inspection squad, the November 12 resolution suspends review of the seven-year-long economic embargo against Iraq.

Two days before the Security Council vote, Baghdad had asked the United Nations for a timetable for ending the inspections and lifting the embargo, stopping U.S.-piloted U-2 spy flights, and reducing the number of U.S. inspectors on the UN teams in Iraq.

U.S. military buildup in Mideast

U.S. defense secretary William Cohen

said November 11 that Washington had "inherent authorization" under previous UN resolutions for a military response, and warned that "not too much time should go by before this is resolved." General Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, "We have adequate forces there now," referring to U.S. troops and weaponry in the region. "We will keep our range of options open."

The U.S. aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* and 16 other U.S. Navy vessels are in the Persian Gulf as part of the 20,000-strong U.S. military force in the region. According to the Associated Press, U.S. military officials said that additional forces could be shifted in, including the *USS George Washington* with 75 warplanes that needs four days to get there from the Mediterranean Sea. U.S. forces include about 200 warplanes, six

navy vessels capable of launching Tomahawk cruise missiles, 2,100 combat-ready Marines on board the amphibious assault ship *USS Peleliu*, and nearly 2,000 GIs stationed in Kuwait with tanks, troop carriers, and missile systems.

The White House has strong bipartisan backing for a possible military assault. Senate majority leader Trent Lott, a Republican, said November 9 that if U.S. president William Clinton were to order a punitive strike, "I think the Congress would support him in a very bipartisan way."

Fissures in Gulf War 'coalition'

Washington may be faced with the option of launching a military assault on its own, as the coalition it cobbled during the 1991 war has fractured. Last month, in a

Continued on Page 14

Capitalism's Growing World Disorder and Prospects for Socialism in the 21st Century

Regional Socialist Educational Conference

December 6 & 7

Ramada Inn 420 20th St. S.
Birmingham, Alabama

❖ PRESENTATIONS ❖ CLASSES
❖ BOOK SALES ❖ SOCIALS

SPONSORED BY THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY AND THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL: (205) 323-3079.

HANDS OFF IRAQ! Speak Out against U.S. War Moves at these Militant Labor Forums

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Fri., Nov. 21, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave.
Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Speaker: Bruce Kimball, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 21, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad St., 2 blocks north of Raymond Blvd.)
Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

OHIO

Cleveland

Panel discussion. Sat., Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m. 1832 Euclid Ave.
Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

March against Sweatshop Abuse! March in solidarity with workers to demand: fair, living wages; the right to organize and the right to bargain collectively; decent, safe working conditions. Sat. Nov. 29, 12 noon. *Meet at 34th and Broadway and march. For more information, call: (212) 645-5230.*

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Struggle for Quebec Independence and the Socialist Revolution in Canada. A reportback from the founding convention of the YS in Canada. Speaker: Mick McDonald, Central Committee member. Canada Young Socialists. Sat. Nov. 22, 6:30 pm Dinner, 7:30 pm Forum. 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

The Fight for a United Independent Ireland and the Crisis in the United Kingdom. Class by Marcella FitzGerald, leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom. Sun., Nov. 23, 12 noon. **Growing Labor Resistance and the Fight for Quebecois Independence in Canada.** Class by Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League in Canada. Sun., Nov. 23, 2 p.m. *Both classes at 66 Albion St. Surry Hills. For more information, call (02) 9281-3297.*

Correction

In the Nov. 17, 1997 issue of the *Militant*, in the front page article titled, "Young Socialists in Canada hold first convention," YS member Xochitl Leal from Vancouver was misnamed "Xochitl Punal."

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 111 21st St. South Zip 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 73712,3561

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

CONNECTICUT: New Haven: Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516.

FLORIDA: Miami: 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. Compuserve: 103171,1674

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 803 Peachtree St. NE. Zip: 30308. Tel: (404) 724-9759. Compuserve: 104226,1245

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Compuserve: 104077,511

IOWA: Des Moines: 2724 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 277-4600. Compuserve: 104107,1412

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772. Compuserve: 103426,3430

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 104127,3505 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (612) 644-

6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 87A Halsey. Mailing address: 909 Broad St., Suite 320. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341. Compuserve: 104216,2703

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642 ; 167 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

OHIO: Cincinnati: P.O. Box 19484. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 662-1931. **Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Compuserve: 104502,1757 **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. Compuserve: 103122,720

TEXAS: Houston: 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 847-0704. Compuserve: 102527,2271

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185. Compuserve: 75407,3345.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461,2544.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 19 Terry St., Surry Hills 2010. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9281-3297. Compuserve: 106450,2216

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL.

Tel: 0171-928-7993. Compuserve: 101515,2702

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 104614,2606

Toronto: 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343. Compuserve: 103430,1552

FRANCE

Paris: MBE 201, 208 rue de la Convention. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (1) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: gphssg@treknet.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

Hype and hustle winding down? — A 1998 "Memories of Diana, Princess of Wales" calendar, regularly \$9.95, is available this week at the Los Angeles "99 cent



Harry Ring

Only" chain. No limit on number purchased.

38 years and still trying — Miami-based Cuban counterrevolutionaries sent boats to off-Cuba

waters carrying lasers to beam "pro-democracy" messages onto Havana's night sky. Residents were called on to gather along the city's sea wall and bang pots and pans in support. The laser message was faint and intermittent, and the call for pot-bangers was ignored. The self-styled Democracy Movement declared its operation a success.

Buckle your belt — According to the International Air Transport Ass'n, 19 planes crashed worldwide last year and 1,189 passengers and 97 crew members perished. Air traffic is expected to double by 2010 and, at the present crash rate, would mean a disaster a week. Affiliated airlines were told they must tackle

this problem and, also, the challenge of declining profits. The profit shrink came despite increased traffic and bigger loads.

More work, less service — British safety inspectors have reports that train drivers are nodding off in the cab because of long hours. Train drivers work at the controls six hours, take a half-hour break, and then drive four hours more.

Meanwhile, train services canceled or arriving late rose significantly since they've been privatized.

'Color-blind' education system — California's two-year community college system, as of last

year, had 1,396,400 students, with 30 percent studying full-time and 70 percent part-time; 46 percent were 24 or younger, 54 percent 25 to 40 or older. About 6 percent went on to four-year colleges. And, natch, 54.6 were nonwhite.

The march of science — "NEW ORLEANS — Seeking a glimpse of the neural machinery of the soul, scientists have discovered that the brain may be naturally attuned to words of prayer and religious experience." — *Los Angeles Times*, November 1.

Note — We did an earlier item on this, based on a brief L.A. *Times* account of a report by UC San Di-

ego researchers to a gathering of neurologists. The item above is the opening of a full-sized article by a *Times* science writer. Interestingly, it appeared in the paper's Saturday religion page, not the Tuesday science page.

You think there's a double standard? — Robert Citron, who led Orange County into the country's biggest municipal bankruptcy so far, is free. His investment juggling cost the county \$1.6 billion and he pleaded guilty to felony charges of fraud.

He did nine months in a county jail work release program — a five-day week clerical job, with nights home.

Lenin on characteristics of imperialism

Below we reprint an excerpt from Volume one of *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!*—*Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*. The book is part of The Communist International in Lenin's Time series, and contains the reports and discussions of the Second Congress of the Communist International. The selection is part of a "Report on the National and Colonial

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Question" given by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin on July 26, 1920. This book is copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BY V.I. LENIN

What is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International¹ and bourgeois democracy, we emphasize this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.

The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces. The vast majority of the world's population, over a billion, perhaps even 1.25 billion people, or, if we take the total population of the world as 1.75 billion, about 70 percent of the world's population, belongs to the oppressed nations, which are either in a state of direct colonial dependence or are semicolonies as, for example, Persia, Turkey, and China, or else, conquered by some big imperialist power, have become greatly dependent on that power by virtue of peace treaties. This idea of a division, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses, not only the first theses published earlier over my signature but also those submitted by Comrade Roy.² The latter were framed chiefly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain. Herein lies their great importance to us.

The second basic idea in our theses is that in the present world situation following the imperialist war reciprocal relations between peoples, as well as the world political sys-

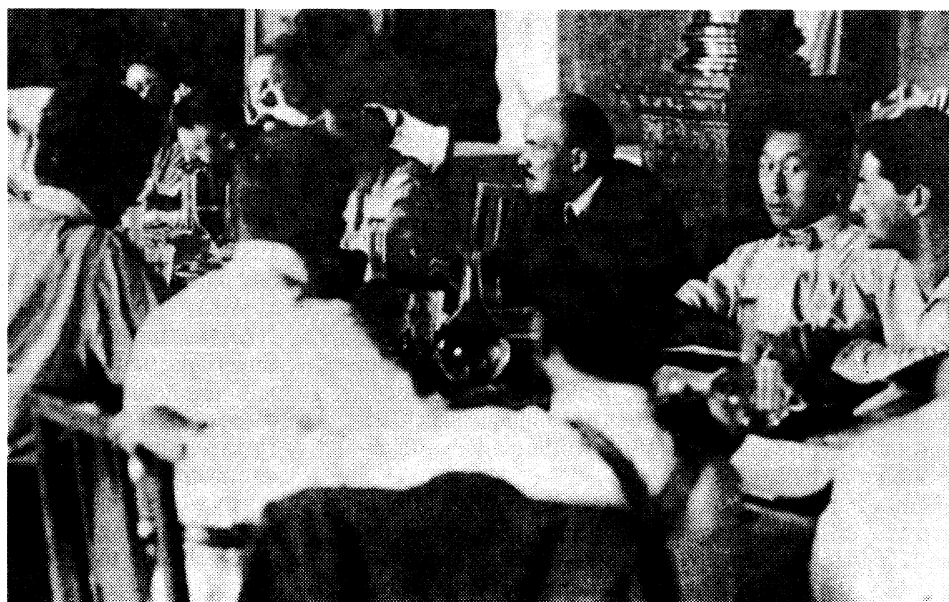
tem as a whole, are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the soviet movement and the soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. Only by beginning from this standpoint can the Communist parties in civilized and backward countries alike pose and solve political problems correctly....

Are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance toward progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal, in that event it will be a mistake to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. We should create independent contingents of fighters and party organizations in the colonies and the backward countries and at once launch propaganda for the organization of peasants' soviets³ and strive to adapt them to the precapitalist conditions. In addition, the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that the backward countries, aided by the proletariat of the advanced countries, can go over to the soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience. It has, however, been definitely established that the idea of soviets is understood by the mass of the working people in even the most remote nations, that the soviets should be adapted to the conditions of a precapitalist social system, and that the Communist parties should immediately begin work in this direction in all parts of the world.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist parties not only in their own but also in the colonial countries, and particularly among the troops employed by the exploiting nations to keep the colonial peoples in subjection.

Comrade [Thomas] Quelch of the British Socialist Party spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treasonable to help the enslaved nations in their uprisings against British rule. True, the jingoist and chauvinist-minded labor aristocrats of Britain and America present a very great danger to socialism and are a bulwark of the Second International. Here we are confronted with the greatest treachery on the part of leaders and workers belonging to this bourgeois International. The colonial question was discussed in the Second International as well. The Basel Manifesto is quite clear on this point, too.⁴ The parties of the Second International pledged themselves to revolutionary action, but they show no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolts against the oppressor nations. This, I think, applies also to most of the parties that have withdrawn from the Second International and wish to join the Third



Lenin (third from right) and other members of commission on tasks of the Communist International at its second congress. This was the first international revolutionary organization to truly include as equals parties of the toilers in the colonial and semicolonial countries, as well as the imperialist powers.

International. We must proclaim this publicly for all to hear, and it is irrefutable. We shall see if any attempt is made to deny it.

All these considerations have formed the basis of our resolutions, which undoubtedly are too lengthy but will nevertheless, I am sure, prove of use and will promote the development and organization of genuine revolutionary work in connection with the national and the colonial questions. And that is our principal task.

¹ Founded in 1889 as an international association of social democratic workers' parties, the Second International collapsed with the outbreak of World War I when leaders of most constituent parties supported the interests of their own bourgeoisies to go to war.

² Manabendra Nath Roy (Robert Allan-Roy Bhattacharya) was an Indian revolutionary who was active in nationalist protests against British rule in 1910–15, and went on to become a founding member of both the Mexican Communist Party (1919) and the Indian CP in exile (1920).

³ The soviets were councils elected by workers, peasants and soldiers formed in the Russian revolution.

⁴ The Second International condemned colonialism at its 1907 congress in Stuttgart, Germany, as well as at earlier gatherings. The manifesto of the International's 1912 congress in Basel, Switzerland, however, did not take up the colonial question.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



November 24, 1972

BATON ROUGE, Nov. 11 — Having won some of their demands, students are continuing their three-week protest on the predominantly Black campuses of Southern University in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

[Governor Edwin] Edwards gave the students until 1 p.m. Nov. 9 to clear out of the building. He gave the police orders to use any means necessary to retake the building. However, the deadline came and passed with the students still inside. Then, an hour and a half later, the students proudly marched out of the building they had held for 10 days. They held a news conference in front of 1,500 onlookers and an array of battle-armed state police, and announced that Dean Bashful had agreed to resign and that their other demands had been met.

The demands won included bus service from the main campus street, emergency medical care on campus, revamping the freshman orientation program, and the right of students to audit the school's financial records. A major demand that the students won was academic amnesty. This means that the striking students cannot be suspended from school for participating in the building take-over.



November 24, 1947

In face of the mounting wave of strikes in France, Premier Paul Ramadier handed in his resignation Nov. 19. This action constitutes recognition of the inability of his regime to do anything about the unbearable rise in the cost of living which is forcing the French workers into action.

The current wave of strikes which forced Ramadier's resignation began in Marseilles when the Stalinist-controlled unions there staged a protest demonstration over an increase in street car fares decreed by the new de Gaulist mayor.

Demonstrations broke out all over France. In the Lille mine basin 30,000 coal miners downed tools Nov. 17.

Strike action spread from pit to pit with such rapidity that within a few days 105,000 out of a total of 114,000 miners in this region were out. The auto workers at Renault Hotchkiss, Simca, Citroen, Ford and Gnome-Rhone walked out. The secretary of the Metal Workers Union in the Paris region called for "total strike." The flour millers of Lille and Marseilles joined 4,500 Paris millers on strike, and 12,000 Paris school teachers voted for strike action to begin Nov. 21. The total number of workers on strike in France on Nov. 19 was estimated at 400,000.

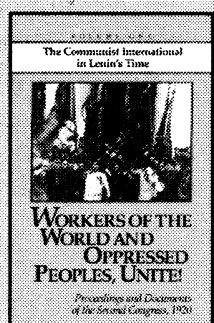
Available from Pathfinder

Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!
Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920

The debate among delegates from 37 countries takes up key questions of working-class strategy and program and offers a vivid portrait of social struggles in the era of the October revolution.

2 vols. \$35.95 for each, set \$65.00

Available from bookstores including those listed on page 12.



Protest threats against Iraq

Continued from front page

Kuwait, bring democracy to Iraq or the Arabian peninsula. And that is the purpose of the current sanctions, not to protect Americans and the rest of humanity from the fantastic threat of Iraqi nerve gas attacks.

But the U.S. rulers walk around with broken teeth since the 1991 war, which showed clearly in the recent UN Security Council vote. Saddam Hussein is still in power and Washington is unable to muster the international support it wants for its war aims. Paris, the imperialist power in Europe most at odds with U.S. foreign policy, is not going along. Moscow, which opposes NATO expansion toward its borders, is also balking. Beijing, which has clashed with the U.S. government over Taiwan in recent years, refuses to support another military assault on Iraq. And the decision of Cairo and other capitalist regimes in the

Middle East to distance themselves from the U.S. initiatives indicate the inability of Washington and Tel Aviv to squash the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and the expectations it arouses among the Arab toilers in the region.

In other words, U.S. imperialism is weaker and the world relationship of class forces has shifted against its favor since 1990. But the sharper competition with rival imperialist powers, vying to grab markets and control resources in a world where the capitalists' profits are increasingly threatened by a deflationary collapse, propels the U.S. rulers toward more military adventures.

This is a time to organize protests and demand:

Repeal the travel ban on Iraqi officials and all the sanctions against the Iraqi people!
U.S. hands off Iraq!

Capitalism's world crisis

A smoldering international economic crisis — from Thailand to Japan and Brazil — is having a growing impact on world politics. There are no policies the capitalist rulers can adopt to avert the impending economic disaster, which will become a nightmare for working people around the world.

What's underneath the current crisis is a world capitalist market increasingly plagued by overproduction of commodities and excess industrial capacity; that is, by more output than capitalists can sell at a high enough profit to justify expanding their productive plants and equipment. That's what the auto plant closures just announced in Thailand and the growing "glut" of the world market with automobiles show.

And what do the Yankee and other imperialists offer in response to the currency crisis and the prospect of defaults in loan payments by Thailand and other oppressed nations in the region? Another "bailout," better described as usury imperialism as Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin did in his pamphlet *Imperialism; The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. The result will be like the 1995 Mexico "bailout": after the loans were repaid with handsome interest to the empire to the north, wages of working people had been slashed, health and living conditions for workers and peasants deteriorated, and U.S. bankers and businessmen owned more of the patrimony of the country.

Even in the United States, the crisis of overproduction is beginning to result in scaling back production in a few companies, as the recent announcement by Kodak of an impending layoff of 10,000 workers.

Bourgeois commentators are increasingly pointing to the danger of a deflationary downturn similar to what unfolded in the last half of the 1920s before the Great

Depression.

Social polarization is on the rise as well, as these developments provide fuel for fascist politicians like Patrick Buchanan who seek to gain a hearing among broader layers of people. They demagogically denounce the "Global Economy," which they blame for loss in "American jobs" and cuts in workers wages.

Working people should be unequivocally opposed to NAFTA, "fast-track" deals, the APEC forum, or any other imperialist trade pacts. None of these have anything to do with free trade, which, as Lenin explained, has virtually disappeared since capitalism reached its monopoly stage — imperialism. At the same time, the "economic nationalism" of Buchanan and the AFL-CIO labor tops draws working people into reactionary chauvinism and is part of preparing us to go to war against our brothers and sisters abroad to defend the interests and profits of the home bourgeoisie.

Above all, however, the world economic crisis and the attempted "solutions" by the imperialist powers are generating resistance by working people to the belt-tightening the bosses are attempting to impose on us — from Thailand to the Dominican Republic. Through these battles working people will gain confidence and the consciousness to go further than fighting for a slightly better portion of the surplus value the employers rob from the producers. Thousands will become convinced of the need to take state power out of the hands of the exploiters, establish a government of the toiling majority, and join the worldwide fight for socialism — a system of human solidarity and cooperation that puts human needs first, not dog-eat-dog competition and profits for the already wealthy ruling families.

Forum in Cuba on road to socialism

Continued from Page 9

that it be structured from, by, and for the ranks," he emphasized.

Although it did not come to the workshop floor in an explicit manner, it was clear from several days of informal discussions with delegates that debates and divisions over such questions have cut deeply into centrist political regroupments such as the Workers Party of Brazil. They also pose major challenges for revolutionary forces.

Despite suggestions from a few delegates that it would be good to draft a common political statement to be adopted at the conclusion of the three days of discussion, the conference hosts and the overwhelming majority of participants insisted that the importance of the gathering was the fact that it had initiated a process of discussion that, together with events like the youth festival and trade

union gathering, should be pursued in coming months, in various journals and conferences as appropriate. The workshop concluded with a consensus among the majority of those present, however, that the initiative to bring together such an international gathering of political parties could not have come from any quarter other than the Communist Party of Cuba and that it represented an important watershed.

As Balaguer expressed it, "we have not the slightest doubt that the world has the choice of two roads: either the continuation of capitalist barbarism or the search for alternatives to this stage. For us Cubans, as for millions of human beings, the alternative continues to be socialism."

Marcella FitzGerald and Michel Prairie contributed to this article.

Washington steps up moves against Iraq

Continued from Page 12

vote to tighten the embargo against Iraq, five members of the UN Security Council — France, Russia, China, Egypt, and Kenya — abstained, resulting in a milked-down resolution. It was the first time the permanent members of the Security Council had failed to agree on Iraq.

Soon after that, on October 29, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein ordered U.S. inspectors expelled, a move Washington used as a pretext to create the current crisis.

On October 30 the UN Security Council called on Iraq to reverse its decision to ban U.S. members of the inspection team. This time the representatives of France and Russia, who have significant oil deals in the region, abstained.

Spokespeople for the U.S. rulers are increasingly pointing to this problem of theirs. "The most frightening thing about the latest flare-up over Iraq is not how Saddam Hussein is behaving," said Thomas Friedman, one of the most prominent columnists of the *New York Times*, in a November 10 article. "France, Russia and the U.N. — they are scary...."

"What does it mean to be allies in a world where we can't even agree that Saddam is a menace? If we can't stand shoulder to shoulder against him, then against whom?"

Tensions are also building in the area. On November 10 Cairo announced it would join the governments of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Syria in boycotting the U.S.-backed economic conference scheduled for November 16 in Doha, Qatar. The Arab League voted earlier to express its "total rejection of any military action to be taken against Iraq."

A long record of U.S. aggression

Washington imposed economic sanctions on Iraq in August 1990, after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, as part of its effort to overthrow the Hussein regime, establish a U.S. protectorate there, and get more control of the country's oil resources. The embargo has been in place ever since. After the 1991 war, its lifting became conditional on certification by UN inspection teams that Baghdad no longer possesses weapons of "mass destruction." So the U.S. inspectors play a central role in justifying the maintenance of the sanctions, which have already cost the lives of half a million Iraqi children and have deprived the country from being able to import medicines, agricultural implements and seeds, and other necessities.

This is not the first time Washington has used the pretext of alleged noncompliance with UN resolutions to assault Iraq. During 1993 alone, Washington bombed Iraq more than 15 times. In January of that year, U.S. warships, with British, French, and U.S. planes, bombed Iraq for more than 10 days. In the summer of that year, the bombing continued, along with missile attacks after Baghdad restricted inspectors. In December of 1993, the Clinton Administration announced it would push to tighten the embargo against Iraq. Throughout the next two years, Washington not only again attempted to tighten the embargo, but stepped up its military maneuvers, sending tens of thousands of troops into the area on high alert. Since the end of the Gulf War, Washington has also patrolled a "no-fly" zone in both northern and southern Iraq. Recently, Clinton moved to extend those zones, and tighten the embargo. And in September of last year, Washington launched a military assault against the Iraqi people with three rounds of missile strikes in the southern part of the country.

A possible confrontation during the current crisis may arise over Washington's U-2 spy flights over Iraq, used to provide data to UN inspectors and conduct other snooping. The Iraqi government had threatened to shoot down the U-2's and demanded that the intelligence flights end. Washington backed off for a while but then resumed the flights November 10, escorted by a number of U.S. fighter jets. Baghdad did not launch its Soviet-made SA-2 missiles in that instance, as it had threatened it would do. But the Iraqi government maintains it may do so as the U.S. planes continue to violate Iraq's sovereignty and air space.

For further reading

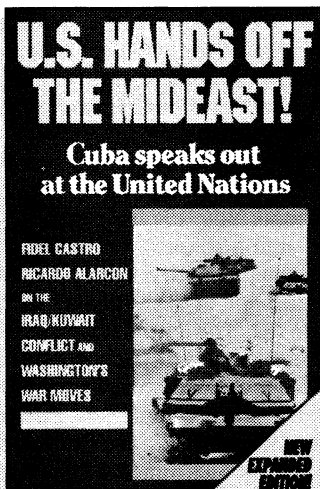
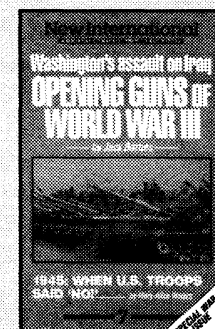
New International no. 7

Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

Also includes:

- 1945: When U.S. Troops said "No!" by Mary-Alice Waters
- Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War by Samad Sharif \$12.00



For further reading from Pathfinder

U.S. Hands off the Mideast!

CUBA SPEAKS OUT
AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Fidel Castro, Ricardo Alarcón

The case against Washington's 1990-91 embargo and war against Iraq, as presented by the Cuban government at the United Nations. \$10.95

Available from bookstores including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Miners in Australia fight union busting

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia — Members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) have been maintaining a 24-hour picket line at the Gordonstone mine in central Queensland since October 2. The Gordonstone colliery, Australia's biggest underground coal mine, is owned by U.S. company ARCO.

On October 1 ARCO gave out retrenchment (permanent layoff) notices to all 312 workers at the mine. The sackings followed a decision by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) on September 30 to reject an application by the CFMEU seeking to prevent the mine's closure. ARCO wants to restart operations with 190 hand-picked employees on individual contracts.

The CFMEU filed 268 unfair dismissal cases in the AIRC on October 21; hearings on these cases are continuing. The CFMEU is seeking an order that if anyone is to be hired to work at the mine they must be recruited from among those who have been sacked. At an October 2 meeting, 500 miners and supporters voted to fight the sackings. "We are not going to take this lying down," said Jim Lambley, district vice president of the CFMEU. Miners are getting support from unionists at other mines.

The company has taken an aggressive approach towards the workers. Miners renting company-owned houses were told to agree to a five-fold rent increase or get out within 30 days. Management is also attempting to reclaim houses that were being bought by miners under a company plan.

ARCO flew in 70 armed security guards from Brisbane to block the mine entrances and patrol streets in the nearby mining town of Emerald. The security guards have been tailing and photographing mine workers, to intimidate union members and their families. Queensland's Conservative state deputy premier Joan Sheldon backed ARCO's decision to employ security guards in the town. "If the workforce is getting to the stage of being violent then the mining company has every right to look after its own assets," she declared. ARCO, one of the world's biggest oil and gas companies, is determined to change work practices at its mines and break the union's capacity to negotiate collectively. All of its U.S. coal operations are nonunion.

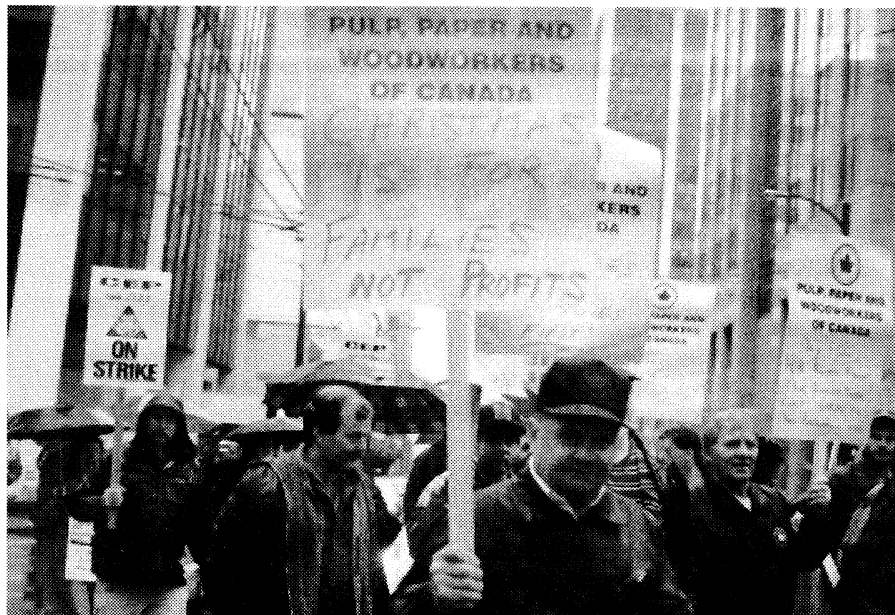
At the Gordonstone mine, ARCO has consistently tried to block union activity, threatening disciplinary action against union delegates and denying approval for stopwork meetings. In March CFMEU officials were banned from visiting the mine.

This fight is emerging as another test case for the federal government's new industrial relations legislation. CFMEU national president John Maitland explained, "There is a pattern of confrontation in the coal industry being led by Rio Tinto in the Hunter Valley and ARCO in Queensland. Significant damage is going to be done to several communities. It will place a question mark over the legitimacy and effectiveness of the [new Industrial Relations] Act."

Miners, other unionists and supporters marched through the streets of Emerald on November 1 protesting ARCO's latest decision to restart operations within the next two months.

Linda Harris is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union in Sydney.

Vancouver: paperworkers rally for union rights



Militant/Monica Jones

Some 700 striking paperworkers joined hundreds of other unionists and supporters in picketing Fletcher Challenge in Vancouver, British Columbia, October 28. About 2,400 workers at three pulp and paper mills are in the fifth month of their strike against the company's demands for job combinations, year-round operations, and more outsourcing. "We need more of these rallies, to get our message out to the public," said striker Gordie Howatt.

Two years later: 'Justice for Gammage'

BY EDWIN FRUIT

PITTSBURGH — The second anniversary of the death of Jonny Gammage was commemorated by two meetings here of about 100 people each.

One was a memorial service held October 12 at the St. Charles of Lwanga parish. On Oct. 12, 1995, Gammage, who was Black, was pulled over for a traffic stop and ended up dead after being confronted by five suburban Pittsburgh cops. Since that time there has been an ongoing campaign to demand the cops be prosecuted, including vigils at the court house, picket lines, demonstrations, and teach-ins.

Speakers at the service included Tim Stevens, president of the Pittsburgh NAACP; William Thompkins of the Urban League of Pittsburgh; and Mauri Saalaxhan, president of the Peace and Justice Institute based in Washington, D.C.

A message was also read from Gammage's parents, who were holding a similar meeting at the same time in Syracuse, New York.

cuse, New York.

Stevens lauded the October 10 Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision ordering a retrial of Milton Mulholland and Michael Albert, two of the cops who were at the scene of Gammage's death. The prosecution of these two ended last October when the presiding judge declared a mistrial. John Vojtas, another cop, was acquitted by an all-white jury from Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. Two other cops were never brought to trial.

The judge in the original trials requested juries from outside the Pittsburgh area. Juries from Chester and Lackawanna Counties heard the cases but neither reflected the ethnic composition of the Pittsburgh area. Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh, has approximately a 12 percent Black population. In its October 10 decision the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the case be returned to Allegheny County.

A city-wide protest was held at the University of Pittsburgh on October 19. A panel

of speakers was led off by Kelly Happe of the Campus Coalition for Peace and Justice. She summarized the two-year effort to get justice for Gammage.

Wayne Babish, the former police chief of Brentwood borough, where two of the cops came from, said that he had been fired just after Gammage's death for trying to reform the police department. He is currently running as the Republican candidate for sheriff of Allegheny County.

Dee Hart, of the United Concerned Christians At Work and one of the key activists in the two-year fight ended the program by saying, "We won't rest until all the cops are put on trial."

The Campus Coalition for Peace and Justice and other groups are planning a protest demonstration at 5 p.m. December 1 at the downtown courthouse, the first day of the trial of the Mulholland and Albert.

Edwin Fruit is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

LETTERS

Real Mexico 'bailout'

The front page article in the Nov. 10 issue of the *Militant* on the international currency crisis points out that the imperialist bail-out of the Mexican peso "accelerated the transfer of much of the country's national patrimony to U.S. capitalists." This is borne out in a cover story in the October issue of *Railway Age* magazine titled "Mexico's Railroad Revolution." The article reports on the privatization and partitioning of Mexico's formerly nationalized railway system, the FNM. The railroad was divided into three segments and offered for sale by the Mexican government as part of the bail-out arrangements. The first segment to be privatized (and operated in a joint venture with the Kansas City Southern Railroad) is the 2,600 miles of track linking Laredo with Mexico City. The U.S. rail bosses taking over the Mexican railroads hope to increase profits south of the border in the same way they do it in the U.S.: crew reductions and job combinations, and changes in work rules and safety practices.

As part of the "modernization" of the Mexican rail system, the magazine reports, "two- and three-person train crews are in place on most main-line trains, with cabooses steadily being replaced by two-way end-of-train devices." This while the average length and tonnage of trains being put together in Mexico for the trip north is increasing. One TFM official bragged, "One advantage we have is that we got thirty years worth of evolution

in labor agreements in two months time". The company's contract with the National Railway Workers Union "provides an average 25% increase," the article reports, in return for a massive workforce reduction. There are currently 4200 workers employed on this line, about half the number of workers employed when the railway was nationalized, and more lay-offs are expected. Locomotive and car repair, and track and signal maintenance, has already been privatized and downsized.

One of the first items of business for the U.S. bosses in Mexico was to increase "security" for their ventures. The chief of the newly-created TFM railroad police force is a retired Mexican Army officer, and the rail cops now have the authority "to arrest and prosecute thieves, vandals, trespassers, and stowaways attempting to cross the border".

Still to come is the Union Pacific's takeover of the second segment of the old FNM, as well as similar scenarios being planned for Mexico's petrochemical and maritime industries. The editors of *Railway Age* glowingly report that "when profits begin to flow, the Mexican people, whose government retains a 39.6% interest in the concession, will share them with the owners of TFM." All evidence indicates, though, that Mexican working people are resisting the imperialist-imposed austerity programs as they fight to reclaim their national patrimony.

Bill Kalman
Miami, FL



Disagree on education

I feel compelled to question the *Militant's* reductive approach to ideological issues, this time in the area of public education under capitalism. I will be directing my criticism at the article by Ted Leonard on Boston's Chelsea High in the issue of October 27.

I agree with the students that they shouldn't be "automatically" failed for six unexcused absences. At most high schools which I am familiar, there is an appeals process for credit denial which usually goes in favor of the student. If this is not the case at Chelsea High, then it should be. However as a teacher, I believe that cellular phones and pagers which can be heard are distracting and unnecessary accouterments of bourgeois "success," the use of which I am surprised Leonard seems to be championing. I agree that it sounds

as if the school administration should have held the assembly the students wanted, but the reporter doesn't explain in full what happened before the principal refused. This omission seems to indicate a lack of thorough analysis of the situation, apparently in order to present a one-sided article.

The article falls into an apparently opportunistic reduction of the general role of public education in capitalist society. No effort seems to have been made to provide direct quotes from the students asking to meet with the superintendent so that the reader can determine if the students' statements were indeed "abusive" and so perhaps counterproductive. A

reader can get the impression that the reporter believes that ANY protest of the unfairness of a situation is somehow proto-revolution-

ary, which is not necessarily true. If Leonard and Marcus were indeed present at the student walkout, then why doesn't the article explain what was allegedly abusive about the language of the students? Your audience is intelligent enough to decide whom to back.

Teachers do not even exist as far as one can tell from the article. The reader is left to assume that teachers, as a passive unified group pledged to support all the evils of capitalism, back whatever the administration says and does, the local administration which also is perfectly pliant in regard to the edicts passed down to it from above.

Some of us teachers actively support students who are being demonized by repressive "Codes of Student Conduct." Some of us agree that cops shouldn't patrol the halls and get paid with school funds and that JROTC shouldn't even be allowed to exist on school property. How is it the *Militant* will support our right to strike in one issue and then ignore our existence in the next one?

Ian Harvey
Naples, Florida

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

Truckers strike wins raises in France

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS — With 40 percent of all service stations out of gas, half of the country's 175 gas storage depots blockaded by striking truck drivers, and up to 191 barriers in place on roads around France, government officials, trucking bosses, and some union leaders rushed to conclude an agreement on November 7 to end the five-day strike. The agreement included an increase in the minimum wages guaranteed for drivers over the next three years. Many strikers were angered by the accord, however, believing they could have fought for more.

Despite the serious inconveniences it often caused, no one could contest the popularity of the truckers strike among workers. "They're right, they're making things change," said 47-year-old GEC-Alsthom coil winder Michel Heimann in Saint Ouen.

The truckers launched their strike November 2 despite the fact that the unions had reached an agreement that same morning with one of the bosses' organizations. The main bosses' organization, the Union of Transportation Federations (UFT), at first refused to accept this initial agreement, leaving the negotiating table November 1. The rapid extension of the road blockades forced the bosses to resume talks November 5, resulting in the November 7 accord.

Wage raises, but with loopholes

The new agreement provides for an immediate increase of between 3 and 5 percent of the minimum wages guaranteed for drivers. For the highest-paid category of long-distance drivers, the increase is 6 percent, with another 15 percent in raises by July 1, 2000, bringing the minimum to \$1,740 for 200 hours work per month. This top pay affects between 10,000 and 15,000 of the 220,000 drivers in France. The most highly qualified trucking workers who are not drivers will see their minimum guaranteed wage go up proportionally, from \$1,221 to \$1,415 a month for 169 hours, which corresponds to a 39-hour workweek.

For the truckers who belong to neither of these two categories, nothing is defined in the agreement beyond the immediate 3-5 percent wage hike. The deal includes a one-time payment of \$522 to most strikers, which had been part of the settlement of a 12-day truckers strike last year, but was only paid to 10 percent of the drivers.

Other aspects of the agreement limit the wage increases it codifies. While raising the guaranteed minimum for some long-distance drivers to \$1,740 per month in the year 2000, the agreement leaves open the possibility of bosses canceling yearly bonuses, such as a 13th month of wages paid by many companies. Also, the previous guaranteed minimum levels for the lowest-paid workers were below the national minimum wage (\$1165 a month). These workers could not legally be paid less than minimum wage, so the 3-5 percent increases in the industry minimum will merely bring them up officially to what they were already being paid.

"We are terribly disappointed," said François Pougetoux, a General Confederation of Labor (CGT) delegate at the Rungis logistics platform blockade south of Paris, where 180 companies have their distribution centers. None of the 13 other drivers there disagreed.

Thirty-year-old Michel Maillard said that the Rungis strikers would gain only \$35 per month. "They're not respecting the drivers," he said. "The bosses are laughing at us."

Near a blockade close to Rouen, some members of the French Confederation of Democratic Labor (CFDT), the only truckers union to sign the November 7 agreement, burned their union cards. According to the Sunday national paper *Journal du Dimanche*, Yves, a CFDT delegate explaining the national agreement said, "I'm disgusted. They're so rotten! I don't understand what is happening."

The CFDT claimed that 61 percent of its members had voted in favor of the agreement after it was submitted to them in the morning of November 7, before the CFDT signed it in Paris at 4:45 PM the same day.



Militant photos by Derek Jeffers
Above, truckers at Plate-Forme Logistique de Rungis, where strikers used 12 trucks to block access to 180 companies. At right, Rungis strikers discuss how to defend a young Algerian trucker who is with them and only has a work contract for a few months. They decided to stay out on strike to make sure he is not victimized.

The legalistic text was 15 pages long.

Yvon Connan, delegate of the independent union, the National Federation of Truck Drivers (FNCR) at Rungis, told the *Militant*, "It wasn't absolutely necessary to sign this agreement right away — we're still a long ways from what we wanted. There is a calendar of wage increases. There are positive things, even if not everyone is affected. Now it's up to us, the union delegates, to make sure the agreement is respected at the local level, to use the positive side. The term of 'driver' has to win more respect. That's linked to the question of wages."

While the CFDT — the union with the largest following among truckers — signed the accord, none of the four other truckers unions did so. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) announced that it had consulted truckers at 104 blockades, and that 80 percent of them were against the agreement. Although Workers Force (FO) had participated in the negotiation of a previ-

ous, similar agreement just before the strike began November 2, it denounced the new accord, stating, "Between Sunday and today, we haven't gotten a penny more. The guys were led to strike for nothing."

Under French labor law, the signature of one union, especially the largest one in an industry, is sufficient for an agreement to be considered valid. The dismantling of some blockades under the pressure of the CFDT, and the lack of any perceived alternative, truckers quickly resigned themselves to lifting the barriers. All were down within 24 hours after the signing of the agreement.

The national secretary of the French Communist Party, Robert Hue, drew a positive balance sheet of the negotiations, speaking of a "significant step forward." He hailed "the new method of the [Socialist Party-led] government, and particularly my friend Jean-Claude Gayssot." Transportation Minister Gayssot is a CP leader, and played a

major role in negotiating the agreement. Gaullist president Jacques Chirac also praised the government for having "done as much as possible" to end the strike.

"Today this isn't a strike anymore, it's an insurrection," lamented right-wing politician Alain Madelin.

'The bosses were scared'

Some strikers also experienced employer-organized violence against them. The worst incident was at a blockade in Vitrolles, near Marseilles, where a commando unit sent by one of the blockaded trucking companies,

European Refrigeration Transportation (TFE), attacked the strikers at 4 a.m., sending three of them to the hospital. Police arrested five of the commandos. Truckers reacted later in the day by setting up blockades outside TFE centers in four cities in France. The mayor of Vitrolles, Catherine Megret, belongs to the fascist National Front. The political bureau of the National Front issued a statement during the strike condemning "the illegal methods used by the truck drivers unions, which can ruin our already sick economy." It said it

was "scandalous" that the state watches "the unions engage in illegal actions without reacting."

At the Rungis blockade on November 7, as the strikers prepared to lift their barricade, Maillard grinned, "Anyway, the bosses did get scared that our action could snowball to other workers." François Pougetoux added in almost a whisper, his voice hoarse from five days at the blockade, "The movement has won us some respect and for us the struggle is not over."

After lifting their blockade, the strikers at Rungis shifted their action to the company they work for, Via Location, at Orly next door. They parked 17 trucks in front of the company's offices, pressing forward locally for their for wage increase demands.

Derek Jeffers is a member of the CGT at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant in Saint Ouen.

Brazil gov't announces taxes, layoffs

BY HILDA CUZCO

The government of Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso announced a massive package of austerity measures November 10, including budget cuts and stiff tax increases. This latest move in response to growing pressure to devalue the real, the country's currency, was prompted after the São Paulo stock market plunged more than 6 percent November 7.

The 50-point austerity package is estimated to total at least \$18 billion. It includes laying off 33,000 government workers, abolishing 70,000 vacancies, and replacing only one third of retiring employees. Over half of the amount will come from a 10 percent income tax hike and raises in taxes on gasoline, alcohol, and air travel. These and other measures are expected to be introduced by executive decrees, to be ratified by Congress after 60 days.

On October 30, the Central Bank of Brazil nearly doubled short-term interest rates to 43 percent to stabilize the real, after a week in which it spent about \$8 billion of its \$60 billion in reserves to keep up its price. In a sign of investors' worry over the devaluation pressures, the Bovespa stock market index in São Paulo registered a drop of 30 percent in late October, the same day markets dived from Hong Kong to Wall Street. A week later the Bovespa dropped another 5.5 percent November 6, despite the drastic currency stabilization efforts.

Cardoso's austerity plans call for cuts in government spending, reducing the 1.5 million-employee civil service, and "reforming" social security. The stated aim of these measures, which have been in debate in Congress for almost three years, is to reduce

the government's deficit to an equivalent of 5 percent of gross domestic product. The steps taken to stabilize the real will exacerbate the deficit by increasing what the government must pay out in interest.

"The 1998 budget will have to be stricter than was initially planned in light of the economic events of the last week," said Sergio Amaral, Cardoso's spokesman. The government plans to trim the budget up to \$2 billion by reducing investment or closing state-owned enterprises. The lower house in Congress is expected to vote for the second time on the civil service cuts on November 19. The government is pushing for approval on the reforms to the social security system and civil service by December 15, when Congress goes into recess.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian government is moving ahead in its effort to raise \$90 billion from selling off state enterprises by the year 2000. A consortium of Brazilian companies, VBC Energia, purchased Companhia Paulista de Força e Luz (CPFL), a São Paulo electricity company, for \$2.73 billion, nearly \$1 billion over the original bid offer. Four other groups entered bids for 57.6 percent of the company shares.

CPFL workers protested November 5 outside the São Paulo stock exchange as the bidding for the company was going on. CPFL provides around 6 percent of electricity in Brazil, serving an area the size of Portugal. The other state electricity companies for sale next year are CESP and Eletropaulo, also based in São Paulo.

"The fact that the [CPFL] sale took place has a lot to do with the trust in Brazil and the belief that it wouldn't be shaken by the crisis," said Mario Covas, the governor of

São Paulo.

For working people in Brazil, the financial crisis means hard times. "I'm not going to buy another thing until it's safe," Isabel Ventura, 34, a government worker in São Paulo, told a *New York Times* reporter. "Brazilians have not forgotten how difficult it was during the time of high inflation, and we are not taking any chances." The high interest rates have dried up sales of cars and other items on credit.

In 1994, the Cardoso government began the "Real Plan" in hopes of lowering inflation and curbing economic instability. This included carrying out tough austerity measures; introducing a new currency, the real, pegged to the dollar and other international currencies; and selling off state-owned enterprises and lifting trade tariffs. As inflation declined 2,500 percent in 1993 to 5 percent today, investors felt confident to bring billions of dollars to Brazil's economy. But this "miracle" now seems on edge.

A currency fall in Brazil could have devastating consequences in other Latin American countries. Brazil's gross domestic product is \$780 billion — more than twice of Mexico. "If Brazil starts having serious problems, it would indeed affect us," Finance Secretary Guillermo Ortiz Martínez of Mexico told *Business Week*. "It would affect the entire hemisphere." A devaluation of the real would put deflationary pressure on the Argentine government to allow its currency to drop, something President Carlos Menem has sworn he will not allow. Some 30 percent of Argentine exports go to Brazil. "If Brazil catches a cold, Argentina will sneeze," stated Argentine vice president Carlos Ruckauf.