

THE MILITANT

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Food, medicine bill does not ease Cuba embargo

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Los Angeles bus strikers gain new support

BY NAN BAILEY

LOS ANGELES—Surprising the employing class with their resilience and the solidarity they have won from other workers, bus drivers here began their fourth week on strike against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) as all its 2,000 buses remained idle. The drivers are fighting for their right to overtime pay and against the company's effort to force hundreds of drivers to be on duty for 13 hours or more while only getting paid for 10 hours. They are also opposed to MTA proposals to contract out more bus lines to private companies.

Meanwhile, the 47,000 Los Angeles County workers, organized by Local 660 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), began what they call rolling strikes. "They're fighting for the same things we are," David, a bus driver with one year's service, said of the county workers. "That's why some of them were with us at our rally last week at city hall."

Every day since October 3, different departments of the county workers have been picketing their workplaces, pressing for a pay raise. The county workers include nurses and others on staff at several large hospitals and medical centers, workers at the public library, and workers at the civic center, beaches, and harbors, among others.

Union leaders announced that a strike of all county workers would take place October 11 if no settlement has been reached in contract negotiations. The Joint Council of Interns and Residents, another county union, joined members of SEIU Local 660 on the

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Sales of new pamphlet are at center of sub drive

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Sales of Pathfinder's newest title *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* are outpacing initial projections. As a result of the successful response to this pamphleteering, the *Militant* has decided to make selling this title the central axis of the circulation drive and raise the goal of pamphlet sales to 2,000.

Socialist workers and members of the Young Socialists who are campaigning with the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are finding a real interest in the title. The explosion of protests and demonstrations in Yugoslavia that brought down the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, and the intransigent resistance of the Palestinian people in Israel and the occupied territories provide good opportunities to campaign with the pamphlet and the two periodicals.

The pamphlet addresses a broad range of political questions—from Social Security, the death penalty and police brutality, education, and the capacities of working people to transform society—from a working-class perspective, rejecting the framework of capi-

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Strikes, street actions topple Yugoslav regime

Workers lead mobilizations that open up political space

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS AND BOBBIS MISAILIDIS

ATHENS, Greece—A general political strike and revolt toppled the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic October 5. Hundreds of thousands of people converged on downtown Belgrade that day,

See report of a participant — page 8

taking over the federal parliament building, the main state television station, and other centers of governmental power. Factory workers, farmers, and other working people were at the center of the revolt.

In the wake of the crumbling of the hated regime, workers in factories, mines, hospitals, banks, and other workplaces around the country have removed and replaced their managers and other cronies of the former government. Students have done likewise at universities.

During the previous 10 days, militant strikes by coal miners and other working people throughout Serbia had made the country virtually ungovernable after the Milosevic regime refused to recognize outright victory for opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica in the September 24 presidential elections, and called for a second round in the vote.

Industrial cities such as Pancevo, Kragujevac, and Nis, which were among the main targets of the brutal U.S.-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia last year, became centers of the working-class resistance to one last antidemocratic attempt by the bureaucratic regime to hold onto power in defiance of



Celebrations followed toppling of the hated Milosevic regime. Working people led the strikes, demonstrations, and seizure of Milosevic strongholds and the parliament building in Belgrade. Sign over truck windshield reads, "He's finished!"

popular will.

The federal election commission had announced the "final results" of the elections, claiming Kostunica won 49 percent of the vote—not an absolute majority—and Milosevic 39 percent. The Democratic Op-

position of Serbia (DOS), a coalition of 18 parties, refused to accept the decision, citing fraud and calling for actions to demand the president's resignation.

On October 6, the day after the revolt in

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Palestinian deaths mount in Israeli crackdown

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Two weeks after heavily armed Israeli forces launched a bloody crackdown against Palestinian protesters, the toll stood at more than 90 dead and thousands wounded—al-

most all of them Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and inside Israel. Tel Aviv's repression has prompted outrage and demonstrations in countries throughout the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.

As unrest boils in the region, the U.S. government continues to press for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. It is applying particular pressure on the Palestinian leadership, falsely blaming it as the main source of violence. While siding with the Zionist regime, the U.S. rulers are pursuing their own divergent interests, pressing Tel Aviv to negotiate a settlement in order to gain stability in a region where Washington seeks to increase its domination.

The refusal by the Palestinian people to give up their fight for a sovereign homeland remains a major obstacle to these imperialist goals.

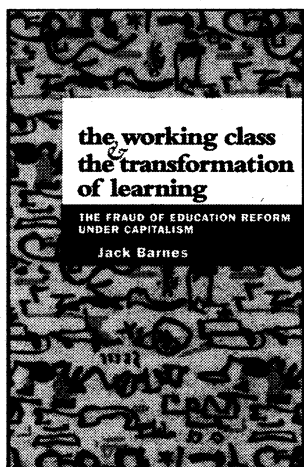
Around 2 million Palestinians live in the West Bank and 1 million in the Gaza Strip. Another million reside within Israeli borders—almost one-fifth of Israel's population—facing institutionalized discrimination. In addition, close to 2 million Palestinians are refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

The breakdown of "peace talks" in July, and the failure of attempts to reopen them, set the stage for the conflict that erupted in late September. During the July sessions, Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat balked at demands by Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and U.S. president William Clinton to cede long-held Palestinian claims to sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem. Arafat is the chairperson of the Palestinian Libera-

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NEW!

FROM PATHFINDER



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By Jack Barnes

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California growers, unions debate 'guest worker' bill — page 2

Growers and unions in California debate 'guest worker' bill

BY BRIGITTE SEGUIN

FRESNO, California—In late September the United States House Judiciary Committee voted 16 to 11 in favor of an agricultural guest workers bill that will be presented before the House and Senate for approval. This bill would allow growers in the United States to hire up to 1 million workers, mostly from Mexico, during the harvest season. Workers would be required to return to Mexico when the harvest is over.

The "guest worker" program has been dubbed the Agricultural Job Opportunity Benefits and Security Act of 1999. Introduced a year ago, it would provide legal status to the workers if they work at least five years as laborers in the fields. These workers would be guaranteed minimum wage, but it is not clear how the wages would be calculated.

An aspect of the debate on the bill has been whether or not employers should be required to provide housing to these workers. The employers claim that it is too costly and inefficient and they would prefer to give vouchers or some cash to them to get their own housing. But there is a housing shortage in many states, posing a crisis for agricultural and other workers.

This is not the first time that the big farmers and the U.S. government have supported such a program. A similar law was introduced under the *bracero* program in 1942 during the labor shortages caused by World War II. An agreement between the U.S. and Mexican governments allowed Mexican workers to come to the United States to work on farms and on railroads for temporary employment. This agreement was extended until 1964. Those programs made it harder for workers to unionize and to fight to improve their wages and working conditions because they are always under the threat of deportation.

This recent bill is supported by the California Farm Bureau Federation, the National Council of Agricultural Employers, and the governors of Arizona and New Mexico, as well as the Nisei Farmers League. It is opposed by the Farm Worker Justice Fund,

Southwest Voter Registration Project, and United Farm Workers which have denounced this program as an "indentured servitude."

At a hearing of the House Committee on Agriculture in Woodland, California, last May, David Weiss, a supporter of this bill, testified on behalf of the California Pear Growers. Weiss said, "Unfortunately, most of this type of work does not appeal to the majority of Americans, regardless of the national unemployment rate. Growers must therefore look to Mexico for the workers we need to complete these tasks. Suffice it to say that were it not for our Mexican neighbors, pears and many other tree fruits would not be viable crops in California."

The unemployment rate in the Central Valley, the largest agricultural center in the country, is in double digits, one of the highest in the country. The big growers still complain about a shortage of labor, especially during the harvest. A large supply of labor works to the advantages of the growers who impose low wages and miserable conditions.

In the 20th U.S. Congressional District of California, which is in the San Joaquin Valley, from Fresno to Bakersfield, the candidates have opposite point of views. Richard Rodriguez, the Republican candidate, supports the plan, agreeing that there is a shortage of farm workers. Calvin Dooley, the Democratic candidate, opposes it because he claims that these workers would be responsible for a higher unemployment rate.

Ned Measel, the Socialist Workers candidate, sees this program as an attack on the working class in general. "This program allows the growers to create more divisions among working people by stipulating under the law that a category of workers has more limited rights. They can be deported any time and are forced to work only as field labor under increasingly harsh conditions. Every worker in this country must have the same rights and ability to seek employment where they choose," Measel said.

He added that the labor movement should fight for equal rights for all immigrants, with



Militant

Laborers union contingent in July 21 march for immigrant rights in Washington

or without papers.

As part of his campaign, Measel visited with the Union of Shepherders, an organization that started to organize shepherds five years ago. There are about 3,000 such workers who came to this country under the H-2A program, which allows sheep owners through the Western Ranchers Association to hire workers, mostly from Chile and Peru, on a three-year contract.

Victor Flores, the president of the union, stated, "It used to be that when an employer was not satisfied with a worker they dropped them off in Bakersfield. They would frequently call the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The shepherd could then be deported. The organization," he continued, "has fought for shepherds who get injured on the job to get workers compensation and we are also going to several hearings to testify before the California Industrial Welfare Commission on the minimum wage." In California, these shepherds receive \$900 per month, which comes out to between 96 cents and \$1.12 per hour, Flores said, because they

work from dawn to dusk, seven days a week with no days off.

In his visit, Measel also saw the typical living arrangements provided by the employers. Shepherds live in small campers next to the grazing flock where the air is thick with dust and flies. There is no electricity. The only source of water is a metal drum with a spigot that is replenished every three to four days. There is no bathroom. Several small propane tanks are the only source of fuel. And the workers are not permitted to leave the property.

The Union of Shepherds, Measel said, is part of the rising resistance of workers and farmers around the United States. Measel called on the U.S. government to end all deportations and INS raids. "Workers from around the world have the right to come to the United States and to do so with equal rights and protections under the law. By opposing this bill and demanding equal rights for all immigrants, the labor movement can unify and strengthen the working class as a whole," he added.

Immigrants protest for rights in NY

BY CRAIG HONTIS

NEW YORK—With chants ringing out of "Aqui estamos, y no nos vamos" and "Hell no, we won't go," several hundred people rallied at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) offices here October 2 to demand amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

The action was one of a series of vigils at INS centers in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, Dallas, and Washington on the same day.

The protesters demanded that the government expand the special immigration status of Cubans and Nicaraguans to include immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Haiti; a reversal of the rule requiring applicants for residency to return to their country of origin while awaiting a response from the INS; and an extension of amnesty for undocumented immigrants past the current cutoff date of having residency since 1986.

The protesters included a contingent of

garment workers brought by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, many of them young Mexican workers. Many of the protesters were from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Ecuador.

Among the speakers at the protest were Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in New York. Perasso linked the recent racist attacks against immigrant workers in Farmingville, New York, with the bipartisan scapegoating of immigrant workers and the increased deportations and stepped-up presence of the INS on the Mexican border.

"Workers from Mexico and other countries bring fighting experiences to the working class in the United States and help us win," stated Perasso. "In many union-organizing drives immigrants are playing a leading role. The Socialist Workers campaign demands equal rights for all immigrants, amnesty for all, and an end to immigration restrictions."

THE MILITANT

Yugoslav workers: obstacle to bosses

Strikes and street mobilizations brought down the bureaucratic Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia. Now, in their attempt to reimpose capitalism there, the imperialists will have to directly confront working people, who remain an obstacle to that goal. Read the 'Militant' for unequalled coverage and analysis.



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UK gov't crisis marks Labour conference

BY JIM SIMPSON

LONDON—The government crisis precipitated by the fuel protests by farmers and independent truckers, and the deep support they won from working people, dominated the Labour Party conference held in Brighton at the end of September. Speeches addressing the fuel protests and the broader crisis by Prime Minister Anthony Blair and other Labour Party leaders marked the conference. There were also conflicts over pensions, rail safety, and pollution.

The Labour government was elected in 1997 with an overwhelming parliamentary majority of 179 seats. Until earlier this year Blair received high ratings in opinion polls and kept the lid on divisions within the parliamentary party. He had not lost a major vote at the annual Labour Party conference since becoming party leader in 1994.

Blair has pursued policies on behalf of Britain's wealthy employers and finance capital that have sought to weaken the power of the unions, curtail state spending on pensions and unemployment, and impose austerity measures under the guise of "fiscal responsibility." Among working people there has been growing disillusionment with the Blair administration as most of them consider themselves to be working harder and longer and with their future insecure; hoped-for improvements in education and the health service have not materialized.

One of the first chinks in his armor appeared with the election of Kenneth Livingstone as mayor of London. Livingstone, a longstanding Labour member of Parliament associated with the party's left wing, ran in opposition to Blair's hand-picked candidate and won hands down.

The power, effectiveness, and determination of the protests against rising fuel prices, as well as Blair's unsympathetic response to them in face of overwhelming support among working people, exposed the anti-worker policies of the government and its underlying weakness as well.

A public debate has opened as to whether Labour will win the next general election, which must take place before May 2002. On the eve of the Labour Party conference, opinion polls showed Labour trailing the Conservative Party, or Tories. Squabbles between government members have been

publicly aired, at the center of which is a division between Blair and Gordon Brown, chancellor of the Exchequer.

Blair's personal ratings in opinion polls suffered another sharp drop, and the high esteem in which he has been broadly held by bourgeois commentators has cracked. In an opinion column in the September 20 *Times*, Simon Jenkins praised Blair for not giving in to the protests and safeguarding high fuel taxes. An editorial in the same paper castigated Conservative Party leader William Hague for not doing likewise, stating that Hague "insists that his party is ready for government. Alas, what he says—and does not say—is proving the opposite."

But the next day columnist Anatole Kaletsky observed, "There was a palpable sense last week that the Prime Minister had lost control. He seemed to have no idea how to cope with what should, after all, have been just a minor crisis. Rightly or wrongly, it looked like the country was saved from disaster only by the good grace and self-restraint of the lorry drivers and farmers. If the protesters had not gone home of their own accord, it seemed that the Prime Minister would not have known what to do."

Drivers, farmers remain confident

The protesters ended the pickets September 14, threatening further action unless the government reduced taxes on fuel within 60 days. In keynote conference speeches both Blair and Brown sought to stand firm against the farmers and truckers.

But fuel protesters, who remained confident in the face of the government's weakness, have reiterated their threat of renewed action. Farmers for Action member Brian Parry, a dairy farmer from Raglan, Gwent, said of Blair's speech, "He didn't give any hope to us." Two tanker drivers at a petrol distribution center in Grays, Essex, who stopped their trucks to buy copies of the *Militant*, said they remained confident that if the need arose for renewed action its effects would be just as powerful as before.

Farmers and independent truckers, the driving force behind the protests, were emboldened by the widespread support they received from other workers and union members. A significant part of the increase in overall taxation since 1996-7—from 35.5

Farmers paralyze Bolivia, win relief



Protesting farmer at roadblock in Cochabamba, Bolivia. For several weeks Indian peasants led massive actions throughout Bolivia, fighting for better prices for their corn, water rights, and against land taxes. Peasants barricaded major roads, paralyzing the economy, while teachers strikes shut half the country's schools. On October 6, President Hugo Banzer agreed to several key demands of the peasants. Coca farmers continue to fight to oppose regime's plans to eradicate all coca crops without offering them an alternative to make a living.

to 37.7 percent of the gross domestic product—comes from increases in fuel duty.

Despite its firm stand against the protesters, the government has been forced to move up the chancellor's pre-budget statement to the end of October, two weeks prior to the 60-day deadline announced by the farmers and truckers.

Drive to end universal state pensions

At the Labour Party conference delegates defeated the platform in votes on rail safety, pollution, and pensions. The Blair government is driving to end the universal state pension—conceded by the post-World War II Labour government in the face of mounting working-class struggle—by introducing means testing. Blair also seeks to reduce the importance of the state pension by keeping its level low and shifting people onto private insurance schemes.

The current pension, available upon retirement, is £67.50 for a single pensioner and £107.90 for a couple a week

(£=US\$1.45). Older pensioners receive slightly higher pensions, with 80-year-olds receiving £86.05. Life expectancy in the United Kingdom is under 75 for men and under 80 for women. Government statistics state that some 2 million pensioners live in poverty, up 100,000 in the last year. There are 11 million pensioners in this country. In 1999 pensioners received a derisory 75-pence (US\$1.09) increase.

Pensions would be 44 percent higher—£97.45 for a single pensioner, £155.80 for a couple—had the Thatcher government in 1980 not broken the link between pensions and earnings that had existed until then. A resolution backed by a number of trade unions called for the earnings link to be restored. Despite the limited nature of this proposal, Blair rejected it, saying it would be a "huge additional expense" for future generations. The Labour leadership put pressure on union leaders to drop the motion, but it was passed by the conference. The government then announced that it will not abide by the conference decision.

The government points to its introduction of the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG), a means-tested mechanism that allows the poorest pensioners to claim a benefit increase to £78.45. In his speech to the Labour Party conference, Gordon Brown announced that the MIG is to be increased to £90, though he didn't say by when. According to the National Pensioners Convention, 500,000 pensioners, or one in four, entitled to MIG do not receive it.

Brown is also introducing pension credits designed to reward private pension schemes, rather than penalizing this system under the means test as is currently the case. The National Pensioners Convention calls for the basic state pension to be £140 per week.

Irish fighters beat London extradition attempt

BY JIM ALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO—"I'm having a beer and I'm shaking," a jubilant Terry Kirby told the *Irish Herald* upon learning that the long battle against London's drive to send him, Kevin Barry Artt, and Pol Brennan back to Northern Ireland was over. British Secretary for Northern Ireland Peter Mandelson announced September 29 that London was ending its eight-year drive to extradite the three Irish republican fighters as part of the prisoner release sections of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Kirby, Brennan, and Artt were among 38 republican prisoners who escaped together from the notorious H-Block wing of the Long Kesh maximum security prison outside of Belfast in 1983. The three men, along with Jimmy Smyth, a fourth republican fighter who was part of the 1983 escape, were living in California when they were arrested by the FBI between 1992 and 1996. The British government issued extradition warrants for the four and demanded that they be sent back to Northern Ireland and to prison.

The H-Block Four, as they became known, won wide support as they challenged London's extradition drive as well as their imprisonment in federal jails in California. Smyth was deported to Northern Ireland in 1996. After spending 14 months in jail, Kirby, Brennan, and Artt were released when a federal appeals court overturned a lower court's extradition order and set a new trial date. Bail was set for Kirby at \$1 million; for Artt and Brennan, \$500,000 each.

Kirby noted that the fight was still not over. The three have not yet received formal notification from the U.S. government that proceedings to deport them have been lifted. They have also applied for political asylum in the United States, but their appli-

cations were put on hold pending resolution of Britain's extradition warrant. Kirby has not been able to work legally for some time.

Mandelson's announcement "will be welcome news" for those "who have been fighting extradition from the United States," Alex Maskey, a Sinn Féin official in West Belfast, said. He noted, however, that Mandelson's action applied only to those prisoners who had not completed actual prison sentences. Extradition warrants remain out for those who had escaped while awaiting trial or sen-

tencing. Mandelson himself noted that the three men would likely have already qualified for early release from prison in Northern Ireland. "The public interest would be best served," Maskey said, if Britain now cleared up "all the anomalies arising from its penal policy."

The last republican fighters were released from the H-Blocks September 29. With the transfer to other prisons of some pro-British loyalist prisoners, as well as one republican, the hated H-Blocks are now empty for the first time since 1971.

Baggage workers at Denver airport strike

BY JAN MILLER

FT. COLLINS, Colorado—Workers at the Denver airport who run United Airlines' automated baggage-retrieval system have been on strike since September 26. The 85 workers are employed by Phelps Program Management, which is contracted by the airline to operate the system between the terminal and the airport's main concourse. United handles about 60 percent of flights to and from Denver.

The workers are members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 142. In an attempt to limit the effectiveness and impact of the strike, the union has been forced to picket in only a remote parking lot, about three miles from the main terminal, rather than the regular employees' parking lot.

Denver International Airport (DIA), which is owned by the city, is located about 40 miles east of downtown in an area surrounded by farmland. Workers set up picket lines two hours after turning down the contract. They are demanding changes in work

conditions and improved wages and benefits.

An October 2 rally at the remote parking lot gate was joined by mechanics, pilots, and flight attendants, as well as other unionists and politicians. Bob Greene, president of the Colorado AFL-CIO, said, "I'd like to send a message to [Denver] Mayor [Wellington] Webb: It's wrong when you place pickets out in the middle of nowhere, with only the jack rabbits around.... These workers have a right to picket at their place of employment." United pilot Scott Goff pledged support to the strikers, stating that the Air Line Pilots Association members "stand four-square behind you. You make us proud to be union members."

On October 4 the union went before U.S. District Chief Judge Lewis Babcock to get a temporary restraining order against the city that would let the picket line move from the parking lot to the main terminal. Tom Buescher, attorney for the strikers, argued that the right to picket at their place of work is "purely a First Amendment freedom of

speech issue. The city won't allow picketing at the terminal because it doesn't like...what others might do." The city attorney argued that it was the intent of the IAM to involve employees of other companies in their picket. The judge stated, "It appears to me that it's more probable than not that the object of the plaintiffs is to create a prohibited secondary boycott. If I allow pickets to be set up at levels five and six of the terminal [where workers and passengers enter], it is not reasonably likely but probable that it would create chaos at DIA." The next legal step is a preliminary injunction hearing that the judge set for October 20.

Don Sandrin, who has worked on the automated baggage system since the airport was completed in 1995, said much of the workers' dispute with Phelps revolves around job security and seniority issues. He wore a picket sign that said: "Dear Mayor Webb. Having a lousy time here in Eastern Colorado Wilderness! Wish you were here! P.S. When you find the time, please send us our rights!"

Pittsburgh students protest racist attacks

The Young Socialists is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information write to the Young Socialists, P.O. Box 33, Times Square Post Office, New York, NY 10108, or call (212) 695-1809, or send an e-mail to: young_socialists@hotmail.com

BY ANGELA ABERNATHY

PITTSBURGH—On September 17 students at Chatham College here awoke to find that they were the targets of racist and sexist vandalism. Students found their doors and bulletin boards violated with scrawlings about the Ku Klux Klan and attacks on gays and women.

Their personal property was also stolen, defaced, and destroyed. This included a Socialist Workers campaign brochure in which the picture of presidential candidate James Harris was defaced.

Within 12 hours, students at the dorm organized a meeting at which various ideas were brought up on how to fight these attacks. Some suggested that more security was needed, that the cops should guard the dorm 24 hours a day, and that surveillance cameras should be installed. Others noted that the cops were not going to "protect" them. Then students began to discuss the fact that making their voices heard and demanding that these attacks stop was the way to fight back, and out of these discussions came the idea to organize a protest for September 21.

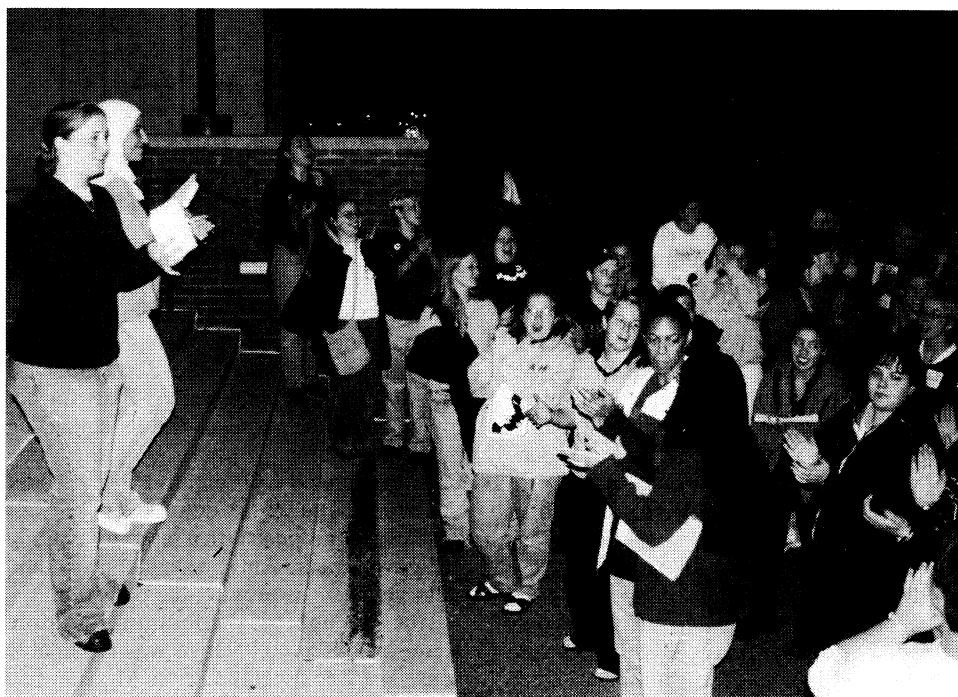
Some students argued that a rally should not be called because those responsible for

the attacks were just playing a prank, supposedly because they were drunk. Most students rejected the idea that alcohol makes someone a racist.

On September 21 about 250 students turned out for the rally. One student after another—Black, white, Asian, Chicano, Palestinian, Puerto Rican, and others—got up in front of the crowd gathered outside the school's library and spoke out against the attack. Some faculty members stated that this sort of incident was not supposed to happen at Chatham because it is a small, liberal, all-women's college. Many students, however, noted that these kind of attacks can and do happen anywhere.

A statement by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party was passed out at the event and was well received. The attacks and protest received local media coverage.

On September 28 the Socialist Workers vice-presidential candidate, Margaret Trowe, spoke at two meetings at Chatham College. A number of students as well as faculty members attended. The topic of the racist and sexist attack was brought up and



Militant

Some 250 students at Chatham College in Pittsburgh rally September 21 against racist and sexist vandalism carried out on their campus.

several of those in attendance spoke to the fact that the school's administration has been trying to brush the incident under the rug.

Students at the meeting discussed a number of other topics, such as a woman's right to abortion. Many students were drawn to

the socialist campaign's stance on women's rights, especially a woman's right to choose, and how these rights can be won and safeguarded.

Angela Abernathy is a student at Chatham College and a member of the YS.

Collections for 'Militant' Fund pick up steam

BY DON MACKLE

The appreciation for the valuable role of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* for fighting workers and farmers around the world has helped push forward collections for the fund, especially in cities where public events are being held. These have helped us take a big step forward, with \$12,400 sent in this week.

"We all need to support these papers," Pedro Jimenez a laundry worker in Rome, Georgia, told participants in a fund drive meeting in Atlanta. "They are the arms of the people. If we support the effort to get them out, more workers will understand the exploitation that is taking place. That is the way we are going to triumph. It's a primary task of the Socialist Workers Party and all fighting workers everywhere to maintain the printing and publication of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*."

Jimenez, originally from Oaxaca, Mexico, shared the platform with *Militant* Editor Martin Koppel and Jeff Rogers, a meat packer at Hormel Foods and member of United Food and Commercial Workers union. Rogers described the interest in the

publications among his co-workers and among strikers he worked along side at Earthgrains bakery during a recent strike. "For example," said Rogers, "union members at Earthgrains made Xerox copies of the *Militant* coverage of their strike and distributed it on the job when they returned to work." Rogers made an appeal for funds at the meeting which brought in \$797 including a new pledge for \$100.

In Chicago, five young members of Casa Guatemala, a human rights organization based in Chicago, attended the fund drive event there. The meeting featured a presentation by Hilda Cuzco, a staff writer for the *Militant* and *PM*, on political developments in Ecuador. The activists said they will be using *Perspectiva Mundial* as a source of news for a radio show they produce. The talk by Cuzco was taped for broadcast the next weekend.

More than \$2,500 was collected at the meeting and in the days just before and after. "As a result of the expanded mailing we sent out we received over \$400. We also got an additional \$700 in new pledges," said Cappy Kidd. "Since we didn't have time

to call everyone who got the mailing before the meeting, we are continuing to organize the follow up calling to get more new pledges."

A team of coal miners who traveled to Kemmerer, Wyoming to continue discussions with miners who carried out a successful strike against Pittsburg and Midway Coal Company (P&M) also found *Militant* readers there willing to join in the fund raising effort. Over two days of discussions the team raised \$74 for the fund from three contributors and report others are considering how much they might be able to send in.

Fund drive supporters in New York organized a meeting in the Garment District and were able to keep themselves ahead of schedule from the money collected. "In addition, over \$200 in new pledges were made at the event," said Laura Anderson, one of the organizers of the fund collection. *Militant* staff writer Greg McCartan spoke on the growing interconnection of the class struggle in the United States and political developments in Cuba.

Also speaking was Nelson Montoya, a native of Columbia who recently met socialists at a literature table they had set up at Union Square. He bought six month subscriptions to both the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* and has been reading them ever since. He spoke about his appreciation for the professional caliber of the publications and the value of their coverage of the history of the workers movement as well as political events of the day. "Our pledges now total \$5,400," Anderson said. "So we'll definitely be raising our goal next week."

San Francisco supporters became the first to raise their fund goal, going from \$10,000 to \$11,000. Steps like this will be necessary in a number of cities now as the drive heads into the final five weeks. The overall pledges still remain almost \$4,000 short of the total goal.

The special mailings, outreach on the job and among workers and farmers in struggle, and successful meetings are helping to pick up momentum in the drive. Many of the newest readers can be among the most eager to see the drive be a success.

In Atlanta, according to Fund Drive Director Lea Bockman, "Now that some of the bigger pledges are in, we will be focusing on getting contributions from among new readers of the paper, especially from co-workers."

To make a pledge or a contribution, write a check to the *Militant* and send it to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

This publication is available in microform from University Microfilms International

Contribute to Militant and Perspectiva Mundial Fund

	Goal	Paid	%
Sweden	530	370	70%
Australia	900	546	61%
New Zealand			
Auckland	1,170	526	45%
Christchurch	520	216	42%
NZ Total	1,690	742	44%
United States			
Atlanta	4,600	3,582	78%
Chicago	7,500	4,951	66%
NY Garment Dist.	5,000	3,230	65%
San Francisco*	11,000	6,670	61%
Charlotte	2,800	1,535	55%
Tampa	600	300	50%
Houston	6,500	3,220	50%
Newark	3,000	1,370	46%
Chippewa Falls	600	270	45%
St. Louis	1,800	675	38%
Upper Manhattan	3,000	1,080	36%
Brooklyn	3,200	1,145	36%
Seattle	9,000	3,120	35%
Philadelphia	2,500	850	34%
Fort Collins	1,400	475	34%
Twin Cities	3,500	1,140	33%
Detroit	3,750	1,200	32%
Pittsburgh	4,000	1,250	31%
Fresno	200	60	30%
Birmingham	3,200	911	28%
Boston	4,000	1,070	27%
Allentown	1,200	300	25%
Miami	2,300	495	22%
Washington	3,000	600	20%
Los Angeles	6,000	1,140	19%
Des Moines	1,800	265	15%
Cleveland	1,600	32	2%
Other		175	
U.S. Total	97,050	41,111	42%
Iceland	250	30	12%
United Kingdom	870	30	3%
Canada	5,000	101	2%
France		320	
Int'l Total	\$106,290	\$43,250	41%
Goal/Should be	\$110,000	\$55,000	50%
*raised goal			

Mary Rees: a longtime supporter of the communist movement

BY GARY COHEN

NATICK, Massachusetts—Mary Rees, a longtime supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died August 28 at the age of 80. A memorial gathering to celebrate her life was organized by her family here October 7.

The room was decorated with Mary's T-shirts, reflecting the many struggles she was involved in, especially spanning the last three decades. A photo display of Mary in action at a number of demonstrations greeted the 60 friends, family, and political associates attending the meeting. Many spoke of how they were inspired to action by her dedication to the fight against exploitation and oppression, and her commitment to social justice.

Mary became a young socialist in her early teens. She and her lifelong companion, Jack Rees, joined the socialist movement in the 1930s and were active members of the Socialist Workers Party for some time.

After several years away from organized political activity, they joined the anti-Vietnam War movement in the early 1960s. Mary helped to organize mass actions to "Bring the troops home now!" part of hastening an end to U.S. imperialism's war.

Much of Mary's political energy was devoted to the fight to win and defend women's rights. She consistently fought for

a perspective of reaching out to build a broad-based movement for a woman's right to choose abortion, equal pay for equal work, gay rights, and the Equal Rights Amendment. She was a firm believer that fighters for women's rights needed to organize themselves in mass action to fight for equal rights, and not to rely on capitalist politicians or others to do it for them.

Mary was a loyal and active supporter of the Socialist Workers Party. Up until her illness prevented it, she maintained a regular shift staffing the Pathfinder bookstore in Boston. Because she was also an accomplished cook, she often helped to organize and prepare wonderful spreads for receptions and dinners prior to events sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party.

For the past decade, Mary and Jack also took care of the SWP leadership school when members of the party were attending conventions and conferences. Paul Mailhot, speaking on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party at the meeting, commented on the professional character of how they approached the assignment, always leaving the place in better condition than when they arrived.

The meeting was a fitting tribute to one who dedicated much of her life to the fight for a just society and an end to the depredations of the capitalist system.

Sales of new pamphlet at center of 'Militant' subscription campaign

Continued from front page

talist politicians and bourgeois society as a whole. Barnes describes a number of struggles, such as the unfolding social movement among miners and others in coal communities across the United States to defend federally guaranteed health-care benefits and the resistance by packinghouse workers in Minnesota that exploded against the company cranking up the speed of the production line.

The new title is aimed at "these vanguard proletarians, in town and country" who are "being impelled to consider new ideas, to read more widely, to broaden their scope, to begin expanding the limits of what they previously believed they, and others like themselves, were capable of." Many of them are open to subscribing to the *Militant* or *PM*.

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning is an excellent piece of literature for the Socialist Workers election campaign, which presents an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans and the other capitalist parties. Candidates and their supporters can bolster sales of the pamphlet by introducing it to working people while going door-to-door to campaign, holding it up as part of street corner campaigning and at plant gates and elsewhere.

Class conscious workers, working farmers, youth, and others want to discuss why "schools under capitalism are not institutions of learning but of social control, aimed at reproducing the class relations and privileges of the prevailing order," as author Jack Barnes points out in the introduction.

Barnes notes how the relationship between education and income in capitalist society has nothing to do with college graduates knowing more, but instead is a small price the propertied rulers pay for a middle class—lawyers and other so-called professionals—that "helps them maintain social stability, hold off working-class demands, and rationalize the polarizing social consequences of the relations of production under capitalism."

Classes can be organized with workers, farmers, and revolutionary-minded youth who decide to purchase the new title and would like to delve deeper into the social questions discussed in the pamphlet. These include an explanation of the wages system and why wages are determined by the struggles of the working class to establish and defend its rights, standard of living, and social wage as a class.

Placing the Pathfinder title at the center of the subscription campaign helps sell *Militant* and *PM* subscriptions, as socialist workers in several cities are finding out. The pamphlet is only \$1 when purchasing a subscription to one of the two publications.

Two supporters of the circulation effort who work in the coal mines out west traveled to Kemmerer, Wyoming, to talk to some members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) who won a recent strike against Pittsburg & Midway Coal Co. this summer.

"A woman we met at a rally organized by the UMWA last July in Denver told us that when her husband first went out on strike she disagreed with the union, but changed her mind after reading the lies stated in the local papers about the miners and how bad off the company is," said Elyse Hathaway. "She decided to join the miners' picket lines. After our discussion with her she bought a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*."

"We spent a lot of time talking to a few people in order to deepen our relationships with fellow vanguard fighters in the coalfields," Hathaway said. "This led to a successful weekend of sales where we sold 4 introductory subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1 renewal for one year, 7 copies of the new pamphlet, 2 copies of *Coal Miners on Strike*, 1 copy of *Genocide Against the Indians*, and a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*." One subscriber renewed her subscription the day before the team arrived

in Kemmerer.

Organizing drive in Omaha

Edwin Fruit and Beth Gibbons, who are meat packers and members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Perry, Iowa, joined a team of *Militant* and *PM* supporters reaching out to meat packers in Omaha, Nebraska, in order to connect with the organizing drives taking place among the workers at seven nonunion meatpacking plants in the region.

"We spread out through the Latino community to find out more about the organizing drive, set up tables at a Latino food store, and at two churches," they wrote. "One team ran into workers at the nonunion IBP plant in Council Bluffs, Iowa, who were interested in learning more about the organizing drive. The workers could relate to our descriptions of conditions faced by meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods that led to a seven hour sit-down strike. Almost everyone we had discussions with explained that the line speed was too fast, they were being forced to work injured, and supervisors verbally abused workers regularly."

The two meat packers said the Midwest sales team sold 44 copies of *PM*, 5 *PM* subs, 7 copies of the *Militant*, and 4 copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. A part of the team also participated in the Third World Studies Conference in downtown Omaha sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. About 50 participants, mostly academics from colleges and universities, bought \$220 worth of Pathfinder literature, 2 subscriptions to the *Militant*, and 3 copies of the new Pathfinder pamphlet.

"This past weekend I was on a team that traveled to Worthington, Minnesota, where there is a large pork packinghouse owned by the Swift company," said Karen Tyler from southern Minnesota. She said they spent the afternoon going door-to-door in a trailer park where many workers from Swift live.

"At one of the first doors we knocked on a Swift worker and his wife who works for a large bakery company invited us inside for coffee and a two-hour discussion," said Tyler. "They told us, 'These plants are all the same, they keep running the line faster and faster.'" The meat packer said his UFCW local had sent a delegation of seven unionists down to Omaha for the September 27 solidarity rally with the workers at ConAgra who are trying to organize the plant with the UFCW.

They bought a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* and two copies of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, one in English and one in Spanish, so they could both read it. "They said they would subscribe to the *Militant* next week and we made plans to get back together," Tyler added.

Houston 'working our way up the chart'

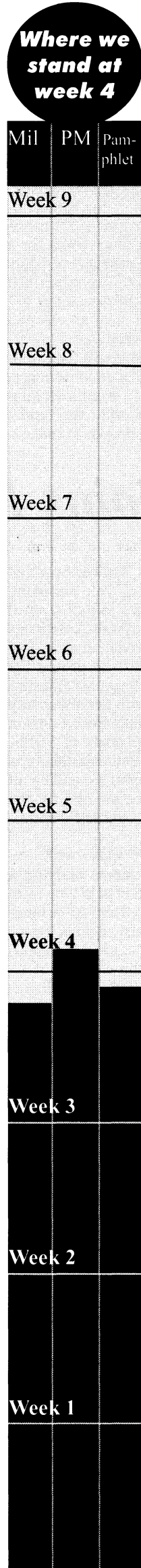
"We're working our way up the chart towards our ambitious goal," wrote Jacquie Henderson from Houston, where they sold 10 *Militant* subscriptions this past week. "Three of the subscriptions we sold were by socialists in two meatpacking and garment plants. All these workers also bought a copy of the new Pathfinder pamphlet."

Henderson said they sent a team to San Antonio to meet some union garment workers who work at two huge Levi-Strauss plants there. "At one of the plant gates when we explained who we were and that we wanted to talk to some of the union workers there, one worker responded, 'Well you've come to the right place. There's a lot of union in there.'" Henderson said workers purchased 13 copies of the *Militant* and two copies of *PM* there. Several days later one worker sent them a subscription blank filled out along with a check.

MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; NDU—National Distribution Union; TCFUA—Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees



Chris Hoeppner (right), Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Michigan, and campaign supporter use *Militant* in Detroit to get out the socialist alternative.



Subscription campaign to win new readers: September 9–November 12							
Country	Militant			PM		Pamphlet	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden	12	7	58%	5	1	15	8
United States							
Atlanta	20	18	90%	8	7	20	24
Tucson	5	3	60%	3	3	8	8
Allentown	18	9	50%	3		35	18
Boston	25	12	48%	8		50	37
Miami	30	14	47%	15	1	60	26
N.Y. Garment Dist.	65	29	45%	35	18	150	91
Washington	30	13	43%	10	7	70	53
San Francisco	35	15	43%	20	7	75	30
Chicago	45	19	42%	15	9	50	20
Houston	50	19	38%	20	3	75	32
Upper Manhattan	67	24	36%	25	22	140	65
Charlotte	15	5	33%	5		50	15
Seattle	30	10	33%	10	8	75	45
Newark	55	18	33%	25	14	85	55
Fresno	10	3	30%	6	3	6	3
Fort Collins	20	6	30%	1		20	5
Cleveland	30	9	30%	6		50	26
Twin Cities	55	16	29%	25	18	110	16
Chippewa Falls	15	4	27%	10	7	20	7
Des Moines	35	9	26%	20	5	50	18
Brooklyn	60	13	22%	30	25	120	52
Detroit	20	4	20%	5	1	35	7
St. Louis	25	5	20%	9	1	45	11
Los Angeles	40	7	18%	20	8	60	21
Birmingham	35	6	17%	2		50	10
Pittsburgh	35	6	17%	2		50	15
Tampa	10	1	10%	5		15	
Philadelphia	25	2	8%	5	2	50	17
Other		1					
U.S. total	905	300	33%	348	169	1624	727
New Zealand							
Auckland	15	5	33%	1		20	8
Christchurch	8	1	13%	1		10	3
N.Z. total	23	6	26%	2		30	11
Iceland	8	2	25%	1		12	5
Canada							
Vancouver	30	11	37%	5		40	12
Montreal	15	3	20%	5	1	30	7
Toronto	25	2	8%	6		35	10
Canada total	70	16	23%	16		105	29
United Kingdom							
London	30	10	33%	10	5	60	16
Manchester	18		0%	2		18	
UK total	48	10	21%	12	5	78	16
Australia	15	3	20%	3		25	8
Int'l totals	1081	344	34%	387	175	1889	804
Goal/Should be	1000	440	44%	350	154	2000	880
In the unions							
United States							
UMWA	18	7	39%			18	12
UNITE	30	9	30%	25	2	60	36
UFCW	55	6	11%	70	6	85	13
U.S. total	103	22	21%	95	8	163	61
Canada							
UFCW	12	1	8%	2	0	15	2
Australia							
MUA	2		0%			3	
TCFUA	1						
Australia total	3	0	0%				
New Zealand							
NDU	1		0%				

In UK, U.S. socialist discusses alliance of workers and farmers

BY PHIL WATERHOUSE
AND CAROLINE O'KEEFE

LONDON—"I'm a farmer, I grow food. What I would really like is for someone to say: 'John, your wheat is really needed. Please grow some more of it.'" John Lawrence, a farmer on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent, was talking with James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president, on a visit to the United Kingdom.

Lawrence farms about 250 acres of wheat and rapeseed. He told Harris the price of wheat has almost halved and the price of fuel has doubled over the last few years. As a result his debt level has also doubled. "The concept that all farmers in Britain are rich is false," he remarked. "Farmers want the land to farm. Others want it to speculate. You won't find a farmer getting rich off growing crops in the ground." He said he had taken part in recent protests by farmers and truckers against the skyrocketing fuel prices.

Harris replied that these increasingly critical conditions were remarkably similar to the situation small farmers face in the United States and around the world. The only exception, he noted, was Cuba, where because of the agrarian reform won by farmers after the 1959 revolution farmers cannot be driven off the land they work.

Interviewing Harris on a radio program, a talk host on BBC London Live radio expressed puzzlement that a socialist would want to talk to farmers, who are often portrayed in the daily media as pro-capitalist businessmen. Harris explained that, while a minority of farmers are wealthy exploiters of wage labor, "most are working farmers, who are natural allies of the working class." On that basis, he said, "we put forward the need for a workers and farmers government, one made up of those who produce the wealth of the world."

Dismissing the concept that politics is exclusively about elections, he explained that "political change comes through struggles, such as the example of the U.S. civil rights movement. That is why, when farmers get out and press their demands around the fuel crisis, it shakes up all politics. That is where our power really lies. That is why working people should support the fuel price protests."

The U.S. socialist candidate spoke at a lively Militant Labor Forum in London, together with Jim Simpson of the Communist League and James Neil, organizer of the Young Socialists chapter in London. Simpson described the swell of support among workers for the fuel protests by farmers and truckers, especially from the oil tanker drivers inside the picketed oil depots. That support was evident at the car plant where he works, particularly when production was held up due to the failure of a delivery truck to arrive with parts for the line. Neil explained how the Young Socialists had

been formed through participating in activities such as the demonstration last June protesting the Labour government's reactionary new asylum laws and the annual gala of the National Union of Miners in Durham.

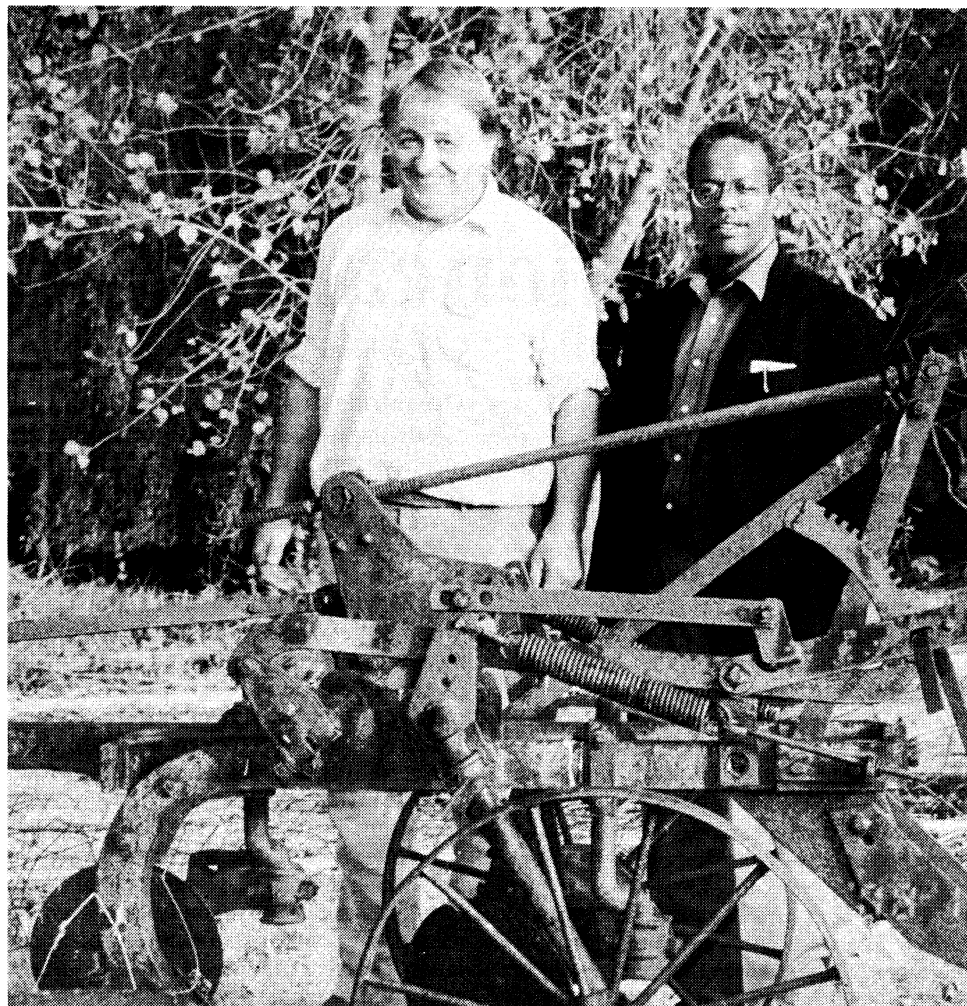
One question at the forum concerned the length of the economic upturn in the United States. "It has lasted eight or nine years," Harris replied, "not the usual four or five. But it has been one of the shallowest since 1945. The miracle economy is not that big a miracle. The standard of living is on the decline. Workers have jobs that they cannot survive on—real wages have stagnated or declined."

"Some people who have jobs are even homeless. In one shelter in New York," he explained, "you can only get in if you are employed. The value of labor power has been driven down by the U.S. ruling class more than in any other imperialist country, except maybe New Zealand." The U.S. bosses are driven to push against wages and social benefits as they try to stay ahead of their capitalist rivals in Europe and Japan.

At a meeting organized by the Young Socialists chapter in London, three YS members were joined by four other youth for a session with Harris that lasted several hours of back and forth discussion. Two subscribed to the *Militant* following the discussion.

"Does your campaign have an election manifesto?" one youth asked.

Harris replied, "I could give a list of positions I stand for, and get a good response, but it would have nothing to do with explaining class politics in the world today, and a perspective for working people to make a



Militant/Lauren Hart

James Harris, right, meets John Lawrence at his farm. "The concept that all farmers are rich is false," said Lawrence, who took part in protests against skyrocketing fuel prices.

revolution."

He added, "The campaign is not just about abstract propaganda about a list of issues. It is not like the pro-capitalist candidates who make promises to do this or that. Our campaign is about understanding the system we must change, why workers and farmers are the only forces that can change it, and a revolutionary course that leads to that goal." For that, "join in political

struggles by working people as we explain these views. We direct them to the *Militant*, to books and pamphlets that give those answers, drawing on the lessons of working-class history, such as the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*."

Caroline O'Keefe is a member of the Young Socialists in London.

Trowe joins Palestinian protest in Detroit

BY ERICA BRANDT

DETROIT—Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. vice president, and campaign supporters joined several thousand people, mostly Arab-Americans and Arab immigrants, who marched in nearby Dearborn October 6 to protest the Israeli regime's repression against Palestinians. Many who spoke with her, especially in the contingents of youth from Fordson High School and the University of Michigan in Dearborn, nodded enthusiastically as Trowe expressed her support for ending all U.S. aid to the Israeli regime and for the Palestinians' fight for national self-determination.

The day before, Trowe spoke with several Arab-American students staffing a booth at an International Fair at Wayne State University in Detroit. Asked about Washington's support to the Zionist regime, Trowe noted that both the Democratic and Republican parties supported the creation of Israel and the theft of the land from the Palesti-

tinians, and have backed it up with arms and billions of dollars in aid. The U.S. rulers, she said, are advancing their own class interests in the Mideast, seeking to strengthen their foothold in the oil-rich region and to keep working people in check.

Trowe also campaigned outside two plants. At the Iowa Beef Processing plant, where the socialist candidate got a friendly response, one of the workers described the conditions they face. "They keep wanting us to go faster and faster and work more and more hours," she told Trowe. At American Axle, a large plant organized by the United Auto Workers (UAW), a unionist told her, "They don't care about safety. They don't want the machines to stop, they don't want the line to stop—they just want you to put your hands in and keep the line going." Five workers bought the *Militant* and one got a subscription after talking to the socialist.

At a Militant Labor Forum here, Trowe shared the platform with Chris Hoepfner, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Sen-

ate. Hoepfner pointed to the protests by working people against the killing by the Detroit police of two workers—Dwight Turner and Errol Shaw, a deaf man. "The biggest challenge we face as working people," said Hoepfner, "is to throw off the self-image the rulers try to give us, the image that we're incapable of changing things." The combative protest organized by members of UAW Local 600 against the killing of Turner, their co-worker, he said, showed how that self-image can change. Several of these workers took the floor at a community meeting of 500 people and, in the presence of many cops and their supporters, condemned the killing and explained that "this is a union question."

Trowe noted that "Detroit is the police murder capital of the country," with 47 police shootings since 1995, including three in the past month. The employers and their government enact an extrajudicial death penalty every day, she explained, not only through the cops on the street but through the bosses' brutal disregard for safety on the job, with workers' lives and limbs sacrificed to the altar of profits.

"Look at the two capitalist candidates debate their plans for prescription drugs. The best plan makes you pay \$2,000 dollars out of pocket. Isn't that a death sentence for the hundreds of thousands or millions who don't have \$2,000? For capitalists, we have no value after we stop being producers for them."

One person attending the forum was a nurse who met the socialist candidates that day at a farmers' market. She told Trowe that when she worked in the emergency room, elderly people in their 80s would come in with pneumonia, but their fever might not be high enough to admit them according to the hospital guidelines. The medical staff would have to either lie about their temperature to get them admitted or put them in a corner and hope their temperature would rise.

This increasing brutality, a normal feature of capitalism today, Trowe said, is what is pushing one group of workers after another to stand up and fight for their dignity. And, she added, it is a reason to join the socialist movement, a vehicle to organize the power of workers and farmers to make a revolution in this country.

Harris meets students, bus drivers in Iceland

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ
AND GYLFI PÁLL HERSIR

REYKJAVIK, Iceland—James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president visited Iceland as part of a tour of several countries in Europe. He explained that, unlike his capitalist opponents, his aim was not to catch votes but to present a revolutionary socialist alternative—one that is international in scope—to working people both in the United States and other countries. "That is why I've been invited to Iceland to talk about our campaign even though we're obviously not seeking votes here," he said.

In Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi Harris was invited to speak to three classes in sociology and English. "Are you for or against gun possession," one student asked. Harris said that he was not for gun control, unlike liberal politicians. Gun control laws not only do nothing to advance the interest of the working class, but sooner or later such laws will be used by the ruling class against working people who fight for their rights.

Violence in capitalist society, he added,

"comes not from films or video games, as some capitalist politicians claim, but from the real world—the brutality that is inherent in capitalist rule. The capitalists and their system are the source of violence—their wars of aggression all over the world, the police brutality on the streets and in prisons."

"What do you think about the military policies of the United States?" a young woman asked at a Militant Labour Forum. "I am against it," Harris answered. "I am not for cutting the military budget but for abolishing the entire U.S. military, which is the biggest and most brutal war machine ever created. But I have no illusions that a president could be elected and do this. It will take no less than a revolution and the establishment of a workers and farmers government to disarm the warmakers, and millions of workers, farmers, young people—including working people in uniform—will have to take part in that battle."

Accompanied by a couple of workers who are supporters of the *Militant*, Harris also met some members of the bus drivers union, Sleipnir, who were on strike last sum-

mer and still do not have a contract. The drivers told Harris about their fight and were interested in U.S. politics.

One bus driver, Sigurdur Flosason, asked Harris about the antiunion "right to work" laws in some U.S. states, which union supporters call "right to work for less" laws. He commented that in their own strike, the bus drivers had to deal with the fact that the employers offered them higher wages if they were willing to leave the union or not join it—a ploy to undercut the labor movement and eventually drive down wages. Flosason added that the fact that there are workers in Iceland who are in no union is relatively new, and that their recent strike was one of the toughest battles in that country in many years.

Harris described the existence of a number of antiunion laws in the United States. In spite of those laws, however, there are more fights by workers to organize unions today, including in "right to work" states, which shows that the key to what working people can accomplish is what they do in struggle.

Document sheds light on Yugoslav upsurge

Printed below are excerpts from "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," by Jack Barnes. The resolution was adopted by the 1990 national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. A decade later, a surging general political strike precipitated the crumbling of the Slobodan Milosevic regime in the Yugoslav workers state.

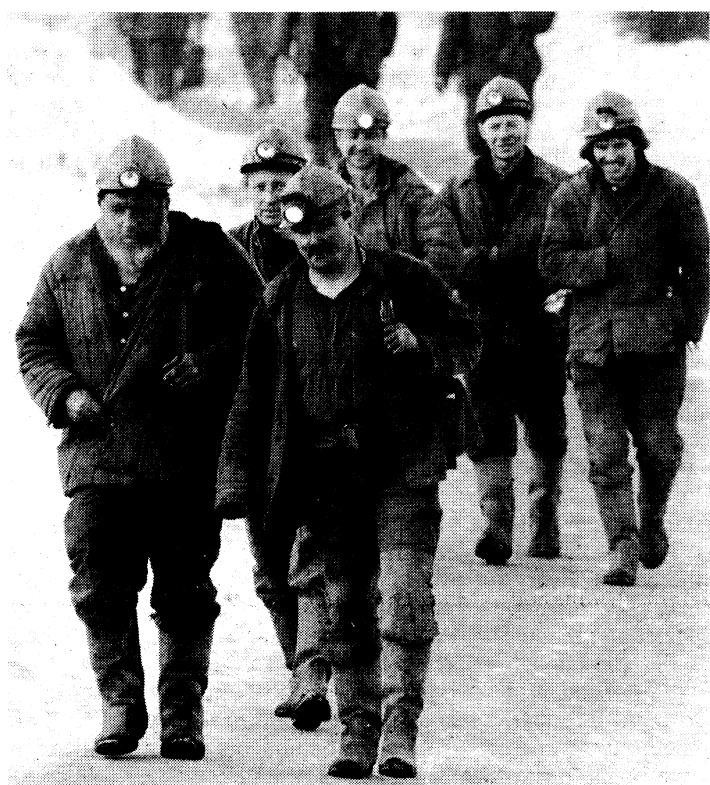
The resolution is published in *New International* no. 11. The excerpts are taken from Part I, "U.S. Imperialism has lost the Cold War," and Part II, "World capitalism has suffered a historic defeat in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." The excerpting was done by the *Militant*, not the author. Footnotes are in the original.

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From Part I

D. U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War

1. The "Cold War" was the term used to describe the strategic military course forced upon U.S. imperialism and its allies in face of the limitations imposed by the international balance of class forces coming out of World War II. These limitations made impossible for the foreseeable future the use of massive armed forces to accomplish Washington's strategic goal—overturning the Soviet Union and Eastern European workers states and reestablishing capitalism there....



Russian coal miners walk off the job in 1996 demanding payment of back wages. "The workers states survive and can only be overthrown in battle with the working classes."

lishing capitalism there....

2. Given these realities, Washington was restricted during the Cold War to using its military power to attempt to contain any extension of the revolutionary overturn of imperialist domination and capitalist property relations. Its strategic effort to weaken the Soviet and Eastern European workers states became one of applying pressure on the bureaucratic castes to police the working class, squelch all political initiatives, and keep working people isolated from the struggles of workers and peasants around the world, with all the depoliticizing and demoralizing consequences that flow from such a separation.

a) For imperialism this was an unavoidable interlude, preparing for the day when the workers states would be sufficiently weakened by Stalinist policies that demoralized the working class to make possible their destruction in a direct imperialist assault.

b) Instead, what has culminated in 1989 and 1990 is an accelerating and irreversible crisis of the Stalinist parties and parasitic petty-bourgeois castes on which they are based, whose counterrevolutionary policies have been weakening the degenerated or deformed workers states for decades.

(1) The workers states and their proletarian property foundations have proven stronger than the castes.

(2) Although brutalized and depoliticized, the working class in the workers states has demonstrated its ability—even within the limits of bourgeois trade union consciousness—to resist the economic and social consequences of the deepening parasitism and bureaucratism of the governing castes.

(a) This resistance, beginning with the Polish workers' uprising in 1980, has triggered the crises that are now ravaging the regimes across Eastern and Central Europe and in the Soviet Union.

(b) The workers of these countries will resist the consequences of moving toward capitalist restoration even more fiercely.

(3) These events confirm the continuing truth of the prognosis advanced by communists in the 1930s.

As succinctly put by Trotsky: "As a conscious political force the bureaucracy has betrayed the revolution. But a victorious revolution is fortunately not only a program and a banner, not only political institutions, but also a system of social relations. To betray it is not enough. You have to overthrow it. The October revolution has been betrayed by the ruling stratum, but not yet overthrown."

3. With the betrayers—who have been the biggest obstacle to strengthening the workers states—either crumbling or on the defensive, and with prospects of a military assault against the Soviet Union and Eastern European less feasible than ever before, imperialism still confronts the same historic battle, but from a weakened position. Instead of waging a "Cold War" against the petty-bourgeois regimes of the bureaucratic caste, *imperialism will have to directly take on and try to defeat the working class in order to overthrow the workers states and reestablish capitalism in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union....*

(1) The disintegration of the Stalinist regimes opens greater political space for organization and struggle by the working classes in Eastern and Central Europe and within the Soviet Union, as they fight back against the devastating consequences of increasing reliance on capitalist methods and encroachments on the conquests of the workers states.

(2) Struggles by workers in capitalist Europe and the Eastern and Central European workers states will mutually affect and influence each other more than any time in over four decades. The relatively impenetrable wall that has previously blocked these interconnections is breaking down with the disintegration of the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances and the accelerating course toward the unification of Germany.²

(3) Moreover, these struggles will be seen over time less as a fight by workers in Western Europe against capitalist exploitation and a separate fight by workers in Eastern Europe against an entrenched bureaucratic caste. Instead, they will be increasingly recognized as an intertwined fight by workers throughout Europe and worldwide against the dehumanizing and earth-destroying system of exploitation and oppression of the imperialist ruling classes and their reflections through various transmission belts, in particular

(a) the labor officialdoms and social democratic, Stalinist, and other petty-bourgeois misleaderships in capitalist Europe; and

(b) the petty-bourgeois regimes, political parties, union officialdoms, and other institutions staffed primarily by middle-class social layers emanating from the disintegrating castes in the deformed and degenerated workers states....

From Part 2

E. Regimes of permanent crisis in deformed workers states

5. c) (1) The disintegration of the Stalinist parties and weakening of the bureaucratic regimes create the possibility for the working class and the workers' movement to fight to develop, to politicize, and to start being open to the influence of revolutionary struggles the world over. It is along this road of struggle that the beginnings of a communist movement can be forged.

(2) The governments that are coming into existence throughout Eastern Europe are petty-bourgeois regimes that are bourgeois in orientation, and in

1. Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?* (Pathfinder, 1972), p. 227.

2. The U.S. rulers began reconstructing NATO in the 1990s on the corpses of the Yugoslav peoples, acting simultaneously to tighten Washington's military encirclement of the workers states in Russia and other former Soviet republics and to reinforce U.S. dominance over rival capitalist powers in the Atlantic alliance. In the early 1990s the U.S. government sabotaged one initiative after another by Paris, Bonn, and London to act as power brokers in the war-ravaged Yugoslav workers state; each hoped to gain military and economic leverage against Washington and against one another. As failures mounted for the European occupation force in Bosnia, operating under a United Nations flag, and as diplomatic efforts foundered, Washington successfully pressed for U.S.-led NATO air strikes and naval and ground shelling against Serbian forces, conducting more than 3,000 such assaults between February 1994 and September 1995. In late 1995, in the wake of this sustained bombardment, the U.S. rulers brought representatives of the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian forces to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, for talks that authorized Washington to spearhead an occupation army in Bosnia of some 60,000 NATO troops, including 20,000 from the United States. As of August 1998, the U.S.-organized occupation force, initially scheduled to depart in late 1996, remained in Bosnia with no settled departure date.

During the same January 1994 NATO summit at which the U.S. administration won approval for air strikes in Yugoslavia, president William Clinton initiated the proposal to expand NATO eastward closer to the borders of the Russian workers state. The July 1997 NATO summit meeting set spring 1999 as the date to admit Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary as the "first wave" of new member states.

this sense are not a qualitative break from their predecessors.

(a) They are staffed not only by holdovers from the nomenklatura itself, but incorporate new layers from the intelligentsia and middle classes in these countries.

(b) While being prepared to march alongside these forces in actions aimed at busting up the previous secret-police regimes, communists oppose all the new governments, which are anti-working class politically, as were the Stalinist apparatuses they are replacing....

6) The events of 1989–90 are a verification of the communist prognosis that the workers states, even those deformed from birth by Stalinist domination, would prove stronger than the bureaucratic castes.

a) The petty-bourgeois caste is not a historic ruling class.

(1) It has no historic economic role in a mode of production.

(2) This bloated layer continues to expand further and further beyond the size of an administrative bureaucracy socially necessary to the tasks of production. It blocks any motion toward establishing new social relations of production in harmony with and leading toward a new mode of production implicit in the nationalized-property foundations of the workers states.

(3) It is a cancer weakening the workers states and their economic foundations.

b) In contrast to the regimes of the stronger capitalist ruling classes, the Bonapartist regime is weak, brittle, and unstable. These regimes have disintegrated with startling rapidity. Their explosion began after only sixty years in the Soviet Union and even less time in Eastern and Central Europe—mere blips in social history.

(1) The bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The ruling oligarchy takes whatever measures it can to preserve bureaucratic rule and privilege, including the sacrifice of entire wings of the nomenklatura in order to salvage the rest, and the incorporation of new layers into the ruling stratum.

(2) The measures taken by these regimes have not historically stabilized them. The governments have proven to be not only regimes of crisis, but regimes of permanent crisis.

(3) Gorbachev's counterreformation, embarked upon in response to the events in Poland, and his deepening Bonapartist course will accelerate; not resolve, the crisis in the USSR.

c) The workers states themselves have been shown to be stronger than the castes and their police regimes.

(1) The workers states survive and can only be overthrown in battle with the working classes.

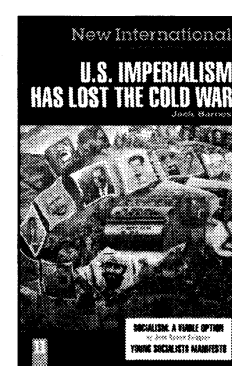
(2) "The social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party," Trotsky explained in 1936, "still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses."³

(a) More than half a century later, the first part of this assessment remains unchanged: the proletarian property relations still exist in the Soviet Union, as well as in the other deformed workers states.

(b) While the socialist consciousness of the toiling masses has been obliterated since the 1930s, and not even a nucleus of a communist vanguard exists today, bourgeois trade union consciousness and the assumption by the working class of the right to a historically defined minimal social wage remain the first obstacle that will lead to massive struggles in the workers states against the reimposition of capitalism.

(3) A counterrevolution to overturn the workers states and their nationalized property foundations cannot be carried out internally, but would require direct imperialist involvement to succeed and consolidate.

3. *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 230.



In *New International* no. 11

• Two programmatic documents of the Socialist Workers Party:
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Eyewitness in Belgrade: workers lead revolt

The following is an eyewitness account from Belgrade of the events of October 5, when Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic was forced out of power by a popular revolt, precipitated by his refusal to concede defeat in the September 24 presidential elections.

BY GEORGE SKORIC

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia—From the early morning hours of October 5, one could hear the sounds of horns coming from cars, trucks, and buses pouring into downtown Belgrade from every highway. Judging from license plates, people had converged on this capital city from all over the country.

Besides national symbols and anti-Milosevic slogans many workers proudly waved their union flags. Word on the street was that the contingents of workers from other cities were coming to the capital in order to finish up what they started a few days earlier when they shut down most of the factories in Serbia and a general strike was announced. Residents were on their windows and balconies saluting the incoming vehicles.

Around this time huge groups of people started to arrive on foot from various suburbs and neighborhoods of Belgrade. When I arrived downtown, around noon, city streets were already jam-packed and the atmosphere was electrified. People were passing out food and drinks from their trunks. They said they were ready to camp in the streets as long as it took and that they would not go home until "the man" resigned. A few came armed with bars and clubs.

It was clear to many that Milosevic wasn't ready to give up power easily, at least not without a fight. Some people ran through with red eyes reporting that the police were being "easy on the tear gas trigger," and that a few incidents between the police and demonstrators had already taken place in various locations around the city.

The main gathering spot organized by the opposition leaders was in front of the state parliament. Although mass protests on the streets of Belgrade are not a new sight, the author of these lines had never witnessed such a huge and heterogeneous crowd. Students, teachers, workers from different unions all marched separately through the city and met in front of the parliament. Every square was covered with people and you could see heavy trucks, buses, and even bulldozers parked all over, serving as roadblocks.

"It's now or never" was the phrase often repeated among the excited masses. "We're going all the way!" was the general sentiment that afternoon.

An official estimate of the number of people present downtown has not been given here, but more than half a million were definitely there.

Decisive role of the working class

Actually, the decisive events began not in Belgrade, but miles away at the Kolubara coal-mining complex.

Protest rallies around the country and Belgrade had started as soon as the dubious official results of the September 24 elections were announced. People flowed into the squares in all the larger cities across the country demanding justice and calling for all-out civil disobedience.

At first, this seemed *deja vu* in many ways. In late 1996, massive street protests were sparked when the Milosevic establishment annulled the results of local elections that had been won by the opposition, and eventually the regime was forced to acknowledge the results. But the mobilizations were limited largely to certain social layers. Middle-class professionals and the student movement were traditionally at the core of these protests.

Small businesses, cinemas, theaters, schools, and universities responded to the opposition calls and went on strike immediately, but industry to a large extent remained untouched by these movements. This was partly due to the openly elitist and anti-working class politics of the middle-class opposition leaders, as well as the manipulation of the unions dominated by Milosevic's Socialist Party through the union bureaucracy. As a result, a big wave of strikes was not seen in the last 10 years of protests against the regime.

This time things went further—much further. The wave of strikes went deeper than anyone could have imagined. By the first few days of October, less than 100 factories were operating across the country. It started with public transport and garbage collectors, and culminated when the country's most important coal mines in the Kolubara district were shut down.

The miners strike threatened to leave half of the country without electricity. Police squads surrounded the plant immediately and the government launched a tremendous propaganda campaign against them. The establishment threatened the miners with layoffs. Despite these pressures the workers resisted, refused to back down, and demanded that the opposition leaders address them personally.

On the evening of Wednesday, October 4, a bus with one opposition spokesperson managed to break through the police roadblock and go inside the plant. By Thursday morning, miners were on their way to Belgrade, determined to put the final nail in Milosevic's coffin.

The Kolubara miners are just the best-known example, but a similar pattern applied to industrial workers all over Serbia. This was evident at the October 5 mobilizations in the streets of Belgrade, which were filled with heavy machinery and workers.

It's hard to explain everything that was happening that chaotic afternoon in Belgrade. To a casual observer it might appear that the people had "gone mad," and many people will tell you that they witnessed "anarchy." But as Leon Trotsky, the Bolshevik revolutionary leader, noticed a long time ago, "Revolution appears to a



Bulldozer used in breaking down entrance to Milosevic-controlled television station, later exhibited by protesters as they celebrated victory in getting rid of bureaucratic regime.

conservative as collective madness only because it raises the normal insanity of social contradictions to the highest possible tension."

It is exactly thanks to this "insane majority" that history keeps moving along. It is exactly because of this half a million "lunatics" that we got rid of the parasitic regime that was on our backs for decades.

I'll try to describe what I saw—or what could be seen through the tear gas clouds.

Revolt erupts in Belgrade

By 2:00 p.m. hundreds of thousands of people had gathered in the area around the state parliament. Opposition leaders held speeches. They announced they were giving Milosevic a 60-minute deadline to resign.

It would be a big mistake, however, to believe that the organizers had absolute influence or control over the crowd. Everything that happened that day grew directly out of the general atmosphere, and the initiative came from the people. The opposition leaders were taken by surprise and were hesitant. The masses made them go further, probably, than they imagined.

Around 3:00 p.m. the crowd ran out of patience. Surprisingly, the police roadblock at the front of the parliament was not that massive, and this sight encouraged the crowd to charge up the main steps. After a short fight with the cops the steps of parliament were won.

This symbolic act released cries of support and cheering from the masses. People climbed the steps and started to celebrate, vigorously waving their flags and chanting. But this turned out to be a trap. All of a sudden, tear gas bombs started to fall onto the steps and into the crowd from all directions. Police evidently had agent provocateurs in the crowd and strategically placed cops on the rooftops of local buildings showering the crowd with tear gas.

At that moment all hell broke loose. So much tear gas had been released that a huge cloud of smoke could be seen rising from the other side of the city. People were crying and coughing all over Belgrade. The crowd was chased away from the steps.

People were outraged. Shouts of "They are trying to suffocate us all!" could be heard. A second wave of demonstrators charged. The crowd broke into a dozen smaller groups and surrounded the parliament and spilled across the area. In face of this, the police scattered and abandoned their positions and vehicles. Nothing could stop the sea of people. Police cars were set on fire and now nothing stood between the protesters and the legislature.

You could see individuals climbing and entering the parliament building through smashed windows. Meanwhile, others armed themselves with police equipment that they seized and with bats and shields made out of the parliament's furniture. Pointing to the next target nearby, many chanted "RTS, RTS!" referring to the Radio and Television of Serbia, the much-hated national television building controlled by Milosevic. All along, the rain of smoke bombs was falling over the scene.

From this point on, people organized themselves and took over several crucial buildings. Most "private" TV stations and newspapers that were also controlled by the regime were freed without much trouble. Local apparatchiks and "program directors" began to "abandon ship" like rats before the flood. Many of them got caught in front of these buildings and roughed up. "Get out! Get out!" the crowd demanded. Much of the staff inside these buildings refused to take orders from the managers and joined the protesters.

The national television building remained guarded by police forces only briefly. The police then scattered. Many of them took off their uniforms and joined the masses, while others desperately tried to stop the crowd with tear gas and, in some cases, rubber bullets. With the help of a bulldozer the entrance was pushed open, and soon the whole television building was in flames.

The parliament was also set on fire. People kept leaving the building with "souvenirs." Many took turns sitting on the "minister sofas," which they placed in the streets, and enjoyed themselves reading classified documents and papers with the parliamentary seal.

"Rioting" and "looting" was reported all over the city. The targets, however, were obviously not picked for material gain by the protesters. Only particular shops were looted. Every target had some kind of symbolic significance. For example, an exclusive perfume shop in the center of the city was looted because it is believed that it belongs to Milosevic's son, hated for his corruption and brutality. The parliament represented political oppression. The national TV building symbolized the media propaganda and lies of the regime. Of course, the local police station was not spared either. Unknown quantities of weapons were taken from this station before it was set on fire.

Celebration

By the evening, most of the battles were already won. Cries of "Belgrade is ours!" could be heard from thousands of throats. Anger slowly transformed into happiness and rioting into celebration.

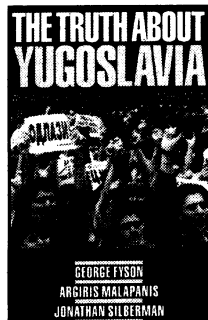
People gathered once again from all sides in front of the liberated parliament. Two trucks carrying huge speakers made their way through the crowd, which was singing and dancing to the music. The already legendary bulldozer was exhibited for the people, while fire extinguishing vehicles were let through to water the burning parliament.

People began to debate and organize among themselves. Some took things out of the parliament and TV buildings and continued to destroy what was left of them. Others argued that things should be collected in one place and saved because they were all "our things" and we would need them in the future.

Despite these discussions, no one could relax completely. People did not throw away their "weapons" immediately, since a counterattack by the police and army was expected. A rumor started to circulate that army tanks were already on their way to

Continued on Page 14

for further reading



The Truth about Yugoslavia

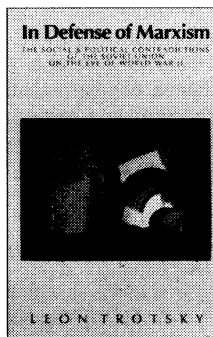
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Strikes, street actions topple Milosevic gov't

Continued from front page

Belgrade and general strike throughout Serbia, Milosevic conceded defeat and recognized his opponent as the winner. Kostunica was sworn in as Yugoslavia's president.

Half a million in the streets

"The police tried to tear gas us at first," said Zorica Trifunovic, an activist in the group Women in Black, who took part in the takeover of the parliament building. "But we were so many! They say half a million. I think it may have been double that. You can't stop the rivers of people when they've decided. When they are self-confident."

Trifunovic spoke to *Militant* reporters by phone from Belgrade. "This revolution was the result of 10 years of work by many people," she added.

Women in Black initiated many antiwar protests in Belgrade and opposed the regime's chauvinist onslaught against Albanians in Kosovo. It also campaigned against the U.S.-NATO bombing.

The organization includes many mothers of soldiers killed in the various military campaigns launched by the Milosevic regime over the last decade in its attempt to gain more resources and control over rival bureaucratic regimes in the former Yugoslav federation.

"It was the most beautiful occasion of my life," said Vladimir Morosev in a phone interview from his home. Morosev, a technical science student at the University of Novi Sad, was referring to the October 5 outpouring in Belgrade, in which he participated with all his family and friends.

"It seemed like the whole of Serbia, at least the overwhelming majority, had enough of abuse and corruption by a bureaucratic and repressive regime. I met people from Cacak and other industrial towns who came to Belgrade last Thursday with arms. They were determined to stay until the regime backed down." The contingent arriving in Belgrade that morning from Cacak included 50 buses and a bulldozer to deal with police attempts to block their way.

Miners, other workers at the fore

"The strikes by coal miners, hotel and bank employees, workers in many other industries, and protests by farmers—even in isolated rural areas—were necessary to bring 'the man' down," Morosev said.

Miners from the Kolubara mine near Belgrade decided to stay in the mines "because we must persist in our demands and defend ourselves," strike committee member Zoran Cvetanovic told the press.

The 4,500 mine workers had been on strike since September 29, demanding Milosevic step down. Kolubara is Serbia's largest coal mine, producing half of Serbia's power needs.

The miners faced down an ultimatum to end their work stoppage brought to them by the army chief of staff, General Nebojsa Pavkovic. Joined by thousands of supporters from the nearby town of Lazarevac who came to their aid, they fended off a police attempt to take the mine.

Eleven miners, members of the strike committee, were indicted "on suspicion of sabotage." But the workers remained determined to continue their fight until Milosevic acknowledged defeat. "Even if they took over the mines they would need us miners to start the machines," said strike committee member Aleksandar Karic at a press conference on October 3. "And we do not want to do that until they meet our demands."

The next day, when hundreds of cops attempted to evict the strikers from the mines, thousands of people converged on the site to block the police. According to numerous accounts, up to 20,000 people showed up within hours' notice. The police then gave up.

The strike at Kolubara quickly spread to the other mines in Serbia. Around 6,500 workers at the Kostolac mine, which supplies coal to the second-largest thermal plant

in the country, put down their tools October 2. They decided to keep production at a minimum of 20 percent. Copper miners in Bor, in eastern Serbia, joined the struggle the next day.

"When we worked during the bombing we were heroes, now we are enemies," said Kolubara technician Dragan Micandinovic. He was referring to demagogic proclamations by the Milosevic regime praising miners for continuing to work despite being a major target during the U.S.-NATO bombing campaign last year. Entire sections of Aleksinac, a mining town of 40,000 about 20 miles north of Nis, in central Serbia, were ruined by bombs dropped by U.S. warplanes and jets of other imperialist powers on workers' homes.

"The coal miners strike was the hot spot that received international attention," said Martina Vukasovic, a mathematics student at the University of Belgrade, in an October 10 telephone interview. "But it was just the tip of the iceberg. Unlike the last 10 years, this time factory and other workers and farmers throughout Serbia were at the center of the rebellion. It was the first time I saw this happening. Before it was mainly students, professors, and middle-class people at the protests against the government. Without the workers we wouldn't have overthrown the parasitic regime."

Vukasovic has been active in the Independent Students Union, which opposed the U.S.-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia last year as well as the chauvinist campaign by the Milosevic regime against Albanians in Kosovo. Many of these students had taken



March of 20,000 at Kolubara mine October 4, organized in response to call by miners for assistance after cops tried to enter the mine to break five-day strike demanding Milosevic step down. Confronted by the mobilization, the police backed down.

part in the 1996 protests that forced the Milosevic regime to concede electoral victories by opposition candidates in municipal elections in most of Serbia's largest cities.

Workers participating in the strike wave included Belgrade bus drivers, sanitation workers, waterworks employees, telecommunications workers, and teachers.

Even the official trade union federation, with 1.8 million members, which had been loyal to the Belgrade regime, joined in an ultimatum to the government, calling on it to "tell the truth" about the elections and warning that it too would participate in the work stoppages.

Branislav Canak, president of Nezavisnost (Independence), the trade union federation independent of control from the former Milosevic regime, said in a brief telephone conversation October 10 that prospects for a transformation of the union movement are now completely open.

Nezavisnost joined in calling the October 5 general strike. It also campaigned against the U.S.-NATO bombing last year and rejected the nationalist campaign of the regime against Albanians in Kosovo.

Since Kostunica's inauguration on the



On October 5, crowd gathers at parliament building in Belgrade amid clouds of tear gas fired by cops.

crest of the revolt, many officials of the former regime have resigned. Meanwhile, working people across the country are taking rapid action to remove hated managers and other bosses still hanging on to their posts.

Workers replace old factory managers

According to an October 10 Reuters dispatch, "Hospitals, factories, ministries, banks, mines, and universities have all had their bosses removed by workers and students who accuse Milosevic cronies of growing rich from their labor, bankrolling the regime and ruining their firms."

The *Financial Times* of London reported October 11 in a tone of surprise, "With Milosevic's rule crumbling, the workers have taken the communist rhetoric literally and taken charge of their enterprises." The paper reported this has happened at the giant Zastava auto plant, the tobacco works in Nis, the health ministry, the Belgrade Bank, and other workplaces.

This was confirmed in telephone interviews conducted by *Militant* reporters.

"Since last Thursday, the Milosevic regime is coming down step by step," said Vladimir Morosev October 10. "This is not organized by the 'democratic opposition,' which is now in the government. 'It is the people, especially the workers, doing it,

sometimes using violent means and against the wishes of opposition leaders."

"My father works for an agricultural company," the student added. "They just formed a new union there and forced management to resign. Just tonight on television, I saw hotel workers at GENEX, one of the largest state enterprises involved in trading and tourism, rebelling and throwing out the director imposed by the regime. They reinstalled the manager who had been deposed 12 years ago. It is chaos, some people say. I love it."

Zorica Trifunovic said she heard news that the Kolubara coal miners have completely replaced the management of their mines and are now back at work. "Students and professors at the University of Belgrade are also striking to demand the removal of pro-Milosevic deans," she added.

Reaction of imperialist governments

Pro-imperialist commentators and heads of government have eulogized the opposition victory, even trying to take credit. CNN broadcaster Christianne Amanpour had the nerve to declare, "We have been calling on the people of Serbia to rise up for 10 years and finally they did, in their own time."

Few are candid enough to note, as a commentator of the Greek daily *Eleutherotypia* did October 8, that "the uprising of working people is significant as a potential precedent in face of the social cost of the measures that will be taken for the 'rehabilitation' and the 'modernization' of the economy." Those terms are code words for the moves the imperialist powers seek to take to undermine and eventually overthrow the Yugoslav workers state.

Unlike other opposition leaders such as Vuk Draskovic of the Serbian Renewal Movement, who participated in the Milosevic government last year, and Zoran Djindjic of Alliance for Change, who took an openly pro-imperialist stance during NATO's bombings, Kostunica, who remains president of the Democratic Party of Serbia, can claim not only that he is not tarnished by association with the old regime but that he opposed the imperialist bombing campaign.

This stance was necessary to win credibility among Yugoslavia's working people, who overwhelmingly oppose the U.S.-led assault and subsequent economic war on their country. This was illustrated during the visit of French foreign minister and European Union official Hubert Vedrine to Belgrade, following the announcement by the EU that it would drop sanctions on Yugoslavia. "During a walkabout, some people smiled and cheered Vedrine," an October 10 Reuters dispatch reported, "but the NATO bombing still rankled, with one bystander shouting: 'You NATO pig.'"

The opposition coalition, DOS, includes several defectors from the former ruling party, such as former army chief Momcilo Perisic. They have sought to ally themselves with trade unions independent of government control, but also with such forces as the Serbian Orthodox Church and the former monarch, self-proclaimed prince Alexander. Although they agree in their denial of self-determination for Kosovo, Kostunica and others in the coalition that won the elections try to distance themselves from the most repulsive methods used by the Milosevic regimes in quashing national rights. DOS also includes parties with majority support among the country's Hungarian and Muslim minorities.

DOS has adopted an economic program that calls for a rapid integration of Yugoslavia into the world capitalist market system and widespread privatization of state-run enterprises, including the cement and tobacco industry, the Yugoslav airline, the Novi Sad oil refinery, the electrical company, and the petrochemical industry. Their plans include massive international loans.

Many Yugoslavs, however, place the emphasis not on the electoral victory of the middle-class opposition forces, but on the mass actions opening up new political space for working people.

New political space opened up

Martina Vukasovic remarked, "Prospects for change are totally new. It will take time, however. Especially regarding the atrocities the Milosevic regime carried out in Kosovo. It's not enough to blame the barbarism of NATO. None of us know exactly what happened there. Many people have bought the nationalist lies of Milosevic and the opposition. But finding out the truth is essential to bridge the gulf with our brothers and sisters among the Albanian people."

Vladimir Morosev added that it's now a priority for progressive-minded students to reach out to their Albanian counterparts in Kosovo. "Kostunica is a nationalist and Serb patriot," Morosev pointed out. "He is for 'the West.' But most people are opposed to what U.S. imperialism did."

"Kostunica is not very important. What's important is what we did."

Natasha Terlexis, a member of the Federation of Airline Personnel, and Bobbis Misailidis are airport workers. Argiris Malapanis, a meat packer in Miami, contributed to this article.

Philadelphia teachers rally against cutbacks

BY JOHN STUDER

PHILADELPHIA—One thousand teachers and other school workers marched and surrounded the Board of Education building here October 5. Called on less than a day's notice, the rally was a protest against the decision of the mayor and the board to unilaterally impose an unprecedented cut-back contract.

Since September 7, some 21,000 members of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) have been working without a contract, for the first time in 35 years. The union represents 13,000 teachers and 8,000 secretaries, aides, nurses, counselors, and other workers.

Mayor John Street, a Democrat, spoke live on television September 27 to announce that he was going to dictate new contract terms within 24 hours if the teachers union did not agree to major concessions. The terms include deep attacks on wages, working conditions, and seniority rights.

The contract that was imposed the next day lengthens the workday by one hour and the work year by two days without compensation, makes pay for new teachers dependent on administration review rather than job category and seniority, grants the administration the arbitrary right to transfer teachers between schools, increases health insurance co-payments by teachers, and keeps wages well below the average in the surrounding counties. School workers other than teachers had even lower wage increases imposed on them.

Students support teachers

Jeanine Lentini, a teacher at Bok Technical High, told the *Militant* that she assigned her students to watch the mayor's speech, and the response of the chief negotiator for the PFT, and to prepare a report for the next morning's class. "When it was one young woman's turn," Lentini said, "she got up on her chair and led a pep rally for the teachers."

Lentini added that 80 percent of her students support the teachers.

Channel 10 television, which aired the mayor's speech and the PFT response, followed the broadcast with an on-line poll, and reported that viewers supported the teachers 68 percent to 32 percent.

"It may be tough medicine to swallow," David Cohen, chief negotiator for the city, said about the cutbacks. "The PFT is going to have to agree to a late-20th century education-reform teachers' contract."

The cutbacks are couched in "education reform" language, demanding teacher "accountability" and sacrifices in the name of "our kids." But the cuts imposed are familiar to many working people—attacks on wages, seniority rights, health and safety, and working conditions.

The rulers of the city and the state have combined to deprive the school system of the funds required to function. The shortfall for this year will be \$80 million.

For the past few years, city officials and state legislators have wrangled over who should pay to cover the gap.

Two years ago, former superintendent of

schools David Hornbeck demagogically announced he was going to close the schools unless the state coughed up more funds.

In response, the state legislature adopted Act 46, a special bill aimed at the Philadelphia school system that allows the governor to declare the city schools "distressed" and take them over. In the case of a state takeover, if the teachers do not work to his directions and under conditions he imposes, the governor can decertify them all. Act 46 also makes it illegal for teachers to strike if it cuts into the state-mandated 180-day school year.

Governor threatens school takeover

Gov. Thomas Ridge, a Republican, has said that if the teachers don't give in to the city's demands he will take over the schools.

The bill also allows Philadelphia's mayor to unilaterally impose his own contract on the teachers, which Street did. The union and the district can supposedly still negotiate, but the board has not set any new meetings.

Although the members of the teachers union voted overwhelmingly to strike at the beginning of the school year, union offi-

cials have not launched a strike, warning about a possible state takeover.

Waiting in frustration, Philadelphia teachers watched as teachers in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, defying court injunctions that barred strikes and threatened fines against all teachers, kept up their picket lines and won important pay gains.

The PFT filed a court challenge October 5 to the imposed work changes, asking they be blocked until the state supreme court can rule on an earlier suit filed by the union that seeks to have Act 46 declared unconstitutional.

John Crysdale, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in the 1st Congressional District in Philadelphia, has been campaigning widely among teachers at city schools, union meetings, and rallies.

"The Socialist Workers campaign supports the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers against a bipartisan drive aimed at gutting union protection of wages and working conditions," Crysdale said. "The PFT's fight against these attacks deserves the solidarity and support of all working people."

Crysdale explained that the bosses are demanding similar concessions from workers in all industries, aiming to slash wages, gut working conditions, step up the pace

of work, and increase profits.

Against the teachers, Crysdale said, the employers and their political spokespeople use the code words "education reform" to justify their attacks on workers' rights and cut back funding for public schools. But their assault on school workers is part of the overall assault on the working class.

"The 'reforms' they are discussing have absolutely nothing to do with improving education for working people," Crysdale said.

"Under capitalism, schools are designed to promote social control, not learning, in order to reinforce and perpetuate the class relations and privileges of the existing order," Crysdale added. "Their schools are organized to teach us to be more obedient, not to learn and think for ourselves."

The socialist candidate called for opposing cutbacks in funding for public schools in the name of "reform."

Supporters of Crysdale have found a lot of interest in the new Pathfinder pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes. Local campaigners have sold 21 copies of the pamphlet to teachers, students, and others since the opening of the school year.

Apple pickers win strike in Washington

BY JOHN NAUBERT

SUNNYSIDE, Washington—The United Farm Workers union (UFW) has added to its recent string of victories in the vast apple orchards of eastern Washington State.

Two organizers of the recent successful campaigns, Elba Ramos and Antonio Rivera Sánchez, explained that the latest strike by apple pickers, held at the Mar-Jon orchard, involved about 50 workers, a fifth of them women.

The workers had been hired by Jon Warling, a labor contractor for the orchards. They had an agreement with the contractor that they would do straight picking at \$20 per bin of Fuji apples. This differs from "sorting," which requires more selection of the apples and thus takes more time. A worker can often fill seven bins a day by straight picking but the rate drops to three or four when sorting.

As workers began their assigned jobs, the contractor demanded they switch over to the selective picking at the same rate of pay per bin. Four had been members of the UFW for a number of months. After being on strike for a few hours, the workers decided to call the UFW for help.

Since this is the height of the apple-picking season, labor is in big demand. The growers have large hiring signs at orchard entrances. This is also the last weeks of work in the orchards for another month and a half, as the different apples ripen at different times.

Only about half a dozen workers crossed the picket line. Along with these, the contractor brought in 14 workers through a second orchard entrance in an attempt to



Militant/Dean Peoples

Apple pickers walk picket line at Borden & Sons Flat Top Ranch September 18. United Farm Workers has won a string of victories in eastern Washington orchards.

break the strike. Ramos and Rivera explained that when the contractor fell behind in his contract to fill 1,000 bins, he gave in to the strikers' demands, including a \$2.00 per bin pay increase at straight picking. Almost all the workers in this fight have now signed cards to join the UFW.

"In the last week there have been two strikes and one job action," Rivera said. "The job action involved a grower who was continually late in paying the workers. In

many of these strikes, between 50 percent and 70 percent of the workers now sign up to join the union," he said.

Ramos pointed out, "The UFW has a strong base and more workers are looking toward the union."

The UFW has also been organizing to send a busload of members to Seattle October 14 to participate in a national day of protest to demand amnesty for all undocumented workers.

Mine blast kills 150 miners in China

BY TOM MAILER

A gas explosion ripped through the Muchonggou coal mine in Guizhou province, China, September 27, leaving more than 150 miners dead or missing, according to latest reports. Of the 244 miners working at the time, 85 were rescued and only 107 bodies recovered. The state media reported that among the dead were a number who survived a few days on food, milk, and water poured down a pipe. Deadly gases mixing carbonic acid and nitrogen are released after such an explosion.

Hundreds of rescue workers relied on picks, shovels, and bare hands to reach the buried miners. A mine official told the press, "We're using human power only, no machines. It's too dangerous to use machines or explosives."

The mine ventilation system was shut down by the explosion and the shafts were blocked by rubble. A gas explosion killed more than 80 miners there in 1983.

China produces 25 percent of the world's coal, but accounts for 80 percent of all mining fatalities. In 20 other accidents in Guizhou province since mid-July, 136 miners have died, according to the Chinese press. So far this year, more than 2,730 have perished in China's mines.

News reports state that a large share of these deaths occur in small unlicensed mines. The Muchonggou coal mine is a licensed state-owned mine, employing 4,000 workers. The bulk of the factories and other means of production are state-owned in China, where workers and peasants made a socialist revolution and overturned capitalist rule five decades ago.

But the bureaucratic regime in Beijing has increasingly relied on capitalist market methods to determine economic priorities. As a result, administrators and Communist Party officials prioritize spending on new production lines rather than upgrading safety measures.

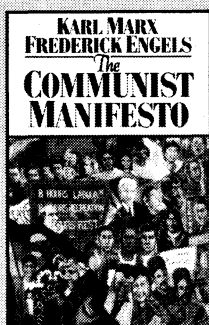
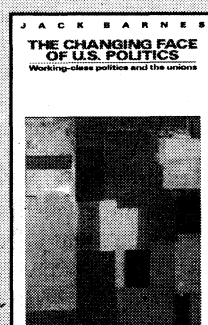
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LA bus drivers gain support as county workers go on strike

Continued from front page
picket lines to protest staffing shortages that sometimes leave interns with 120-hour workweeks.

Mechanics refuse to cross picket lines

An important development in the MTA strike came when more than 1,800 mechanics employed by the transportation authority decided to continue to honor the picket lines despite their union president's urging that they return to work. Drivers have been joined on the picket lines not only by mechanics but by clerks and custodians. Unions representing the mechanics, clerks, and custodians are also currently in contract negotiations.

Neil Silver, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), which represents the mechanics, held a press conference October 2 to announce that he was "recommending" that mechanics cross the picket lines of the bus drivers, who are organized by the United Transportation Union. Silver said the union would reevaluate its position after seven days, a period he called a "cooling-off period."

But the next day, only eight of the ATU's 1,860 mechanics crossed the picket lines. Mechanics joined bus drivers in larger numbers than usual on picket lines early that morning and were able to convince several other mechanics who showed up to work to change their minds.

"We've been told for years you never cross a picket line, so I am here to support the drivers," said Edward Rivera, an MTA mechanic for 16 years. "Without us they won't get a contract, and without them, we won't get one," another mechanic told the *Militant*. "This is what unity and union solidarity is supposed to be about," he said.

"Neil Silver did what he had to do, and we are doing what we have to do," said another mechanic.

Bus drivers applauded the mechanics. Said one driver on a downtown picket line, "The tree has been split apart, but the roots run deep and are as healthy as ever." Christian Velasquez, a construction worker and bus rider who stopped by the picket line at San Pedro and 16th Streets in downtown Los Angeles to offer his solidarity, said of the mechanics and drivers, "I was so glad to hear when the mechanics didn't go back. They started this together and it's important that they finish it together."

The mechanics' action shed light on the biased reporting on the strike by the big-business *Los Angeles Times*. On October 3 a front-page article with a large headline announced, "Two Unions Split With Striking MTA Drivers." The article asserted, "The Metropolitan Transit Authority's supervisors and mechanics broke with striking bus drivers Monday and announced that they will return to work today. It was not immediately clear whether the two groups' return to work will allow the transit agency to resume at least reduced bus and Metro Rail service." A number of supervisors, organized by the Association of Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees, did return to work, although an AFSCME union official insisted no supervisor would drive a bus during the strike.

The *Times* article continued, "Zev Yaroslavsky, a member of the MTA governing board, called the action by the breakaway unions 'a very healthy development.' He and others said they hope drivers will also return to work."

When the mechanics continued to stand with their brothers and sisters in the bus driv-



Hospital patient Mastoori Waseem, right, shows support to nurses picketing Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles. "These nurses—I'm in favor of them," she said.

ers union, the *Times* relegated this news from the front page to the Metro section.

Meanwhile, 2,500 UTU drivers voted "no" at a mass meeting held to decide whether to return to work while contract negotiations continue. The UTU represents 4,400 bus operators. Gov. Gray Davis asked the drivers to call off their strike after he signed a bill on September 30 that requires the owners of privatized sections of the MTA system to recognize union contracts honored by the MTA. The county board of supervisors made the same request days earlier.

As the transit workers and county workers wage their strikes, other workers in the area are pressing their demands as well. About 150 longshore workers protested safety and working conditions October 5 at a Port of Los Angeles coal terminal. Members and supporters of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) demonstrated for several

hours outside the port facility that handles shipments of coal and petroleum coke. Workers protested a number of serious accidents that have happened at the location since it opened in 1997. One worker was killed and another paralyzed in 1998 when a conveyor collapsed. Just last month, workers explained, Keith Rowell, a heavy equipment operator, narrowly escaped injury as his bulldozer plunged 50 feet when a cavity opened up in petroleum coke beneath his rig.

"I was lucky I wasn't buried," Rowell told those at the protest, "because there is no plan to get someone out if they are. We need better safety plans and communication to get things done." ILWU Local 13, which represents 35 workers at the site, has been negotiating a contract since April with the terminal's operator, Savage Pacific Services.

Robert Reyna contributed to this article.

U.S. bill on food, medicine does not ease Cuba embargo

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

U.S. House of Representatives and Senate negotiators announced agreement on a bill October 5 that they claimed will allow the sale of food, medicine, and fertilizer to Cuba, but under severely restrictive conditions. The Cuban foreign ministry blasted this proposal as a "public relations maneuver" that leaves the 40-year U.S. embargo against Cuba intact and in some ways actually strengthens it.

As announced, the agreement reached by the legislators ends all unilateral U.S. food and medicine embargoes currently in effect—against Cuba, Iran, Libya, Sudan, and

North Korea—and prohibits the president from using such sanctions in the future without obtaining Congressional authorization.

Cuba alone, however, would be prohibited from using U.S. government or commercial credit to purchase food and medicine. It would either have to pay in cash or secure a loan from a bank in another country, probably at high interest rates. Sales of Cuban goods to the United States would continue to be banned.

The measure would also codify into law, at least for the next year, existing regulations—currently enforced by executive order—that restrict travel to Cuba by U.S. resi-

dents. Under these regulations, travel is authorized for U.S. residents who are granted a license by the U.S. Treasury Department or are invited by a non-U.S. group that pays all expenses.

The Cuba provision is one of the items tacked onto a \$80 billion agriculture spending bill for the coming year. A final vote in the House and Senate still has to take place.

U.S. president William Clinton objected in particular to the measure's effect on the executive branch's power to make and apply policy. "It certainly restricts, I think, in a completely unwarranted way, the ability of the United States to make travel decisions on policy that I do not believe should be made, written in law, in stone by the Congress."

Rep. George Nethercutt, a Republican from Washington State who for the third year in a row has sponsored a bill to supposedly ease U.S. sanctions on food and medicine to Cuba, commented that the agreement "doesn't meet the needs of everybody, it's not perfection, but it's an opening."

Some of the most vocal supporters of the U.S. embargo expressed satisfaction with the negotiated bill. Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Republican of Florida, called it "a tremendous victory."

In an October 5 statement reiterating the Cuban government's position, the foreign ministry in Havana denounced "a supposed agreement in the U.S. Congress permitting the sale of medicines and foodstuffs to Cuba, which is being presented as a substantial change in the blockade when in reality it is not." It noted, "If this maneuver comes to fruition, the U.S. blockade of Cuba would remain intact."

The statement emphasized, "For Cuba, the real solution is the normalization of relations between the two countries and the lifting of the genocidal blockade unilaterally imposed against Cuba."

The foreign ministry added, "While reiterating its disposition to maintain normal trade relations with U.S. companies, the Cuban government wishes it to be clearly

understood that if this bill is passed under these discriminatory and humiliating conditions, Cuba will not undertake any commercial transaction with the United States."

Four decades of U.S. economic war

Washington has carried out a bipartisan policy of aggression against Cuba since working people there, under the leadership of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro, overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. As the revolutionary leadership mobilized workers and farmers to carry out far-reaching social measures, including a sweeping land reform in 1959 and the nationalization of key industries in 1960, and refused to back down before Washington's ultimatums, the U.S. rulers launched a campaign of counterrevolutionary terror against the Cuban people.

After Cuban working people defeated the U.S.-organized mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and forced Washington to back off its invasion plans during the October 1962 "missile" crisis, the U.S. rulers embarked on a policy of economic, diplomatic, and political warfare with the aim of overthrowing the Cuban revolution.

The U.S. trade embargo, enacted under the Kennedy administration in the early 1960s, was tightened in 1992 under the misnamed Cuban Democracy Act, known as the Torricelli law, which made it illegal for foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies to trade with Cuba. The law also closed U.S. ports to ships that have made a port of call to Cuba within the previous six months, and authorized the president to apply sanctions against any government that provides aid to Cuba.

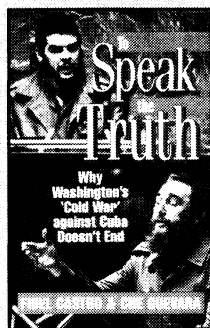
In 1996, Clinton signed into law the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act, also known as the Helms-Burton law. It codified into law all previous executive orders tightening the embargo. It also allowed Cuban-American and other U.S. businessmen whose property on the island was expropriated to sue companies abroad that invest in those properties.

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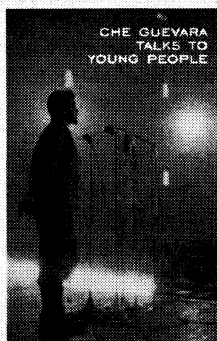


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—Che Guevara

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Palestinian protesters face Israeli crackdown

Continued from front page
tion Organization and president of the Palestinian National Authority.

The renewed conflict began after rightist Israeli politician Ariel Sharon walked onto a holy Islamic site in Jerusalem on September 28, surrounded by 1,000 cops. Encouraged by clerics at mosques, thousands of Palestinians mobilized in the face of Israeli police and military forces that included infantry, helicopters, and armored vehicles. Since then, youths armed with stones confronted Israeli forces in West Bank cities, Gaza, and inside Israel. Protesters blocked highways and organized funeral processions—that became political demonstrations—for victims of the Israeli violence.

Palestinian National Authority (PNA) police have sometimes joined the fighting as protesters have come under Israeli fire, or watched as clashes occur. The Tanzim militia, which is linked to Arafat's Al Fatah group in the Palestine Liberation Organization, has been active in organizing the resistance to the Israeli forces.

Attacks by Zionist settlers

As the conflict unfolded, attacks by Zionist settlers on Palestinians increased. In a Palestinian district in the northern Israeli city of Nazareth, as residents defended themselves from rampaging settlers October 8, Israeli police opened fire on the Palestinians, killing two men, aged 25 and 42.

"It did not occur to us that the police would get to the scene, see what was happening and side with the thugs who were attacking our homes and beating people randomly," Jalal Hassan told reporters. "It was a message from the Israeli state to all of us:

'You are not really citizens. You do not belong here.'"

After the incident, Obour Rizeq, a city worker, pointed to the second-class status of Palestinians living in Israel. "We do not receive the same economic or political benefits.... Young men cannot find work. Nearly half of all Arabs in Nazareth live below the poverty line.... Why is anyone amazed that everything has exploded?"

Demonstrators condemn repression by Tel Aviv

Dearborn, Michigan

Thousands took to the streets October 6 to demand an end to the killings of Palestinians by the Israeli Army. A large percentage of the population of this city near Detroit is Arab and Arab-American, including Lebanese, Egyptians, Syrians, and others. A contingent of students from Fordson High School led chants in Arabic and English.

Two days earlier several hundred people showed up at the Dearborn City Hall for a candlelight vigil. Sponsors of both the October 4 vigil and the October 6 march and rally included the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition (Al-Awda), the Arab Student Union at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, ACCESS, the Lebanese American Heritage Club, the Arab American Political Action Committee, and many others.

—ERICA BRANDT

New York City

"We demand an end to the killing of Palestinians! We demand the United States stop sending weapons to Israel! We demand international protection for the Palestinian people and an end to Israeli occupation!" were the slogans of a demonstration of 3,000 at Times Square called by the Palestine Right to Return Coalition October 6.

Participants, from New York and New Jersey, were largely young workers and students. Bassam, Rimani, a youth from Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, told of another demonstration in Brooklyn that day of more than 1,000 people.

Nacima Diglawi, a junior from North Bergen High School in New Jersey said that 25 youth from her high school came together to the protest. There were also five buses from Paterson, New Jersey.

Nadia Guessous, a first year graduate student at Columbia University, said she learned about the demonstration from

The previous day, the Israeli army positioned tanks at Zionist settlements in the West Bank cities of Nablus and Hebron as settlers and Palestinian forces exchanged gunfire. Armed settlers blocked road junctions in the West Bank and Gaza, saying they were retaliating against the destruction of a Jewish religious site in Nablus.

Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon on October 7 crossed the border with

Israel and captured three Israeli soldiers from a patrol vehicle. Hezbollah spokespeople said the goal of their operation was to exchange the three sergeants for 19 Lebanese prisoners being held without trial in Israel.

Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak immediately seized on this incident. He threatened to attack Lebanon and Syria and to pull

Continued on Page 14

Turath, a student organization at Columbia that has organized vigils every afternoon on the campus. Guessous came with 15 other students from her campus. Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition called the demonstration.

—JASON ALESSIO

Miami

Supporters of Palestinian rights protested in front of the Israeli Consulate here October 4, 6, and 7. Hundreds participated in one or more of the rallies, which were organized by the Islamic Centers of South Florida and local mosques. "This is the least we can do here, with our sisters and brothers fighting over there," said Nour Kablawi, a high school student in Miami and one of the many young Palestinian women demonstrating.

Some protesters formed a car caravan that drove up and down Biscayne Boulevard, in the center of Miami's downtown, waving Palestinian and Islamic flags and honking their horns for hours.

—CINDY JAQUITH

Paris

More than 3,000 people protested the Israeli repression of Palestinian demonstrators here October 7, while thousands more took to the streets in Marseilles, Strasbourg, and other cities.

The action in Paris was called by a number of antiracist and political organizations, including the Green Party and the French Communist Party. Both are currently part of the coalition government. The CGT union confederation also participated.

The organizers of the demonstrations called for "peace, to stop the massacres, and for withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Palestine." Some 2,000 immigrant youth came to the action from the working-class suburbs surrounding Paris. Support-

ers of the Association of Palestinians in France carried a banner calling for sanctions against Israel, for the right of Palestinian refugees to return home, for dismantling the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, and for "a sovereign Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital." They called on the French government and the European Union to "suspend their economic, scientific and military collaboration with Israel."

—NAT LONDON AND
CLAUDE BLETON

Manchester, England

Some 1,000 supporters of the Palestinian struggle from Manchester, Birmingham, London, and surrounding towns held a protest here October 7. Speakers at the rallies before and after the march aimed their fire not only at the Israeli government for its brutality and denial of Palestinian self-determination, but also at British prime minister Anthony Blair for not condemning the Israeli government action and the U.S. government for supporting Israel.

—DEBBIE DELANGE

Charlotte, North Carolina

In the shadows of this city's tallest building about 300 Palestinians and their supporters held a demonstration here October 6 sponsored by nine Arab-American organizations in the Charlotte region. Nearly 300 people rallied in the city center, covering the four corners of a major downtown intersection.

Dr. Hisham A Abdel-Aal, president of the Egyptian Society of Greater Charlotte, said, "They say we provoked this outrage. How do you provoke with stones? To have gunships, helicopters against children? The U.S. is always talking about human rights, what about five and a half million people who have been demanding human rights for 50 years?"

—DONALD HAMMOND

— CALENDAR —

March for Peace in Support of Vieques, Puerto Rico

MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

Sat., Oct. 21, 12:00 noon. From Columbus Circle (59th St. entrance to Central Park) to USS Intrepid Naval Museum on the West Side Highway (46th St.). For more information, e-mail: ViequesAlliance1021@hotmail.com, Voice mail: (212) 591-1103. Also see web page at <http://www.ViequesAlliance.org>

International march and rally to oppose poverty and violence against women

MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

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MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON

The Fight for Women's Rights Today. Speaker: Sarah Ullman, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Oct. 22, 5:00 p.m. 683 Washington St. Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

BRITAIN

LONDON

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: the Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism. Fri., Oct. 20, 7:00 p.m. 47, The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

CANADA

VANCOUVER

Washington's Cold War against Cuba: a Historical Perspective. Edward Milton, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Oct. 22, 2:30 p.m. 4806 Main Street at 32nd Ave. Suite 2. Donation: \$5. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

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Washington, Tel Aviv vs. Palestinian struggle

Printed below are excerpts from "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," a talk presented by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in Cleveland on March 30, 1991. The entire speech can be found in *New International* no. 7. Copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

A collateral objective of the war drive [against Iraq in 1990-91] was putting Washington in a stronger position to force a "solution" to the Palestinian national question. For the U.S. rulers, the realization of this goal—somehow eliminating the roots of the *intifada*,¹ without igniting a broader revolutionary upheaval—is intertwined with progress toward their long-standing aim of

BOOK OF THE WEEK

establishing stable, profitable relations with the major capitalist regimes in the region, whose populations are predominantly Arab. These regimes, which stretch from the Atlantic coast of northern Africa to the Arab-Persian Gulf, rule over populations many, many times the size of Israel's and over lands that contain strategic supplies of oil and other major sources of natural wealth. Washington aims to assert more strongly than ever its position as the predominant imperialist power in its relations with these regimes.

From the early 1960s, the U.S. government increasingly supplied Israel with modern military equipment and had to rely on it as a bastion to defend imperialist interests in the Middle East. During the mid- to late 1950s, an upswing in worker and peasant struggles for national sovereignty and land throughout the region gave rise to bourgeois regimes in a number of countries that, from the standpoint of imperialism, were too weak and unreliable to play this role. With the consolidation over the past quarter century of larger and stronger capitalist classes, and a growing middle class, however, Washington grabbed the chance to use these bourgeois governments more effectively to promote its own interests. The military defeats dealt to these regimes by Israel in wars in 1967 and 1973 induced sections of their ruling classes to turn more sharply toward imperialism. The Egyptian rulers have led the way in this regard, recognizing the State of Israel following the 1978 Camp David Accords engineered during the James Carter administration.²

The U.S.-organized war in the Gulf widened the divergence between the foreign policy interests of the U.S. and Israeli ruling classes. The Israeli rulers come out losers from U.S. imperialism's strengthened alignment with the Egyptian, Saudi, and Syrian regimes, which joined in the military alliance against Baghdad. This weakens Israel's influence with Washington, its special place in the world imperialist system, and thus its leverage in wresting ever-

increasing U.S. economic and military assistance and attempting to block such U.S. aid to regimes in the Arab countries.

This divergence between Washington and Tel Aviv is contrary to what most of the major media portrayed during the war as a new high point of cooperation. This is supposedly exemplified by the Israeli government's "agreement" not to send its warplanes against targets in Iraq in response to Baghdad's Scud missile attacks and Washington's subsequent dispatch of Patriot antimissile missile batteries to Israel. The truth, however, is that Tel Aviv never had any choice in the matter. The U.S. military command simply refused to give the Israeli air force the "friend or foe" codes that would have allowed Tel Aviv's bombers and fighter jets to enter Iraqi airspace without being shot down by—or shooting down—the U.S. aircraft that controlled those skies.

In fact, Washington humbled Tel Aviv during the Gulf war in order to block it from disrupting the U.S. rulers' foreign policy and military goals. Israel relies on its proven record as a garrison state: that it will respond militarily to any perceived threat, and respond tenfold to any attack on its territory. The Israeli regime, though, was forced by the U.S. government to take the hits from Baghdad's Scud missiles without responding. Although the Scuds are militarily insignificant, the inability to retaliate was another political humiliation for Tel Aviv. The bitterness and frustration in Israeli ruling circles grew even more as it later became clear that Washington's much-touted Patriot missiles are a failure. They didn't destroy most warheads or prevent the Scuds from doing damage. The Patriots did nothing more than blow apart the highly inaccurate Scuds, scattering the warheads and other debris at random. Scud warheads came down and exploded on Israeli territory regardless, and parts of both the Scuds and Patriots did damage as well. (In fact, Israeli military evaluations insist that each Scud missile launched by Baghdad after the deployment of the Patriots did more damage than those beforehand.)

Irrepressible fight by Palestinians

While Washington's interests have diverged further from Tel Aviv's, however, this has not brought the U.S. rulers any closer to a "solution" to the Palestinian question, without which their efforts to establish stable relations with bourgeois regimes in the Middle East are continually disrupted. Washington's biggest political obstacle in this regard is the irrepressible fight by the Palestinians for their national self-determination—above all the struggles of the Palestinians living inside the post-1967 borders of "Greater Israel." This remains an enormous problem for imperialism, no matter how much cooperation the U.S. government gets from Moscow, and no matter how many trips Secretary of State James Baker makes to the region, shuttling between Tel Aviv and the capital cities of Washington's allied regimes in various Arab countries.

Tel Aviv seized on Washington's war drive as cover to extend its garrison-state brutality against the Palestinian population in the West Bank, Gaza, southern Lebanon, and inside Israel itself. It imposed a round-the-clock curfew—virtual house arrest—on the Palestinian population, depriving hundreds of thousands of families of their livelihoods. Thousands of Palestinians were rounded up, beaten, and jailed. Israeli cops, troops, and rightist vigilantes murdered Palestinian fighters with greater impunity. Tel Aviv stepped up air raids on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Despite earlier pledges to Washington, the Israeli regime openly organized immigrants from the Soviet Union and other Jewish settlers to expand land takeovers in the West Bank and Gaza. If the Israelis can't fly the skies against the U.S. Air Force, they can still build settlements on stolen Arab land—for a while.

Within an imperialist framework, *there is no solution* to the Palestinian question. The fight for the national rights of the Palestinian people is the axis of the class struggle in Israel and throughout those areas that historically constituted Palestine. The Palestinian people continue to press forward the fight against their dispossession and earn solidarity from Arab peoples and conscious fighters among the oppressed and exploited around the world. The Palestinians have not been so dispersed geographically as to lose their national identity and cohesion.



Militant/Lauren Hart

March of nearly 4,000 in Washington on September 16 supporting right of Palestinians to return to their homeland. Fight for national rights of Palestinian people is axis of class struggle in Israel and areas that historically constitute Palestine.

Above all, so long as the Palestinians are not expelled en masse from Israel and the occupied territories, every step forward in their struggle for national liberation is at the same time an *internal* social and political crisis for Tel Aviv. Moreover, every move by Tel Aviv to incorporate the occupied territories into a permanent "Greater Israel" guarantees intensified resistance, including among the Palestinians inside Israel itself, thereby deepening its internal crisis. In addition to some 3.5 million Jews, 2.5 million Palestinians are currently living under Israeli rule: 800,000 inside the pre-1967 borders, and 1.7 million on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian national self-determination is irreconcilable with the class interests of the Israeli ruling class. The bourgeois regimes in the surrounding Arab countries, while claiming to speak on behalf of their "brothers" the Palestinians, have repeatedly shed Palestinian blood to preserve their own class power and state privileges. Washington is pressuring more of these governments to follow in the footsteps of Cairo by establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, and some may do so. Nonetheless, these capitalist regimes must take into account the potentially destabilizing political consequences at home among the Arab and other oppressed peoples—who strongly identify

with the Palestinian struggle and who, along with working people the world over, are the only reliable ally of the Palestinians.

The nearly four-year-long *intifada* on the West Bank and Gaza Strip has reaffirmed that the Palestinians will not stop fighting until they have won their struggle for land and national self-determination. That's why Washington is no closer after the Gulf war than it was beforehand to finding a way around this dilemma. The U.S. rulers urge Tel Aviv to trade "land for peace." But the response by the Israeli rulers in deeds outweighs any diplomatic words. Tel Aviv acts on the conviction that only the peace of the grave will still the Palestinians' struggle for land.

¹The *intifada* is the sustained uprising—including protests, strikes, rallies, and resistance to land confiscations—began in December 1987 by Palestinians and their supporters in Israel and in other Arab territories occupied by Israel following the June 1967 war.

²In June 1967 the Israeli government invaded Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. By the time a ceasefire took effect after six days of fighting, Israeli forces occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. Nearly 1,000 Israeli soldiers were killed and 4,500 wounded. Some 4,000 Arab combatants were killed and 6,000 wounded.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEET/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

October 24, 1975

TOLEDO, Ohio—Farm workers from the tomato, sugar beet, and cucumber fields of northwest Ohio, together with their supporters, gathered here on October 4 for a four-mile march in support of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's efforts to organize agricultural workers in Ohio and Michigan.

Red flags with the FLOC eagle and slogan, "Hasta la victoria" (Until the Victory), filled the air.

Among the marchers were children of all ages. About twenty Chicano students came from a FLOC group at a local high school.

The march called for government enforcement of migrant housing laws, better wages for farm workers, the right of farm labor to organize, and replacing the labor contracting system with the union hiring hall.

The marchers, about 130 in all, chanted "Viva FLOC" and "Viva la causa" as they proceeded through the streets of the Chicano community. Supporters waved from their windows. Automobile drivers honked their horns in sympathy. Bystanders shouted encouragement, and some joined the march.

FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez was the featured speaker. "Two children died in the fields this summer because the government won't enforce the child labor law," Velasquez told the *Militant*. "They won't enforce the existing housing codes either.

Farm workers themselves must organize to better their conditions."

THE MILITANT

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October 23, 1950

The Truman administration began to enforce the McCarran-Kilgore police-state law last week. Section 22 of the law forbids the entry into this country of any alien who has "at any time" been a member of, or affiliated with a "communist" or other "totalitarian" party. The Attorney General may make exceptions in cases of foreign visitors coming here temporarily, but is required under the law to report the information about these exceptions to Congress.

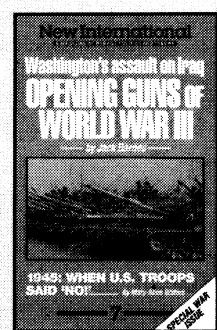
The consequence of enforcing Section 22 was that hundreds of people arriving at Ellis Island, especially Germans and Italians, were detained at Ellis Island while the Department of Justice considered their cases. The congestion became so great that the State Department suspended all visas except those of DP's and ordered a rescreening of all aliens abroad who had applied for entry into the U.S.

Public reaction was so unfavorable that some of the chief congressional sponsors of the law protested that the administration was deliberately enforcing Section 22 in such a way as to create "ill will" toward the law. But everything the administration was doing was authorized and permissible under Section 22.

FOR FURTHER READING

Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq



Jack Barnes

The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces,

growing instability of world capitalism, more wars. In *New International* no. 7. \$12.00

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.

Yugoslavia: victory for workers

The general political strike and revolt in Yugoslavia that brought down the Slobodan Milosevic regime is a victory won by working people. The downfall of the bureaucratic regime—which claimed to speak for workers but was the opposite of socialism—is one less obstacle for the toilers in Yugoslavia. They have won greater political space to organize struggles for their demands and to link up with working people around the world.

The ouster of Milosevic is the result neither of the middle-class opposition headed by Vojislav Kostunica, the new president, nor of a CIA plot, as alleged by Stalinist defenders of the old regime. What determined the victory was the decisive entry onto the scene of the working class by the hundreds of thousands, especially industrial workers such as the coal miners.

These events take place a decade after the shattering of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The best explanation of those developments is contained in issue 11 of *New Internationalist*, titled "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." It is important to study it and get it into the hands of fellow workers, farmers, and young people as a tool that can be used to understand and respond to the events today.

The efforts by the imperialist powers since World War II to pressure the bureaucratic castes to police workers and farmers in their own countries, where capitalism had been overthrown, failed. In 1989-91, what broke was the regimes, not the working class. The workers states, however deformed, proved stronger than the bureaucratic apparatuses.

Imperialism now has to confront the working class directly throughout the region in its goal of reimposing a capitalist order. This can only be accomplished by force. That

is why Washington and other NATO powers waged a savage bombing campaign and continue to deploy occupation troops in Kosova, Bosnia, and elsewhere in the Balkans.

Workers are now taking initial steps to defend their social gains, sweeping out managers and other cronies of the old regime in factories and workplaces throughout the country. They are acting on the fact that the state is theirs. The fact that workers and farmers in Yugoslavia made a deep-going socialist revolution coming out of World War II shapes the class confidence and social attitudes of millions of working people there today. Their resistance to capitalist forms of exploitation and its social relations remains a big obstacle to imperialism's aims.

Washington's immediate response has been to issue a list of demands on the new government. The Clinton administration has announced it will remove some trade restrictions, but it is keeping many economic sanctions to use as a club against Yugoslavia.

U.S. capitalist politicians are demanding Milosevic be turned over to the imperialist powers, who would use a show trial to justify imperialist prerogatives to intervene in countries around the world under the "humanitarian" flag. But only the Yugoslav working people have the sovereign right to judge and sanction Milosevic.

Imperialist spokespeople are demanding the Yugoslav government privatize all state-owned industries, welcome foreign capitalist investment, and other measures to integrate Yugoslavia into the capitalist world.

Working people in the United States and elsewhere should demand that all trade and diplomatic sanctions against Yugoslavia be lifted immediately and unconditionally. All U.S. and other foreign troops should get out of the Balkans now.

Campaigning with new pamphlet

"The working class cannot begin with how to change things so that *youth* get a better education. We have to begin with how to transform the values of society, not just the economics.... To be meaningful, education has to create the possibilities for society as a whole to advance, instead of reinforcing the exploitation of the majority by the few."

"Class-conscious workers and labor and farm militants approach Social Security as a matter of *social solidarity*. The toiling majority in city and countryside, whose labor transforms nature and in the process all wealth, have a *right* to a *social wage*, not just an individual wage. We have a right to lifetime health care, disability compensation, and a secure retirement."—from *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes.

Campaigning to get this pamphlet from Pathfinder into the hands of as many working people and youth resisting the assault by the employers and their government and seeking answers to the rationalizations and alien class framework of all politics today is the most important way readers of the *Militant* can help bring a working-class perspective to thousands over the coming weeks. After the second debate between presidential candidates Albert Gore and George W. Bush, the importance of selling, reading, and studying the pamphlet could not be clearer. Consider these few brief points.

Bush and Gore justified U.S. foreign policy based on "our nation's interests." Both used "our nation" or "we" numerous times when referring to the United States. They talked of Africa, the Mideast, Latin America, and the Caribbean and clicked off a host of U.S. invasions with the arrogant assumption that intervention is *their right*.

Like their approach to education and Social Security, when it comes to foreign policy the capitalist candidates drive to get working people to start with an assumption of "looking out for number one"—the USA. Bush and Gore are simply explaining the beginning and end of every for-

eign policy decision by the U.S. government: what is good and in the interests of the capitalist class. They use "our nation" to blur over the fact that there are different social classes in the United States with antagonistic and opposing interests. Their foreign policy is only an extension of the social relations and anti-working-class drive at home. Reading and studying the pamphlet will advance an opposite class approach: that of extending a hand of social solidarity and mutual respect, equality, and collaboration.

Pretending racism and national oppression have not been a cornerstone of the construction of the United States as an imperialist power, both Bush and Gore defended the police and state institutions from charges of systematic racism for such practices as racial profiling with the idea that racism, and lynchings such as that of James Byrd in Texas, are the work of a few bad apples. Both candidates' answer is a federal hate crimes law, which rather than dealing with racism, police brutality, and systematic discrimination simply opens a new assault on democratic rights.

Both returned to education and health care. Bush said his goal is that "every single child in America must be educated, I mean every child." Gore, saying education is his "number one priority," pressed to have "accountability" and required "states to test all students, test schools and school districts, and that...we should go further and require teacher testing and for new teachers also."

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning points out that each capitalist candidate approaches these questions with assumptions "centered on 'looking out for number one.'" The pamphlet offers a way to break out of the framework permeating all capitalist society, to look at every question as a social question and from the point of view of our class, and to chart, as Barnes writes, a working-class course to "throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society, as we collectively educate ourselves and learn the exploiters in the process."

Palestinian deaths mount in Israeli crackdown

Continued from Page 12

out of efforts to restart negotiations. Barak also issued an ultimatum giving Palestinian authorities 48 hours to restrain the protests or face the use of "all available means" by Israeli troops. On October 10 the Israeli cabinet withdrew the threat, saying that Arafat would be given a "last chance" to contain Palestinian protests.

Barak also raised the possibility of seeking an "emergency" coalition government with Sharon. The right-wing politician spurned the offer, saying he would push for early elections, and denounced Barak's decision to extend the deadline of his ultimatum. In an October 10 editorial, the *New York Times*, which supports Washington's push to reopen talks, advised Barak to "put aside the idea" of a coalition government with Sharon. At the same time, the *Times* editors declared that Barak's threats "to unleash full military force against Palestinian targets are readily understandable."

On October 7 the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution that, without naming the Israeli government, condemned the "excessive use of force" against the Palestinians and called for an immediate resumption

of Israeli-Palestinian talks. Washington had threatened to veto the resolution before the condemnation of Tel Aviv was toned down. Fourteen council members voted for the resolution, and the U.S. representative abstained.

The Clinton administration has continued to pressure the Palestinian leaders. The October 11 *New York Times* reported that "Clinton has spoken to Mr. Arafat daily since [October 6], sometimes three times a day, impressing upon him, location by location, how things must be brought under control." London and representatives of the European Union have delivered a similar message.

"The Palestinians, in many ways, are putting the Israelis under siege," U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright asserted October 8. "We are concerned about excessive use of force, but also about this siege mentality that is being, really, provoked, in a way, by all the stone-throwers."

She added, "Mr. Arafat has made some very hard decisions in the past, and he has been able to control things.... He has to do everything he can to get this rock-throwing and violence under control."

Tel Aviv's brutal repression has sparked demonstrations throughout the Middle East. Protests of more than 10,000

Revolt in Belgrade: report of a participant

Continued from page 8
Belgrade.

Opposition organizers and politicians finally reappeared and began to make speeches to "calm down the masses." Vojislav Kostunica, the opposition presidential candidate, was announced as "the new president of the country" and people greeted him with cheers.

Kostunica seeks to demobilize protesters

Kostunica assured the crowd that it was all over, that there was no need for further fighting, and that the police would not intervene. In the meanwhile, news came that the tanks had stopped and that the army would not go "against its own people."

As I am writing these lines, on Sunday, October 8, the celebration is not over. People are still in the streets beeping their horns and taking pictures by the burned-out parliament. TV channels have begun broadcasting again, but now they are publishing uncensored news and playing formerly blacklisted artists.

Tons of foreign journalists are on the scene. This morning a French reporter asked me to give a statement. She asked me, "What can the European Union do for you now?" "Leave us alone and let us continue what we started yesterday," I answered.

The perplexed journalist thought I had misunderstood her and said she was referring to credits and investment. I began to explain how all of this did not bring any good to the peoples of Eastern Europe or Russia, but she told the cameraman to cut and went along looking for a suitable comment and a victim.

A ceremony was held October 8 honoring the newly formed government. Kostunica, however, is not an unanimously supported political figure in Serbia. He is a founding leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia, one of the petty-bourgeois groups of the opposition. The capitalist media labels him a "moderate nationalist."

I remember Kostunica, however, as a chauvinist who never said a single word against Milosevic's reactionary war crusades and who fetishizes the market economy and private property.

He does not hesitate to say that he is speaking for and addressing "the Serbs" and that he will help us to finally step out of the "communist stone age" and jump on the train with the rest of the "civilized world," referring to the capitalist world.

Imperialist sanctions remain

The imperialist powers, of course, are giving Kostunica their full support. Some have already mentioned that sanctions against Yugoslavia will be lifted, but I doubt they will all be eliminated soon, at least not without a long list of demands delivered straight to Kostunica's office.

The opposition alliance organized a public concert and held speeches October 8. When the presence of the Kolubara miners was mentioned, the crowd gave a big applause. But instead of the miners, the microphone was passed to a local church figure who said a collective prayer.

The Kolubara miners union, however, has issued a proclamation stating that it will reach the people despite the opposition's effort to silence them now that they are deemed "not needed anymore."

The strikes are not over yet. The miners have demanded that the new government dismiss the minister of energy and mining or Belgrade will lose electricity again.

These events indicate that valuable lessons were learned during the last few days. The working class demonstrated its courage and has gained a better sense of its power.

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Safety, environment, protectionism are issues in genetically modified food debate

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Kraft Foods announced September 22 the first nationwide recall of a food made from a genetically engineered crop. This decision followed the company's admission that taco shells with the Taco Bell brand contain genetically modified corn that has a protein with certain characteristics of a food allergen. The corn has been approved for use as animal feed, but not for human consumption.

The recall provided ammunition for environmental organizations that warn against the development and use of such products. "Our regulatory system is not up to the task of preventing problems with genetically engineered food," said Joseph Mendelson III, legal director of the Center for Food Safety in Washington.

Calls for a moratorium or a complete ban on research and manufacture of these commodities receive a hearing. Many working people are suspicious about the motives of the giant food and chemical corporations as they race to put new products on the market in order to reap sales and profits with little regard to safety and health.

Protests against genetically engineered foods may often point to legitimate safety concerns. The cause of the problem, however, is not the technology itself but its control by capitalists interested only in profits. The issue of bioengineered crops has also been used as a cover for protectionist campaigns in capitalist trade conflicts.

One side of the introduction of these crops that has not received as much publicity is the effect on working farmers, who are facing rising costs and danger to their land as they are pushed into using modified seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers from agribusiness monopolies. Last December five farmers in the United States and one in France represented by 11 law firms filed a class-action lawsuit against the biotech firm Monsanto, alleging the company defrauded them when it told them that genetically modified seeds were safe and did not conduct the necessary testing to ensure safety.

Kraft is not the first big company to be affected by the campaign against genetically modified foods. According to the *New York Times*, McDonald's and Frito-Lay are among food companies that have cut back on using ingredients made from bioengineered crops, "out of fear that consumers would reject them."

Legislation on safety and labeling of food products has been introduced in the U.S. Congress and Senate concerning biotechnology. Similar statewide bills are pending in Maine, Colorado, and Oregon.

At the same time the campaign against genetically engineered food has become a weapon in trade conflicts. The capitalists in Europe, in particular, take advantage of it in their competition with their rivals in the United States.

Technological advances

Genetic research has provided scientists with new tools in developing crops and animals with particular traits. Genes from one species can be spliced into another; going further, genes from animals have been transferred to plants.

Technologically speaking, such techniques register an advance over what farmers have been doing in a painstaking way for thousands of years in grafting plants, and selectively breeding seeds and stock animals for desirable characteristics. Today, genetically modified crops are typically altered to resist pests, diseases, increase yields, and boost nutritional content.

Over the past few years, there has been an explosion in planting biotechnology crops in the United States. Nearly one-fourth of U.S. farmland is planted with transgenic corn—meaning it contains "foreign" genes. Genetically modified corn and soybeans—the two largest crops in the country—were planted on more than 60 million acres of farmland in 1999. An estimated 70 percent of grocery store foods in the United States contain genetically modified corn, soybeans, and other crops, according to the Grocery Manufacturers of America, a trade group representing the big U.S. food conglomerates. Their dominant presence in the food industry includes snacks, breakfast cereals, vegetable oil, and numerous other products.

"The world market for food made from

transgenic material—everything from potato chips and microwave popcorn to ketchup and soy sauce—is booming," said one report. Sales of food made with transgenic products have soared from \$4 billion in 1997 to an estimated \$19 billion in 1999. Kraft said the Taco Bell product line, with about 2.5 million boxes in stores and homes, accounts for more than \$100 million in annual sales.

Genetically engineered crops burst onto the commercial market in the mid-1990s. Among the first wave of these products was Monsanto's Roundup Ready soybeans,



Demonstration against genetically modified foods. While such products may in some cases pose legitimate safety concerns, the problem is not technology but its control by capitalists interested only in profits. The issue of bioengineered crops has also been used as a cover for protectionist campaigns in capitalist trade conflicts.

which have genetically engineered resistance to the company's widely used Roundup herbicide. The Missouri-based company soon got hammered by criticism that it plotted to monopolize Third World agriculture and hook subsistence farmers on its genetically modified seeds. Its "terminator" products produce sterile seeds, obliging farmers to buy new seeds from the manufacturer at sowing time.

The next generation of genetically modified organisms included "golden rice," a crop enhanced with beta carotene, the nutrient that serves as a building block for vitamin A. The rice is produced by inserting two genes that make beta carotene into the DNA of a species of bacteria. Rice embryos are infected with the modified bacteria, which transfers the genes necessary to make the beta carotene. The resultant mutated rice plants are then crossed with other strains of rice.

'Grains of hope' for handsome profits

According to the World Health Organization, some 250,000 million people worldwide are deficient in Vitamin A. Hailed as "grains of hope," golden rice would allegedly benefit at least 1 million children in semicolonial countries who die each year through vitamin A deficiency, and another 350,000 people who go blind.

Seeking to repair its battered image, Monsanto announced at an agricultural conference in India August 3, that it would grant patent licenses at no charge to the developers of golden rice. "We are committed to growth of biotechnology, and these applications...in the developing world are real," declared Monsanto spokesman Gary Barton. "They meet very human needs."

With almost half the world's population—3 billion people—dependent on the 560 million tons of rice harvested each year, biotech firms selling golden rice seeds could rake in hefty profits. "A billion new rice consumers will be added in Asia by 2020," Monsanto stated on its web site.

In April Monsanto, Novartis, and five other

biotech firms shelled out \$50 million for a TV campaign to promote genetically modified foods. The Rockefeller Foundation poured \$100 million into the plant biotechnology that created golden rice, while Monsanto spent tens of millions establishing a "working draft" of the genetic structure of rice. The two scientists who launched the project in 1993 to create golden rice, were also backed by the Swiss government and the European Union.

Two companies, the Anglo-Swedish firm AstraZenica and the German-based Greenovation, have set up a donation pro-

gram to distribute the seeds to farmers in semicolonial countries through government-run centers. The farmers, however, would only be allowed to earn a maximum of \$10,000 annually from the sale of their genetically engineered crop before they would have to pay royalties.

Monsanto and other companies have developed two genetically altered crops, Bt corn and Bt cotton, resistant to the European corn borer and the cotton boll worm. Bt stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a common soil bacteria that creates toxins targeting the pests, which are responsible for damaging millions of dollars of crops.

Environmentalists and consumer advocacy groups assert that the use of biotechnology threatens the ecosystem with "Frankenfoods" and "superweeds," and will drive small farmers to ruin.

In late July environmental activists held demonstrations in 19 cities, from Miami to San Francisco, as part of a nationwide campaign to demand labeling of genetically modified organisms. Several organizations have joined the campaign effort, including the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and the Public Interest Research Groups. A \$1 million campaign has been aimed at the U.S. Congress, the Food and Drug Administration, and several food companies and their products, starting with Campbell's Soup.

The environmental group Greenpeace and other opponents of biotechnology say that "genetic pollution" could contaminate vast tracts of agricultural land. They speculate that transgenes in pollen carried by the wind could possibly fertilize wild plants, creating indestructible "superweeds." A number of ecologists have raised concerns that widespread planting of plants like Bt corn could lead to the development of Bt resistance among crop pests. And, according to the World Health Organization, "health side-effects [of golden rice], if any, are unknown."

Spokespeople for Greenpeace and other organizations say that biotechnology will have a disastrous impact on farmers. In its

"Golden Rice" report, published in June of this year, Greenpeace claims the "gene revolution" has buried small farmers "in a mire of debt and destroyed the very fields from which they eke out a living."

The monopoly of the transgenic seed market by corporate giants will control farmers' production, "dictate what inputs to use, thus increasing farmers' dependence and indebtedness," says the report. ActionAid, a development agency based in the United Kingdom, says poor farmers could be roped into "a cycle of seed and chemical dependence." As a result, both groups say, farmers in Third World countries will become even more impoverished.

These problems—which existed long before the techniques of genetic modification were developed by scientists and exploited by capitalists—are the results of the normal workings of capitalism. Farmers and peasants in semicolonial countries are driven off their lands by the cost-price squeeze that characterizes capitalist control of agriculture. Working farmers are squeezed on one end by the falling prices they receive for their commodities, and on the other end by the rising cost of the inputs they need to produce those commodities—seed, fertilizer, machinery, and other utensils. These giant agribusinesses are seeking to take advantage of their competitive edge with the new seeds to more thoroughly dominate the market and deepen the exploitation of working farmers.

Protectionist campaigns

The growing interimperialist conflict between agribusiness in European Union countries and the United States has also been exacerbated by the introduction of genetically engineered crops. The U.S. capitalists' greedy embrace of the new technology gives them a potential edge over their competitors. Countercampaigns in Europe against such products have had a significant impact.

Last year the countries in the European Union purchased some \$1 million worth of U.S. corn, a tiny fraction of the \$305 million purchased in 1996. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, purchases of U.S. soybeans plummeted in Europe from \$2.6 billion to \$1 billion in 1999.

Demonstrations against genetically engineered foods in Europe often have an anti-U.S. character, featuring slogans against Washington and U.S. food companies.

José Bové, a farmer in France, became something of an international figure after leading nine other men in the ransacking of a McDonald's restaurant in response to Washington's decision to levy high tariffs on Roquefort cheese, paté de foie gras, and other luxury imported food—a retaliation against the European Union's decision to ban U.S. hormone-treated beef. Bové, who was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison for the vandalism, plans to travel to India in September to participate in a protest against genetically modified grain.

Pierre Lellouche, a member of the French Parliament's committee on environmental safety, asserted that there was deep distrust of assurances from the U.S. biotech companies that the food was safe. "The general sense here is that Americans eat garbage food," he said. "That they're fat, and they don't know how to eat properly."

Lellouche's use of such chauvinist language indicates how the campaign against genetically engineered foods is being used to back one or another side in trade wars.

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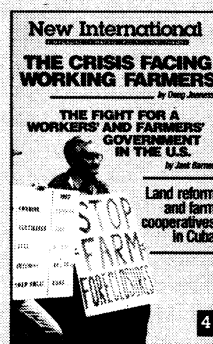
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Platinum miners strike in South Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

RUSTENBURG, South Africa—"Our strike is stronger because the company is feeling the pain now. But the mentality of 1652 is still going on in their minds," says Jacob Tshukudu, 36, who has worked as an underground platinum miner for 13 years.

Tshukudu's union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), struck Anglo American Platinum, the world's largest producer of the metal, on September 18. His reference to 1652—the year that Jan van Riebeeck led three Dutch ships to establish what became the Cape Colony at the southern tip of the African continent—captures part of what this strike by tens of thousands of miners is about.

While the immediate demand is for a pension increase, miners are fighting, in their own words, to be treated as human beings, which necessitates dismantling the organization of labor and social conditions established under apartheid white minority rule.

Anglo American Platinum, or Amplats, a division of Anglo American Corporation, employs about 43,000 miners and refinery workers in South Africa. Seven of these mines, and three smelters, are in this area of the country's Northwest Province, employing approximately 17,000 miners and 3,000 refinery workers, according to NUM organizer Zola Sontonga.

Of these, says Sontonga, at least 12,000 had joined the strike by October 7. This figure does not include strikers at Amplats operations in other parts of South Africa.

Union spokesperson George Molebatsi says a majority of workers at the company's mines in the Northern Province are also on strike. The numbers are fluid because miners belonging to rival unions have not all joined the strike. The company claims that with the exception of the NUM its final offer, "unilaterally implemented" October 4, has been accepted by all unions and staff associations representing half the workforce.

Pension fund increase

The workers' central demand is for a 1 percent increase in the pension fund. The company and NUM have already agreed to a 9 percent wage increase, which is only 1 percent or 2 percent above current fluctuations in the consumer inflation rate. Workers refer to the entire package as a 10 percent demand.

"Minimum salary for a miner is about 1,100 rands a month (about \$150). After deductions, take-home pay is about R900 (\$123). We feel we are being very reasonable in our demands in that their profits are so good," said John Segotlong, 25, a refinery plant operator.

Strikers say the company's refusal to meet their demand for an additional 1 percent for the pension fund is about teaching the union a lesson. "They are aware that our union is prepared to do everything, and that the only union that can represent all the workers is the NUM. It's a matter of testing our power. Already 8 percent of the increase will be taken away by inflation. So we are only asking for 2 percent so we can lead a better life," says Segotlong.

Ever since a wave of workers struggles led to widespread unionization in the mid-1980s, the South African mining bosses have been probing to break or weaken the National Union of Mineworkers, which has 290,000 members in gold, platinum, coal, and other mines throughout the country. Their efforts resulted in the formation of the Mouthpeace Workers Union at Amplats mines in 1996. This organization signed an agreement with Amplats on September 27.

Lizwe Kwezi, 26, who works underground, describes Mouthpeace as "a counterrevolutionary organization." He displays a list, produced by the NUM, of 22 of its members that it says have been murdered by Mouthpeace over the past several years. The courts and police, he says, are complicit in protecting these thugs.

"The company uses Mouthpeace to hurt the NUM," states Kwezi. "Even if you look at their leadership, it includes people who are coming from the AWB [the rightist Afrikaner Resistance Movement]. Mouthpeace is just



South African miners and refinery workers meeting to discuss picketing against Anglo American Platinum in Rustenburg, Northwest Province.

there to counteract government legislation and what the NUM is fighting for." He says the primary adherents of the group are Xhosa speakers from certain regions of the Eastern Cape—and that the company is attempting to play up tribal divisions.

Workers say that the NUM has made headway among some Mouthpeace members, who have joined the strike. In contrast, none of the strikers have crossed the picket line to return to work.

In the first week of October the NUM launched what strikers call the "second phase" of the walkout. "We are embarking on rolling mass action," says Sontonga. NUM refinery workers, whose contract expires at the end of the year, have been called out on a solidarity strike with the miners. A national march of NUM members and their supporters is scheduled in Johannesburg on October 11, where Amplats strikers other unionists will demonstrate outside the company's headquarters.

Apartheid rule turned blacks into rightless noncitizens, and the mining industry in particular was built on the superexploitation of African labor. Black workers were not allowed to take skilled jobs underground; these were filled by whites. All the bosses,

including at foreman level, were white. Legislation introduced by the African National Congress government, such as the Employment Equity Act, aims to introduce affirmative action throughout the economy. Workers in many industries are waging a fight to have the bosses implement the law.

"The company is not prepared to change the system underground," says Tshukudu. "It takes a long time for black miners to be appointed (promoted in a system of job and wage categories). A white man who comes in gets an appointment within 12 months. With black miners it can take up to six years."

"The mine I work in is 1.46 kilometers (about nine-tenths of a mile) underground. It is very hot and very hard work. Most of the bosses are white and only black people are doing the hard jobs. The company is not prepared to adhere to affirmative action laws—they only tell the media that. They say they are 'in the process of implementing' the Employment Equity Act, but they are really in the process of slowing it down. It's a gospel of no event. Black miners want to become electricians, boilermakers, and fitters. But they are not given the opportunity of advancing themselves to a better position."

There are several thousand whites in the

mines and refineries here—most of them foremen or in "skilled" jobs. None have gone on strike. The NUM is a nonracial union, and in some other mining areas has made progress in recruiting white miners, but not in Rustenburg.

Hostel system

The predominant language among miners in the Rustenburg area is Tswana. Many also speak Zulu, Xhosa, and other languages. Amplats recruits miners from throughout South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho, and other countries in the region. The entire mining industry was built on this migration scheme, in which miners are separated from their families by both time and distance. Most still live in single-sex hostels on company property. The NUM has fought for years to do away with the hostel system, but the employers have hardly budged. There are "married quarters," but these are populated only by white mine staff.

Kwezi says: "Last year I lived in a hostel with 10 other men—11 people in one room. There is no sanitation. The toilets are filthy. There is no supervision where black people are staying. The food there is rotten." He now rents a room in a nearby township for R250 of his monthly take-home pay of R1,000. The remainder has to cover food, clothing, transportation fees, and recreation.

Kwezi is from rural Transkei, and only sees his family once a year.

Six years after South Africa's first democratic elections, black life remains cheap in the eyes of the employers. This is especially true in the mines, graveyard of many tens of thousands of Africans over the last 130 years, upon which Anglo American and other mining capitalists built their fortunes. Last year alone, 309 workers were killed underground.

"All that Amplats wants is to maximize profits," says Kwezi. "Last year one of my colleagues went missing underground. We gave information to management, but the very same day, blasting activities took place without any search. Safety equipment is not provided unless government inspectors arrive. Dozens of people were killed in the mine last year."

"Significant changes have not been made. Little changes have," says Segotlong. "But we are determined that as the NUM we will push it to where we want it to be. We've got the hope that we will do it as the union."

Locked-out Fletcher's workers win support

BY BEVERLY BERNADO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—As a result of the fight by meat packers locked out by Fletcher's Fine Foods, and the support the union members have been receiving, the company announced October 4 they were dropping their demand to dock workers' pay if they used the washroom. The bosses haven't backed down on other concessions, however, such as a steep pay cut.

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1518 were locked-out by Fletcher's Fine Foods—a pork processing plant in Vancouver—in August. Since then they have maintained picket lines and recently began leafleting supermarkets urging people not to buy Fletcher's products. Workers voted down a contract 345 to 13 that included a 40 percent wage cut, mandatory overtime at management's discretion, the elimination of negotiated scheduled hours of work, and docking workers' pay at regular rates for using the washroom. If using the washroom for more than 20 minutes per week union members would be deducted at twice their pay rate and if they use the washroom more than 20 minutes per week over a 12-week average, they would be deducted at triple their rate of pay.

At shopping centers around the area, members of the local received a warm response from other working people. Some gave examples of concession demands by

bosses at other companies. Unionists from the Canadian Auto Workers and the International Association of Machinists said they would tell others about the boycott of Fletcher's products. UFCW members on strike against Superior Poultry in nearby Coquitlam have also carried out a leafleting campaign against Costco, which agreed to stop carrying Superior Poultry products in its stores.

Management at several supermarkets tried to intimidate Fletcher's workers from distributing leaflets in front of their stores, saying it was private property and threatening to call the police or go to court to get an injunction. UFCW members stood their ground and showed them a copy of a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that upholds the right of unions to distribute truthful information at secondary targets during a strike or lockout.

The locked-out Fletcher's workers have also received support from the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), which represents federal meat inspectors. PSAC regional executive vice president Patty Ducharme condemned the concessions around washroom breaks as having "the effect of discouraging workers from using proper hygienic practices, such as removing their outer work clothing prior to using the washroom (section 56 (2) of the Meat Inspection Regulations) and it would undoubtedly lead to improper washing and

sanitizing of hands after use of the facilities (Section 56 (1) of the Meat Inspection Regulations."

Bob Jackson, regional vice president of the agricultural component of PSAC added, "It will be federal meat inspectors who will then have the additional burden of monitoring this situation created by a cheap employer." Both urged the public not to purchase Fletcher's products until the lockout is settled.

In a statement expressing appreciation for PSAC's support, UFCW Local president Brooke Sundin stated, "The downward pressure that food processing corporations put on wages and working conditions have very real consequences for not only workers, but the general public. In the last year or so there's been an e-coli outbreak at Fleetwood Sausage in Surrey and at Lakeside Packers in Alberta. When a company like Fletcher's makes such demands, it's not just a matter of a few workers being affected. These issues can affect us all in a very real, very dangerous way."

Workers on the picket line are buoyed by the fact that the company has withdrawn the provisions around bathroom breaks, but remain determined not to accept the boss' demand for wage cuts.

Beverly Bernardo is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1518 locked out by Fletcher's Fine Foods.