

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Canada vote: fragmenting
of bourgeois politics

— PAGE 3

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VOL. 64/NO.47 DECEMBER 11, 2000

Workers in Argentina stage general strike

Oppose government drive against social wage, union rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Factories, airports, railroads and buses, banks, schools, and government offices were shut down in Argentina November 23-24 as millions of workers took part in a 36-hour general strike. The protest was in response to the latest round of austerity measures the government is imposing to meet the conditions demanded by the International Monetary Fund for a new loan needed to cover the interest payments due on the country's \$123 billion foreign debt.

The action was led by Argentina's three major trade union bodies, which organize half the nation's 14 million workers—the two wings of the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) and the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA).

This was the second nationwide strike involving all the major union federations since President Fernando de la Rúa took office last December, and the third and largest strike that has been called in less than a year in South America's second-largest nation.

De la Rúa's latest assault, announced November 10, includes a five-year freeze on federal, provincial, and municipal spending, while providing tax cuts to domestic capitalists and imperialist investors; moves to dismantle the state-run pension system, forcing workers to seek individual retirement funds from private companies; raising the retirement age for women workers from 60 to 65 years; and allowing private companies to compete with state health-



Airline workers join August protest in Buenos Aires against government antilabor moves

care systems, which are currently administered by the unions.

The president is also promoting a bill, already approved by the lower house of Congress, that would end industry-wide contract bargaining, a gain won through battles to organize unions following World War II. The bill, which is awaiting Senate approval, would allow bosses to negotiate

labor agreements plant by plant.

All of these measures are part of an escalating attack by the capitalist rulers on the social conquests won by the working class over previous decades.

The Argentine government is carrying out these moves in order to reach agreement with the IMF for an emergency loan

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Newspaper workers walk out in Seattle

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

BOTHELL, Washington—The evening before Thanksgiving, instead of preparing for holiday festivities, hundreds of Seattle *Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* strikers and their supporters gathered at their union hall in this town north of Seattle. They listened to union speakers, then poured out of the building and headed to the newspapers' printing facility down the street.

As they marched by the company's entrances, many stopped to wait for the trucks that were to deliver the ad-heavy editions of the holiday paper. Dozens of hired union-busters from the Vance Security firm looked on, and local police waited nearby as the strikers stopped each truck, which then took several minutes to inch forward through the crowd.

Members of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild walked out at the *Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* (P-I) November 21 after overwhelming membership votes to strike. The 971 striking Guild members work in circulation, advertising, and journalism, including reporters and photographers.

They struck after five months of negotiations during which the companies' final offer was virtually identical to their starting position. The companies demanded a six-year contract with average pay increases of \$3.30 an hour over the length of the agreement. The union called for a three-year contract with \$3.25 in raises. According to strikers on the picket line, some of the other

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Pathfinder draws interest at Mexico book fair

BY CHESSIE MOLANO
AND ROBERTA BLACK

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—A large turnout has marked the first four days of the Guadalajara International Book Fair, which

opened here November 25. The Pathfinder Press booth at the fair has been a center of political discussion, especially for those seeking revolutionary answers to how to change society.

Held at the modern Guadalajara Expo, this fair attracts book buyers, distributors, and librarians from throughout the Americas. The featured nation at this year's event is Spain, resulting in larger than usual participation from that country.

During the fair's opening weekend, all sessions were available to the public and thousands poured into the sprawling facility.

On several days of the fair, the hours of activity were divided. From 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. it was accessible only to those active in the book trade. These were busy times for booksellers and librarians, many who went from booth to booth. Then the doors opened to the public at 5:00 every evening.

Many youth and others have congregated at the Pathfinder stand during the public hours. A total of 235 books and pamphlets were sold from that booth the first four days.

The Pathfinder stand is being staffed by volunteers from several U.S. cities. Several visitors who stopped by ended up staying for an ex-

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Israeli gov't escalates attacks on Palestinians

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The Israeli regime has continued to carry out a calculated escalation in its military brutality against the Palestinian people. In late November the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) directed strikes by helicopter gunships at targets associated with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, backing up Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak's repeated demand that the Palestinian leadership call a halt to protests in the occupied territories.

Attempts by the PNA to abide by these dictates have only increased the volatility of many areas in the West Bank and Gaza, where heavily armed Israeli forces confront and blockade Palestinian working people and youth.

Faced with an increasingly uncertain future, the Israeli rulers are beset by divisions. Declining support for his government has forced Barak to call new elections for next year.

On November 20 IDF helicopter gunships attacked targets in the Gaza Strip for several hours, firing missiles at the headquarters of the Palestinian police and intel-

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Factionalism and Polarization in U.S. Politics: The Changing Struggle for a Proletarian Party

Hear: Jack Barnes

National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

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'Cuba will be transformed into a giant university'— page 5

Cubans demand extradition of rightist terrorist

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Speaking at a rally in eastern Cuba November 25, Cuban president Fidel Castro emphatically reaffirmed the position he had taken the previous week at the 10th Ibero-American Summit of rejecting a statement by the body that promoted the "antiterrorist" campaign by the imperialist government of Spain.

The resolution, introduced by the Salvadoran regime at the conclusion of the summit and approved by all the governments represented except for Cuba, singled out the Basque pro-independence group ETA as "terrorist." In explaining Cuba's abstention on the vote, Castro pointed to imperialism's bloody role in the world, highlighting Tel Aviv's brutality against the Palestinian people, Washington's responsibility for the tens of thousands killed during El Salvador's civil conflict in the 1980s, and U.S.-backed attacks by right-wing terrorists against Cuba itself.

After arriving in Panama City for the summit, Cuban officials denounced the presence in that country of CIA-trained terrorist Luis Posada Carriles and other counterrevolutionaries who have been involved in numerous attempts to assassinate him, thus virtually forcing the Panamanian government to arrest the rightists.

Posada Carriles was involved in the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados that killed all 73 persons aboard. He has also bragged about his role in a string of bombings in Havana in 1997, including one that killed an Italian tourist. The Cuban government has requested Posada Carriles and other individuals arrested with him be extradited to the island in order to bring them to justice.

The Cuban leadership has launched a public effort demanding the extradition of Posada Carriles. This began with the November 25 demonstration of 30,000 in Guisa, in the eastern province of Granma. Two days later, Castro spoke at a rally of 100,000 youth in Havana, sponsored by the major student organizations, that called on

the Panamanian government to extradite Posadas Carriles to Cuba. He was accompanied by Luis Inácio "Lula" da Silva, leader of the Workers Party of Brazil, who joined in the call for extradition.

In his speech in Guisa, Castro reiterated his government's rejection of the anti-ETA resolution adopted at the summit because of its hypocritical and "selective treatment" of what is deemed terrorism.

Antiterror motion 'cooked up in Spain'

The Cuban leader noted that Salvadoran president Francisco Flores had traveled to Spain before the summit meeting. Castro stated, "His hypocritical statement on terrorism was cooked up beforehand with the government of Spain, an emerging European economic power in Latin America, which at times has been useful in the struggle against the voraciousness of the North, but whose political leadership acts with an evident tendency toward arrogance."

Spanish capitalists have increasingly invested in Latin America in recent years, buying up telecommunications, banks, and other sources of profits.

Castro pointed out that the anti-ETA motion "was immediately seconded by the president of a different Mexico," in a criticism directed at outgoing president Ernesto Zedillo. Mexico, he stated, "is now ruled by the interests, principles, and commitments imposed by the [Free Trade Agreement]."

"Whether because of their neoliberal affinities or the deceitful nature of the issue, the proposal received the support of all the rest" of the heads of state at the summit, Castro said. "Almost all those gathered there, as we know, hold very different political, economic, and social ideas from the revolutionary and ethical ideas of our he-



Granma

Hundreds of thousands rally in Havana in October 1976, condemning bombing of Cuban airliner, which killed all 73 people on board. CIA-trained terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, who was involved in the attack and numerous operations to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro, was arrested November 17, shortly after Castro held press conference in Panama exposing his presence there.

roic people. Yet there was no hesitation in maintaining our position, even knowing beforehand what they would do."

Castro criticized Flores for sponsoring an antiterrorism resolution, being "the president of a country that has been the U.S. base for counterrevolution in Central America and refuge for the worst terrorist known in this hemisphere," referring to Posada Carriles.

He said Flores had falsely feigned ignorance about the rightist's presence in El Salvador. The Cuban government, he said, had given him information about Posada Carriles's whereabouts since October 1999, but the Salvadoran government "did absolutely nothing." At the summit, Flores accused Castro personally of being responsible for tens of thousands of deaths in El Salvador's civil conflict. The Cuban president replied by pointing to the massive military backing Washington had given the Salvadoran regimes in the 1980s to wage its

bloody war against the revolutionary movement.

In Mexico, the government there stated that it would issue no official response to the criticism by the Cuban revolutionary leader "out of courtesy." Castro is expected to visit Mexico and attend the December 1 inauguration of president-elect Vicente Fox. Mexican officials tried to justify their position at the summit, however, by noting that the anti-ETA motion had been approved by all governments present except for Cuba.

The new Fox administration has declared it will campaign around "human rights" and "democracy" as part of its foreign policy. The real character of such a campaign became clear when the daily *El País* of Spain reported that the new foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda, "will continue the antiterrorist collaboration that the government of Ernesto Zedillo provided to Spain."

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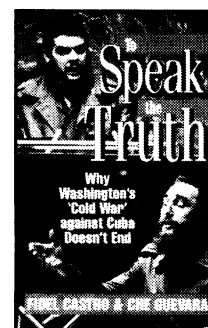
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Tel Aviv steps up armed attacks on Palestinians

Continued from front page

intelligence agencies, as well as the personal security force of PNA chairman Yasir Arafat. Tel Aviv declared that it ordered the barrage in retaliation for the alleged involvement of the Palestinian "military establishment" in the previous day's bombing of a school bus traveling from a Zionist settlement in Gaza. Two people died in that incident.

Three days later, Israeli army officers ordered Palestinian police to vacate "liaison" offices they had shared in Gaza, after an

police and the CIA.

The usefulness of this structure to Tel Aviv, however, is undermined by the refusal of Palestinian workers and farmers to submit meekly before Israeli power. Their resistance continues to be generated by the denial of the Palestinians' right to a real homeland. The areas allotted to the PNA under the treaties are scattered, largely impoverished, and hemmed in by armed Zionist settlements and IDF units.

In the recent unrest the Palestinian cops

from firing from Area A. Orders have been issued regarding this by the Palestinian Security Council." Under the Wye River Accords, the small areas under the PNA's security control, amounting to some 10 percent of the West Bank and 60 percent of Gaza, are designated "A." Areas B and C are patrolled by Israeli forces.

The statement represented the most public attempt to date by the Palestinian leader to clamp down on shooting by official PNA security forces, and especially by the Tanzim

Ariel Sharon of the Likud Party. Sharon, whose September 28 visit to a Muslim holy site in Jerusalem accompanied by 1,000 police precipitated the latest conflict, condemns Barak for allegedly offering concessions to the Palestinian leadership in previous negotiations.

"Arafat is no partner. Arafat is a brutal enemy," Sharon aggressively declared at a November 22 rally in Jerusalem organized under the theme of "Let the Israeli army win."

During the November 20 missile attack on PNA targets, Sharon called on Barak to order the "liquidation" of Palestinian security head Mohammad Dahlan.

U.S.-sponsored 'commission of inquiry'

Meanwhile, Washington has sponsored a "commission of inquiry" into the unrest. Tel Aviv "softened its objections" and agreed to cooperate with the commission after a November 22 meeting between U.S. defense secretary William Cohen and Barak, according to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*. The body is made up of former U.S. senators George Mitchell and Warren Rudman, former president Suleiman Demirel of Turkey, Norwegian foreign minister Thorbjørn Jagland, and European Union representative Javier Solana.

The commission is a bone thrown by Washington to the Palestinians, part of U.S. efforts to gain PLO collaboration in coming to some kind of agreement. The U.S. rulers want to sponsor new "peace talks" because they are concerned that Tel Aviv's heavy-handed military response is a growing obstacle to attaining their shared objective of weakening and eventually defeating the Palestinian national struggle.

The U.S. rulers are also nervous about the implications throughout the Middle East of Tel Aviv's brazen brutality and the refusal of Palestinians in the occupied territories to bow down before it. On a tour of the Middle East, U.S. defense secretary Cohen said November 18 that if the unrest "gets out of control, it will not be confined to Israel."

In another sign of friction between the two governments, the Clinton administration criticized the Israeli army's "excessive use of force" in its November 20 bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

Tensions in the region

On November 21 the Egyptian government withdrew its ambassador from Tel Aviv—only the second time it has done so in 21 years—in protest of the Israeli assault the previous day. Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak has played a prominent role in various negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. Five days later Mubarak met for new consultations with Danny Yatom, a prominent advisor to Barak, where he reported on previous talks with Arafat.

The same day Israeli warplanes struck across the northern border with Lebanon after a bomb attack that killed an Israeli soldier. IDF tanks also shelled positions in Lebanon allegedly held by Hezbollah guerrillas, who are fighting to reclaim border territory known as Shabaa Farms.



Israeli artillery pounds targets in southern Lebanon November 28, after soldier died in bomb blast. Tel Aviv also unleashed air strikes.

explosion in one office killed an Israeli officer. Like the November 20 bombardment and earlier assassinations of prominent Palestinian figures, the eviction was a demonstrative act designed to intimidate and pressure the Palestinian leadership. On November 26 Israeli military officers met Palestinian representatives "to try to renew cooperation," reported the *Times*.

Palestinian Authority's umbilical cord

The Palestinian National Authority structure, established through the U.S.-supervised Oslo and Wye River Israeli-PLO negotiations during the 1990s, is tied by an umbilical cord to the Israeli state. The several different organizations that make up the Palestinian security forces were established with the cooperation of the Israeli secret

have on occasion traded fire with attacking Israeli troops. They have mostly directed their activity at Palestinians, however, including those engaged in protests against Israeli occupation.

The Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group stated in March that 250 political prisoners were being held in Palestinian jails. Some 200 had been held for more than a year without trial.

The PNA's measures against political opposition have led to growing anger among Palestinians. So have the privileges enjoyed by top PNA figures and their associates—privileges that stand in contrast to the miserable living conditions of working people in the occupied territories.

On November 17 Arafat stated, "We are exerting every effort to prevent any element

militia associated with Fatah, whose cadres have frequently been involved in exchanges of fire with Israeli forces. While the decree had some effect, protests, including some that involve the militia, have continued in many locations.

Barak accepts early election

"Shaken by two months of violent conflict with Palestinians, [Barak] yielded Tuesday to demands by the hard-line opposition and said he was ready for early elections...two years ahead of schedule," reported Associated Press journalist Mark Lavie from Jerusalem November 28. Representatives of the Knesset parties have begun talks to set the date.

Barak's government has been under constant attack by its opponents, especially

Vote shows fragmentation of politics in Canada

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—The Liberal Party of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien won a third consecutive term as a majority government in the November 27 federal elections in Canada.

The announced results, as we go to press, are that the Liberals won 173 seats in the federal parliament, and the Canadian Alliance won 67—each gaining 9. The Bloc Québécois won 37 seats, 7 fewer than before; the social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) secured 15, a loss of 6; and the Progressive Conservative Party won 11, a loss of 4.

Voter turnout was one of the lowest in Canada's history at 63 percent, down from an average of 75 percent in federal elections up until the end of the 1980s.

The elections make Chrétien the first prime minister since 1945 to win three consecutive majority governments. In his first press conference the day after the elections, Chrétien proclaimed it "an important day for federalists," referring to the Bloc Québécois loss in Quebec, a comment echoed by Michael Harris, the Progressive Conservative premier in Ontario. While the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties campaigned across Canada, the Bloc, a pro-Quebec sovereignty party, sought support only in Quebec, which is an oppressed nation within the Canadian state.

Commentators noted the failure of the Canadian Alliance, a West-based right-wing party, to win more than two seats east of Manitoba province.

The NDP, historically backed by the unions, made a poorer showing than in the 1997 elections. Many union officials gave back-handed support to the Liberals in the name of preventing gains by the Alliance.

The vote registered three political features above all.

First, despite gains by the Liberals in the

Maritime provinces and Quebec, the elections did not reverse the long-term trend toward the fragmentation and regionalization of bourgeois politics in Canada. This began about a decade ago with the breakup of the two-party monopoly of Liberals and Conservatives that prevailed for most of the 20th century.

Chrétien's Liberals won more than 80 percent of their seats in Ontario and Quebec alone. The Canadian Alliance dominates all provinces west of Ontario, while the Bloc Québécois maintains its base in French-speaking Quebec. This means no capitalist party draws significant support across Canada.

Second, the campaign was marked by the continuing shift to the right in capitalist politics, with a sharpening political polarization and an increasingly coarse and strident tone among bourgeois politicians.

The Canadian Alliance led a decidedly rightist campaign—for the reintroduction of capital punishment, against a woman's right to abortion, for the deportation of undocumented immigrants, for increased power to the police and the courts, and for the privatization of the state-run health-care services.

Playing on Canadian nationalism, the Liberals counterposed themselves as the defenders of "Canadian values" as opposed to what they called the "U.S.-style values" of the Alliance, accusing their opponent of seeking to replace the national Medicare system with a "two-tier" health system and other attacks on social gains. In fact, the Liberal government itself has drastically cut transfer payments to the provinces, which has resulted in a two-tier system in a number of provinces.

In Quebec the polarization was focused around the question of Quebec sovereignty, the heart of the Bloc Québécois program. The Liberals made most of their gains

among people who had voted for the federalist Conservative Party in the 1997 federal elections.

Third, despite its claims to the contrary, the record of the Liberal government indicates that it will use its reinforced majority in Parliament to implement many aspects of the Canadian Alliance program, deepening the assault against working people's social wage, democratic rights, and union organizations that it has led over the last decade with the help of all the other pro-capitalist parties.

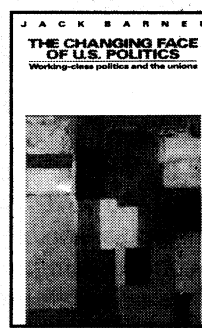
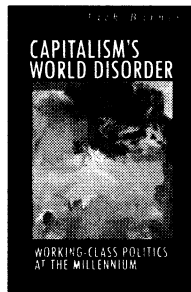
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Clinton pushes market 'reforms' in Vietnam

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. president William Clinton concluded a three-day tour of Vietnam November 19 urging the government to open its markets to U.S. capitalist investors. He was given a red-carpet treatment by top Vietnamese government officials, indicating the regime's desire to grant economic concessions to Washington in hopes that more capitalist investment will give a boost to the country's stagnating economy.

"Hanoi has made it clear that Mr. Clinton is welcome as a friend," the *International Herald Tribune* reported November 17. Banners were strung across highways and buildings greeting Hillary Clinton, who also toured the country.

The U.S. president arrived in Vietnam with an entourage of more than 50 U.S. corporate bosses from Boeing, Nike, General Electric, General Motors, Cisco Systems, Citigroup, Procter & Gamble, and others. These big-business executives seek to deepen U.S. imperialist penetration into the country and take advantage of cheap labor costs there. "Its workers earn high marks from foreign employers—and not just for the low pay," a *New York Times* article noted.

Several companies already have significant investments in Vietnam. By investing in and opening new manufacturing facilities, they hope Vietnam could serve as an export platform for U.S. finance capital. Big-business investors also have an eye toward buying some of the more than 6,000 state-owned enterprises.

Pressing the country's 78 million people to embrace capitalist "reforms," Clinton spoke to 600 students at a November 17 nationally televised meeting at Hanoi National University. "Only you can decide if you will continue to open your markets, open your society, and strengthen the rule of law," he declared.

The U.S. big-business media devoted massive coverage to the warm welcome Clinton received in Vietnam. Le Mai Huong, a recent law school graduate, displayed a different reaction. "America behaves as if its the head of the family," Huong told a *New*

York Times reporter. "It won't listen to anybody and just does what it wants. It wants to impose its subjective ideas on the rest of the world. They keep talking about human rights but I wonder—what America did in the war, was that an example of human rights?"

Vietnam's industrial development was devastated by Washington's brutal war, which lasted more than two decades. Today, more than a third of the population lives in poverty. It is a country rich in mineral resources with sizable deposits in phosphates, manganese, bauxite, chromate, and other metal ores. Production is being developed for oil and gas deposits discovered off the southern shore. But Vietnam's economic output fell 5.8 percent in 1998 and 4.8 percent last year.

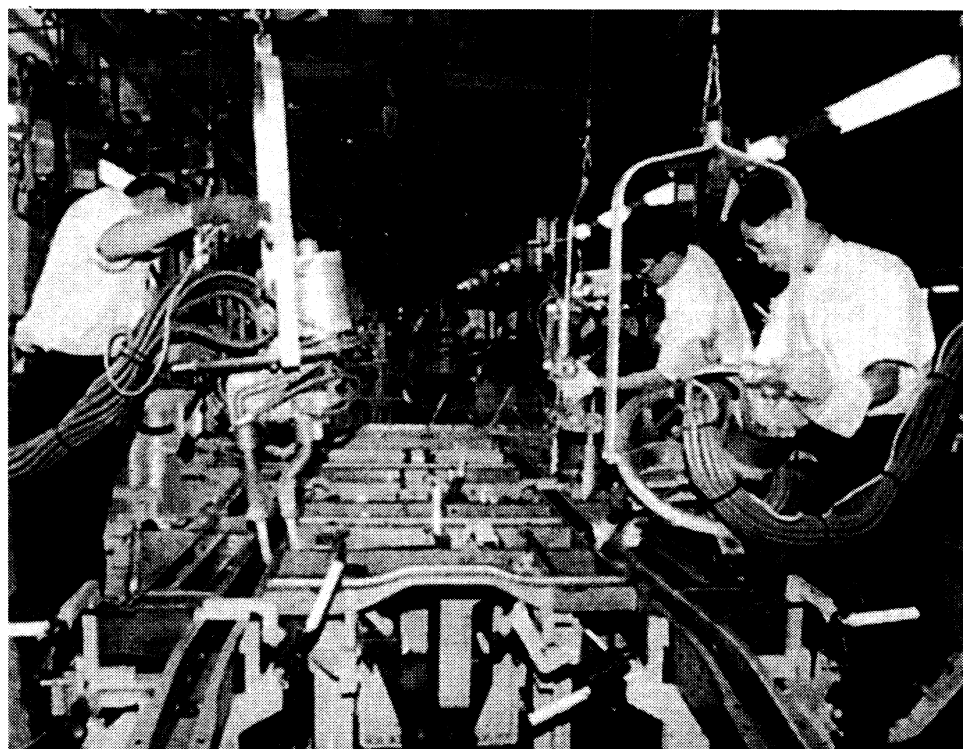
Legacy of Vietnamese revolution

Coming out of World War II, the Vietnamese people stepped up their national liberation struggle to drive out the Japanese and French colonial masters. After the 1954 defeat of the French imperialists at Dien Bien Phu, U.S. presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy sent military advisers to train U.S.-backed forces based in the southern part of the country.

An estimated 3 million Vietnamese people and 58,000 U.S. troops died in the war, which included massive bombardment and dumping of toxic chemicals like Agent Orange that continue to plague the Southeast Asian country today.

In 1975 the U.S. war machine, which involved more than 3 million military personnel, was evicted from Vietnam, marking a political defeat for Washington. Vietnam's workers and peasants subsequently overturned capitalist rule and property relations in the south, strengthening the working class and oppressed worldwide. Despite its bureaucratic deformations, the new regime was forced by the rising tide of revolutionary struggle to establish a state monopoly of foreign trade, nationalize major industries, launch a deep-going land reform, and introduce economic planning.

As a result of the literacy campaigns and



Assembly workers at Ford auto plant in Hai Duong, east of Hanoi.

other education carried out by the liberation movement, Vietnam today has a literacy rate of 94 percent, the highest in Southeast Asia. As punishment for these revolutionary measures, the U.S. government maintained an embargo against Vietnam, refused to normalize relations, and backed an invasion by the Chinese military in 1979.

The bureaucratic leadership sitting atop the Vietnamese workers state granted political concessions to Washington in exchange for normalizing relations. In 1994, the U.S. rulers lifted a trade embargo that had been in place since the war. The following year full diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. Washington's ultimate aim is to reestablish wage slavery in Vietnam, China, and other regions torn from the world capitalist system. However, nothing short of using military force against the toilers in these workers states will accomplish this objective.

Trying to whitewash the history of Washington's brutal efforts to maintain its hegemony in Southeast Asia, Clinton claimed in an interview with CNN November 19, "We had never had any imperialist designs here. The [Vietnam War] was over what self-determination for the Vietnamese people really meant and what freedom and independence really meant."

Clinton's Vietnam visit also included a spectacle at the site where a U.S. warplane was shot down and crashed. A reported 1,500 U.S. GIs are missing from the war. "Gaining the fullest accounting of American prisoners of war and Americans missing in action... is on the top of my agenda for this trip," Clinton asserted, adhering to Washington's ongoing campaign to use this timeworn issue as a political weapon against the Vietnamese people. An estimated 300,000 Vietnamese soldiers are unaccounted for.

'Entrepreneurship, competition'

Clinton wrapped up his tour extolling the virtues of "entrepreneurship, innovation, and competition." He said the trade agreement signed last July between Washington and the Vietnamese government would lead to "a more open, sophisticated free market, based on international rules of law." The trade pact, subject to ratification by the U.S. Congress, mandates Vietnam to reduce tariffs on a broad range of U.S. commodities and to open its telecommunications industry and the country's banking system to foreign investors over seven years. Washington also agreed to reduce the 35 percent import tax it imposed on Vietnam's exports.

Capitalist investments, which poured into Vietnam at a rate of \$4 billion a year over the past decade, trickled to \$1.4 billion last year. Some of the dwindling foreign capital reflects the bosses' difficulties in extracting more profits out of the workforce through speedup and working longer hours. Vietnam's 11 new auto plants, which run at less than 10 percent of capacity, sold only 8,000 vehicles in the first eight months of this year. Ford Vietnam, a joint venture between Ford Motor Co. and a Vietnamese enterprise, makes only 100 of the 14,000 cars that the factory could produce each month.

Hazardous working conditions are prevalent in U.S.-owned plants. An inspection at Nike, the largest private firm in Vietnam with 45,000 workers at five factories, revealed high levels of toxic chemicals at its Tae Kwang Vina facility. Some 77 percent of the workforce suffered respiratory ailments. "Right now, I have good health, but in five years I won't be able to work this job anymore. It is too hard," said Nguyen Anh Ha, a worker at the plant who earns \$50 a month making \$120-a-pair athletic shoes.

Growing pressures from the working class has prodded Vietnamese government officials to debate reducing the official workweek from 48 hours to 40. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is pressing Nike's bosses to campaign against this move.

Meanwhile, anger is bubbling among peasants and farmers who have been pushed off from working the land. Demonstrations over land rights have erupted in the northern provinces and elsewhere.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD — Fight for bilingual education heats up in Arizona

BY CHESSIE MOLANO

TUCSON, Arizona—The fight to defend bilingual education has heated up here in recent weeks. This has been triggered in part by Proposition 203, which was passed November 7. The measure is an English-only proposition which aims to eliminate bilingual education in Arizona schools, replacing it with a one-year English-language so-called immersion program.

Prior to election day more than 400 people marched in downtown Tucson, including many youth. The protest circled the area and took up one lane of traffic. Young Socialists members here set up a literature table and received a number of positive responses. YS members passed out flyers that had a statement on bilingual education as a

right. The flyer referred to the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes.

Larissa Ortiz, who is a senior at the University of Arizona, said that this proposition would be a return to the English immersion classes, called 1C, that were in place from 1919 to 1967. The program lumped together in one class students of all nationalities and languages, including Hispanic, Native American, and Chinese, and of all ages. Throughout the program's existence there has been a dropout rate as high as 60 percent. The *Arizona Daily Star* quoted some who had gone through the 1C class as saying, "Immersion gave students just enough English to survive in a world of

menial labor." The current proposition requires that all classes be taught in English, and that "English Learners" be placed into one-year immersion programs. Any teacher or school official who refuses to comply will be sued, fired, and not allowed to return to work for five years.

Ortiz continued, "This proposition is racist. It doesn't just affect immigrants but everyone." She pointed to the 21 official Native American tribes in Arizona, many of whose languages are on the verge of extinction. She said that many people want to believe that bilingual education is just for immigrants, when in fact it is multinational and helps Hispanic-Americans and English-speaking Americans to learn Spanish.

On November 6 students at the University of Arizona held a hunger strike against the proposition and camped out on the campus overnight. Throughout the day students stopped by an information table on the proposition and the fight to defend bilingual education. That evening about 35 people marched around campus in heavy rain. Juan Carbajal, a student who is very interested in the problems of education reform, said on the new measure, "No one can become proficient after one year. They shouldn't strip our native tongue, but use it as a foundation to teach another language."

The day the proposition was passed, Erik Ortiz, a member of MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan), said, "This is not the first or last attack on minority groups, not only here in Arizona but in the United States. This is the most racist proposition I've heard of."

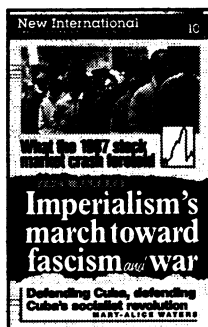
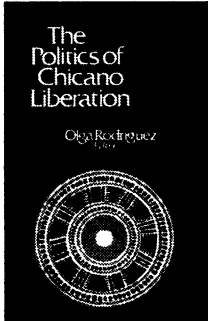
Ten people held a demonstration near the Federal Building November 2, including several youth who are radicalizing over this issue. Marisela, who is in the sixth grade, said, "We were meant to speak two languages and not just one. The Proposition 203 is not fair. Spanish is our culture."

Chessie Molano is a member of the YS in Tucson, Arizona.

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'Our country will be transformed into a giant university'

BY MAGGIE TROWE
AND CATHARINA TIRSEN

HAVANA—During the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba, held here November 10-14, hundreds of conference participants visited the Pathfinder table, located with other publishers and concession stands around a courtyard next to the Karl Marx Theater.

The table was the scene of nearly continuous, lively discussion in English, Spanish, French, and Swedish. Many people visited more than once, not only to read and consider what to buy, but to discuss with the workers and students from the United

French.

Many discussions on women's liberation took place around the table, and most titles on the topic were sold before the conference ended.

Titles on the Palestinian struggle and the Jewish question attracted substantial attention from many participants throughout the conference. An Israeli delegate who has been a reader of Pathfinder books for a good number of years came by to talk. A supporter of the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination, he said Zionism and the Israeli state have nothing good to offer Jews or Palestinians. On a recent visit to New York, he recounted, he bought some books from Pathfinder's new Garment District outlet.

A group of Palestinians participating in the conference came by to talk. One, who had been a political prisoner, said his group wants to work with anyone who is interested in fighting for self-determination for the Palestinian people, including Israeli Jews who have been part of the fight. "What is posed is a fight for a democratic, secular state," said Walid Ahmed of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. "It could be called Palestine or some other name."

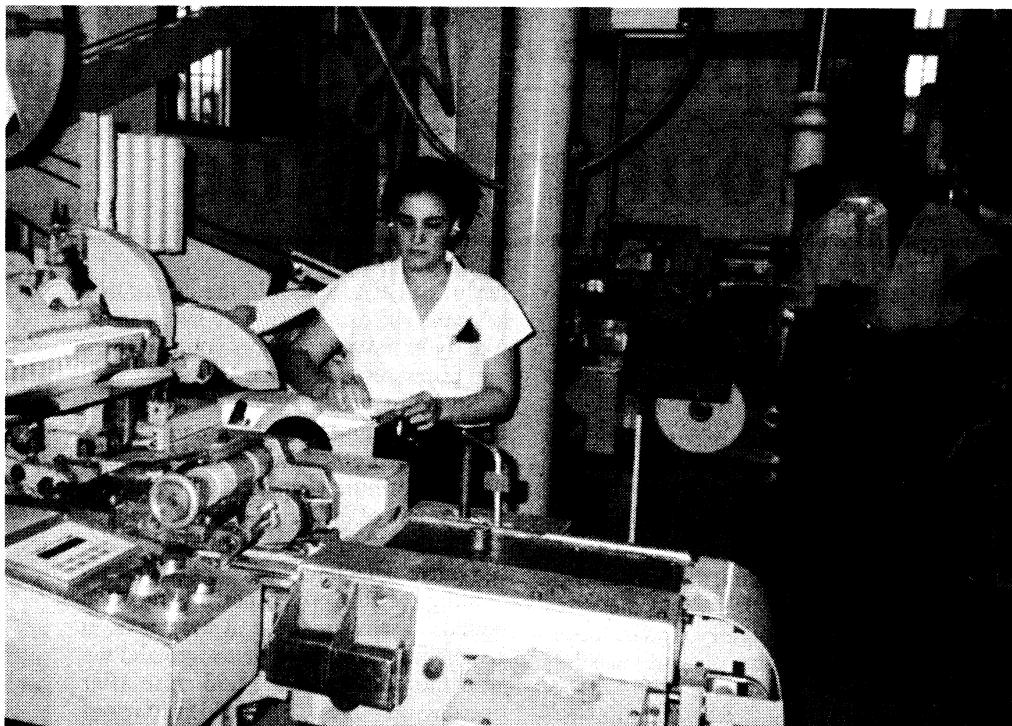
At the Convention Center, where two large workshops were held, two Cubans staffing a souvenir table, Roberto and Alberto Quijano, came by. As they looked over the books, Alberto told about being part of the mass mobilization in response to the U.S.-backed assault at Playa Girón (or Bay of Pigs) in 1961. They were especially interested in *Lenin's Final Fight*, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" in *Nueva Internacional* No. 5, and *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky, and were pleased to learn they could buy books in pesos at the end of the conference.

'Books help draw necessary lessons'

A worker from South Africa, wanted to talk about how the fight for socialism could be strengthened in his country. He said he was frustrated with the South African Communist Party because he thought it was not following a working-class course, and bought *New International* No. 5, which includes the article "The Coming Revolution in South Africa" by Jack Barnes, and *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Holding a copy of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, Corazon Fabros, who is active in Amistad, a Cuba solidarity organization in the Philippines, said, "If you are an activist today, you need to prepare. And these books help you draw the necessary lessons."

"As soon as I finish reading one, I will pass it around," said Sayma Nanyeni, a



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Worker at BrasCuba cigarette factory in Havana. Plant is part of joint venture by Cuban government and BAT, a British company. The surplus generated by workers in this plant was used to finance the opening of a second plant without foreign investment.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

States and other countries who were staffing the table.

A young Puerto Rican opposed to the colonial bondage in which his country is held by the U.S. rulers, bought *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* in Spanish and was interested to learn about the extent of the protests that have taken place in the United States against Washington's naval base on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*, a pamphlet containing interviews with Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda, sold well in both Spanish and English. Cancel Miranda, a strong supporter of the Cuban revolution who was attending the conference, stopped by the Pathfinder table to talk for a while as well.

Nicolás, a Colombian student, said he supported the Cuban revolution and thought Colombia needed to follow the same road, but he didn't think a revolutionary leadership adequate to the task existed yet in his country. "I would be dishonest if I joined one of the political organizations in Colombia today," he said.

He stressed that for working people to confront the onslaught of the capitalist crisis in his country, building a revolutionary organization was at the top of the agenda. He spent some time browsing through and reading books on the U.S. class struggle.

A Bolivian woman born in France, together with her daughter, a medical student in Guadalajara, Mexico, came to the table twice. They were particularly interested in the fight for women's rights. After extended discussion in three languages they decided to purchase the three-part Education for Socialists bulletin *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation* and a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* in

Namibian journalist, who carefully considered numerous titles, and walked away with James P. Cannon's *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, as well as several issues of the magazine *New International*.

All told, the political work of the volunteers at the Pathfinder booth netted more than \$2,100 in sales of books, pamphlets, and periodicals. The four best-sellers were *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, with 24 sold in English and Spanish; *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes, with 20 sold in English and Spanish; *Capitalism's World Disorder*, also by Barnes, with 14 sold in English, Spanish, and French; and 12 copies in three languages of the issue of *New International* with the article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War."



'To be educated is the only way to be free'

One of the most important developments in Cuba in recent months is an intensified campaign to broaden the availability of quality educational tools for every student and to increase the access of every adult to ongoing higher education. Everywhere in Cuba today you see and hear enthusiastic references to *La Universidad para Todos*—"The University for All." Cuban president Fidel Castro spoke about this effort in his speech at the closing session of the conference. The eloquent phrase of 19th century Cuban revolutionary leader José Martí, "To be educated is the only way to be free," is the watchword of the day.

At 3:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday, students at the Olof Palme high school in Havana crowd into three classrooms, each with a new TV set, to watch a program teaching English. So do many other students at high schools all over Cuba.

"We don't have enough English teachers," explains Luis, a student teacher at the high school. The TV programs with classes taught by some of Cuba's best educators will help overcome that shortfall—including training the students to understand and use the language more, he tells us, as opposed to knowing just the vocabulary and grammar.

The school has recently been provided with new television sets, one for every 50 students. The same are being provided to every school in Cuba. In remote mountain areas where there are still schools without electricity, solar electric panels are being installed to generate power, reported Luis Ernesto Morejón, a young Cuban who is involved in the planning of the new education programs.

The English classes are also broadcast at 7:00 a.m. and at 11:00 p.m., two days a week, for all Cubans who want to study. The remaining three days of the week, a Spanish class is broadcast. The high school students get the accompanying textbook free, as they do all school books, but they are available in tabloid format for others to buy at a price of 2.5 pesos, about one-tenth of the price of most books.

The Cuban daily *Granma* recently reported that a total of 1 million television sets would be purchased from China. Some 700,000 of the color TVs will be

sold in Cuban pesos with interest-free loans provided on installment plans of up to five years, allowing many Cubans to replace their old black-and-white sets. In addition, 100,000 TVs will be provided to schools and other institutions, according to the report, and 200,000 will be sold in the dollar stores.

"We want to create a society with full opportunities for all," Castro explained in his closing remarks to the world solidarity conference. In capitalist countries, "human beings are a surplus," he noted. "That can not happen under socialism—a human being can never be a surplus. You can call us utopians, but if we had not studied, there would never have been a revolution of the humble and for the humble."

Computer clubs for youth

Rafael Tamayo is part of the national leadership of the Joven Clubs de Computación, a national effort to expand computer clubs for young people in every municipality in the country, making computers more widely accessible and advancing computer literacy, including among preschool and primary school students. There are now 174 clubs in 168 municipalities, with plans to increase the number to 300 clubs by April 2001. This initiative too, Tamayo said, is a national priority.

"Our country will transform itself into a gigantic university," Castro said at the September 13 celebration of the 13th anniversary of the Youth Clubs. "The heroic resistance of these last 10 years is what has given us the right to fulfill many dreams."

There is widespread enthusiasm for these educational measures in Cuba. One of the many places these steps are being discussed is among workers preparing the May 2001 congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC). One section of the resolution being discussed in every workplace prior to the election of delegates states, "Our union movement decisively embraces Fidel's idea of transforming our people into one of the most educated in the world, and we commit all our cadres, leaders, and members to the sustained effort that this implies...."

"Cuban workers, through higher levels of education, have acquired an elevated political culture. This must now be integrated into a higher culture of the general type, which includes work culture, economics, history, science, art, and literature, with a full understanding of Martí's profound statement that without education no freedom is possible."



'Those who work in the fields are paid more'

For Emilio Molina and fellow cooperative member Pedro, the workday starts at 4:00 a.m. That is when they load up the truck with bananas, sweet potatoes, and other products from the agricultural production cooperative (CPA) called "Friendship between Cuba and the Nordic Countries." Then they drive from the cooperative outside the town of Güira de Melena in Havana province into the market at the corner of A and 27th Streets, in the Plaza municipality of Havana.

"That is when we start, in order to be there before 8:00 a.m. when the market opens every day," says Molina. He shows some

Continued on page 11



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Pathfinder table at Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity in Havana was a center of nonstop political discussions.

Newspaper workers walk out in Seattle

Continued from front page

issues that led them to strike are the two-tier wage system, the lack of sick leave or sick pay, and the need for improved pension benefits.

One of the strikers at the expanded picket line here expressed a sentiment that is often repeated by her fellow strikers. Maxx Ewing, a worker for 11 years in the classified ad department of the *Times*, explained that, while wages were important, the fight is also about something else: "It's about the way they treat us. It's about dignity. And because of that the people will stay out, because the truth is with us."

Others at the Bothell strike action included members of Teamsters Local 174 who are honoring the Guild lines, as well as unionists from the International Association of Machinists, United Food and Commercial Workers union, Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), Musicians union, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and other members of the King County Central Labor Council.

Solidarity from former Boeing strikers

Many striking Guild members are especially appreciative of the solidarity from members of SPEEA, who struck Boeing for 40 days in February and March of this year and beat back the company's contract demands. The picket site at the printing plant, like the sites at the newspapers' offices, are marked by burn barrels provided by unionists from SPEEA who used these during their strike. Unlike the regular open barrels, these have covers and a long chimney extending above everyone's heads. When filled with burning wood, they produce a lot of heat and an impressive plume of orange smoke.

One of the best-received speakers at the union hall earlier in the evening was a mem-

ber of SPEEA, who told the crowd that after the strike at Boeing he had learned that "you have to support your brothers and sisters every chance you get."

Spending a short time on the picket lines is enough to see the broad support for the strikers. Lani Mao, who has worked for nine years in the circulation department of the *Seattle Times*, brought her mother with her to the picket line the day after Thanksgiving. "I insisted on coming," said Louise, her mother. She added, "I was on strike at Marmaxx in Las Vegas a couple of years ago and we won the union and a \$1.50 raise after one day on strike." She held the largest sign with four big letters on it—HONK. Car after car hit their horns as they cruised by, including bus drivers and truckers.

A young woman walked up with a carafe of tea for the pickets, explaining that she had previously worked at a coffee shop nearby. Several retirees were also walking on the line. Taxi drivers have stopped by and donated firewood, cookies, and pizza.

One of the strikers, Kim Pham, recently graduated from college and was hired as a newsroom copy aide at the *P-I* two weeks before the strike. "I'm supporting the labor movement," she said. "This is not only for the *P-I*. This is part of history. I wouldn't be learning what I'm learning here if I was in the office." Kim explained that earlier she had brought her roommates to the picket line and that they really liked being there.

Owners out to weaken union

The owners of the *Times* and *P-I* have made it clear they are out to weaken the union, or worse. In their joint strike preparations, the companies erected eight-foot-high chain-link fences around their prop-



Unionists on strike against *Seattle Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* take a break from walking picket line to read over the union's newspaper, the *Seattle Union Record*.

erty and boarded up the first-floor windows. They hired replacement workers and Vance Security. This is the notorious union-busting outfit that has been used against striking coal miners, the Caterpillar strikers in Illinois, and many others.

In its November 23 issue, the *P-I* stated, "All full-time *Times* employees currently on the job are receiving an 'appreciation bonus' of \$100 a day, plus overtime. 'We are reimbursing people in advance for the dislocations in life they are facing,' Sizemore said. The *P-I*'s Oglesby said bonuses are planned at the conclusion of the strike"

Mason Sizemore is the president of the *Times* and Roger Oglesby is the editor of the *Post-Intelligencer*.

Both papers have continued to publish during the strike even though their editions are sharply slimmed down, some as small as 24 pages. The papers are being distributed free, and in the first few days of the strike company phone lines were not available for subscription cancellations.

Teamsters Local 174, with 81 drivers, has refused to cross the Guild picket line. On the other hand, another Teamsters local has yet to take such a stand, and Graphics Communications Union Local 767M, which organizes the pressmen at the *Times*, has stayed on the job.

In a move to tap the broad solidarity for the strike, the Newspaper Guild has begun publishing the *Seattle Union Record*. First published online, the paper came out with its first print edition of 30,000 November 24. It carries general news articles as well as articles on the strike and from the picket line. It states, "This is not the first edition of the *Seattle Union Record*. We take the name from history. The original *Union Record* was a labor-backed paper during the era of the general strike of 1919, during which 65,000 Seattle workers silenced the city for five days."

The *Eastside Journal*, which had printed the November 24 issue of the *Union Record*, refused to print more issues after being contacted by Frank Blethen, publisher of the *Times*. The union has since announced that it found another printer for following editions.

Ernie Mailhot works in the meatpacking industry in Seattle.

Titan Tire strikers in Mississippi hold firm

BY SUSAN LAMONT

NATCHEZ, Mississippi—"Everyone is looking at this fight. If Taylor is successful in doing away with the union, it would affect all the other manufacturers who are looking to do the same thing. But we're going to win this," said Titan strike activist James White here. White is a tire builder and has worked for 30 years at Titan Tire's plant in this city located on the Mississippi River.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has set a hearing for after January 1 next year, to be held at the Adams County courthouse here, following its August ruling that Titan Tire Corp. owes back pay and jobs to workers who have been on strike at the Natchez plant since Sept. 15, 1998. The strikers are members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 303L.

Besides the unionists in Natchez, some 670 members of USWA Local 164 have been on strike at Titan's Des Moines plant since May 1, 1998.

The strike here began after Titan Tire International owner Maurice Taylor bought the Natchez plant from Fidelity Tire Manufacturing Co. in August 1998. Fidelity's parent company, Condere Corp., had filed for bankruptcy in 1997 and laid off hundreds of workers. Out of 500 union members who had been at the plant, less than 250 were working as of Sept. 4, 1998, the last day of work under Fidelity. Despite a court order to honor the previous labor contract with the Steelworkers, Taylor immediately began to go after the union.

Pursuing unfair labor practice charges against Titan Tire, the USWA won a victory when the NLRB found earlier this year that Titan and Fidelity Tire were "alter egos"—meaning that they shared the same equipment, customers, and managers. Titan therefore did not have the right to fire those who were working when it took over the plant without first negotiating with the union.

An administrative law judge will oversee the hearing, in which the NLRB, USWA, and Titan Tire will be able to call witnesses and present testimony. If the judge rules against Titan, the company can appeal the

decision to a panel of NLRB judges and then to the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals.

According to the November 24 *Natchez Democrat*, the NLRB complaint against Titan charges that "in August 1998, Taylor threatened to fire employees, lower wages, move the work to another plant, or close the plant because of employees' involvement with the union; that Taylor asked employees to remove the union as their collective bargaining representative in August 1998; that since November 1998, Titan refused to give the union requested information about pay rates and hiring dates for production and maintenance employees; that Titan refused to give the union information about contractor Mark E. Mason; and that Titan refused to give the union information about daily production at the plant." Mason was furnishing Taylor with scabs.

Taylor, whose brazen union-busting tactics and rhetoric have helped harden Steelworkers in their long fight, thumbed his nose at the complaint, calling it "laughter in its highest extent." A few weeks before the complaint was filed, he referred to NLRB regional director Curtis Wells as "brain dead and dumb."

Taylor filed a lawsuit in late September against the USWA, under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), seeking "damages" of \$240 million from the union (see last week's *Militant*).

Striking workers from both the Des Moines and Natchez plants traveled to Las Vegas in early November to draw attention to Taylor's union-busting actions at an International Tire Expo, a large trade show that drew thousands of automotive equipment manufacturers, distributors, and dealers. In October, Titan strikers were joined by Steelworkers locked out at AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio, for actions in Detroit aimed at gaining support for their fight.

According to the October 25 *Solidarity News*, available on the USWA web site, Titan strikers also joined with Teamsters, auto workers, Newspaper Guild members, other USWA members, and other unionists in the

area in a 500-strong march to back janitors on strike in Southfield, Michigan.

USWA Local 303L members maintain round-the-clock pickets at the Natchez plant. Their determination is expressed by strikers on the picket line and at the union hall. "It's very important that the Steelworkers stand up, which is what we're doing," striker James White emphasized. "The union is stronger because of this fight. We have more solidarity, more people standing together. Before the strike, you couldn't see that, but now you can."

Susan LaMont is a sewing machine operator and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Centreville, Alabama. Brian Taylor, a textile worker, also contributed to this article.

Workers end strike at Frigidaire plant

BY BECKY ELLIS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—The strike by 1,680 members of International Association of Machinists Local 623 at the Frigidaire freezer plant in St. Cloud, north of this city, ended November 18. Union members had voted down a revised contract offer. But, following the rules of the union, officials organized a second vote on whether to continue the strike. The 680 votes in favor of continuing the strike fell 52 votes short of the two-thirds majority required under union rules. The revised contract offer now goes into effect.

The chief issue in the strike was medical insurance costs. Before the strike the company proposed increasing insurance premiums paid by workers far beyond projected pay raises of 12 percent over three years. After workers rejected the initial contract offer, the bosses offered a revised proposal with slower movement toward higher wages and a cap on health-care costs.

The original contract that workers rejected by a 3-1 margin on October 28 would

have pushed up the employee share of family medical premiums by 35 percent in the first year, with unspecified increases for the following two years. The revised contract limits workers' cost increases for family coverage to \$20 a month in both the second and third years.

Workers were also seeking to improve working conditions, including some control of production rate increases. According to one worker, the line speed had increased from 550 units per shift to 1,300 units per shift over a three-year period. The new contract calls for two full-time union officers in the plant, one to handle safety concerns and another to deal with issues such as production speed. The contract allows the union to call in a "consultant" to review production speed.

Some workers spoke out against the new settlement. "I'm not very happy at all," Ken Nordman told the *St. Cloud Times*. He has worked at the freezer factory since 1988. "We got a raw deal. I was planning on sticking it out another month, two months."

Workers in Argentina stage general strike

Continued from front page
that could total more than \$20 billion—a huge new debt to pay interests on the existing debt to U.S. and other international banks. The concern of imperialist financial institutions is that the Argentine government might default on the debt. According to an article in the *Financial Times* of London, “Argentina accounts for up to a quarter of tradeable emerging market debt and there are fears over possible contagion if it were pushed into default.”

Recession devastates working people

The government's austerity measures come in the midst of a two-year recession, which has had the biggest impact on working people as growing numbers have lost their jobs. Argentina's unemployment rate is now officially at 15.4 percent.

In the 1990s the Peronist administration of Carlos Menem sold off most state-owned industries, from the oil company to the railroads and utilities, resulting in massive layoffs, including many workers in union jobs that were considered relatively stable.

At the same time, the peso was pegged to the U.S. dollar, which has led to the virtual dollarization of the Argentine economy, resulting in high prices and the devastation of workers' living standards.

In carrying out this offensive, the Menem government took advantage of the fact that the labor bureaucracy in Argentina has subordinated the unions politically to the Peronist party since it was founded in the mid-1940s by bourgeois nationalist leader Juan Perón. During the years of Perón's rule, the Argentine working class wrested an expanded social wage and organized powerful trade unions.

It is these social conquests that the imperialists are pressing the government to take on more directly. When Menem used up his political capital after years of brutal assaults and economic crisis, the bourgeoisie turned to de la Rúa, who took office in December, to continue the assault.

Roadblocks throughout the country

The national strike was originally called by the CTA and the “dissident” wing of the CGT, led by truckers union chief Hugo Moyano, to protest the death of Aníbal Verón, a laid-off bus worker who was killed when cops attacked 100 protesting unemployed workers blocking a road in the northern province of Salta.

The strike began November 23 when workers around the country walked out of factories and offices, and proceeded to set up road blockades—a method of struggle borrowed from the *piqueteros*, the unemployed workers in the provinces who have set up pickets on highways over the past half decade to draw attention to their critical situation.

The following day, the main wing of the CGT joined the strike, as workers from hospitals, trains, gas stations, banks, and garbage collection services, among others, took to the streets. Schools were also shut down tight. Union officials report that more than 90 per-

cent of the country's labor force walked off the job.

In Buenos Aires, the country's capital, bus traffic ground to a halt. Workers set up a soup kitchen in front of the government house at the Plaza de Mayo, while others banged pots and pans at the parliament building.

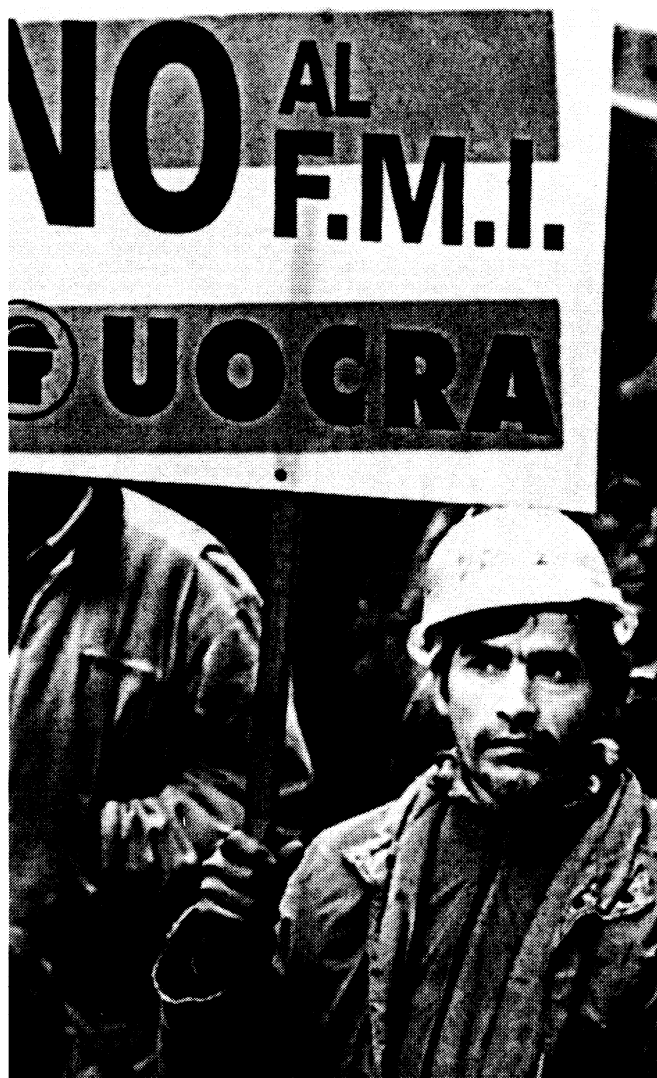
“We just can't go on like this anymore,” said José Martínez, a laid-off textile worker and father of four, on his way to the rally at the Congress Plaza. “My children are suffering because I can't find work, and this government isn't doing anything to help me.”

Provinces are seething

Unionists blocked bridges and roads in all 23 provinces. About 700 workers successfully blocked the highway connecting Buenos Aires with La Plata. In the south, 500 workers blocked traffic on one of the bridges that connects the provinces of Neuquén and Río Negro.

In Córdoba, a major industrial center, the government deployed 2,500 cops as unionists held marches, blocked roads, and rallied in the city center. Metalworkers organized pickets in the industrial belt outside the city, as 150 auto workers blocked the road in front of the Volkswagen plant with burning tires. Truckers, electrical workers, and municipal employees also organized actions.

While the international big-business media gave coverage to the general strike, it has virtually blacked out the eruptions of protest throughout the provinces, where social conditions are most critical (see accom-



Workers in Buenos Aires protest Argentine government's austerity measures, in action leading up to previous general strike in June. Union sign reads: “No to IMF.”

panying article). Jobless workers have repeatedly blocked roads in cities around the country demanding jobs, not just the make-work programs offered by the government.

In mid-November, more than 3,000 unemployed workers blocked National Highway 3 in La Matanza, an industrial district in Buenos Aires province—and historically a center of the meat-packing industry—where today some 476,000 people live be-

low the official poverty line. The action was led by the CTA and another union organization. Protesters demanded food, jobs, and improved social services. In Argentina barely 5 percent of jobless workers are covered by unemployment insurance.

Concerned about a bigger social explosion, the government quickly promised to distribute 20,000 kilos of dry food per month for six months, build five schools and repair the existing ones, three “mobile hospitals,” and 5,500 make-work jobs.

In General Pacheco, also in Buenos Aires province, workers blocked the road and set up a soup kitchen for local residents. “We don't want charity, we want jobs,” they chanted.

Farmers protest

Northwest of Buenos Aires, in Henderson, a town of 8,000, more than 1,000 farmers and other working people stormed City Hall to protest the lack of aid to victims of recent flooding. “The politicians leave us to the mercy of God. They do nothing. No one takes charge of the situation, while the people face ruin,” said an angry farmer, Héctor Mateos, whose land is under water.

In the southern province of Chaco, farmers used trucks to block national highways 9 and 16. They demanded credit, lower fuel prices, and government assistance to plant their crops.

One of the most devastated regions is the north of Argentina, especially Salta, where the privatization of the oil industry in 1991 led to mass layoffs and official unemployment today is 25 percent. On November 10, cops assaulted unemployed workers blocking highway 34, killing one protester, Aníbal Verón, a bus worker who had been laid off a year ago and had not been paid his last seven paychecks.

The killing set off a wave of angry protests throughout Salta, and eventually led to the calling of the general strike.

Meanwhile, Indalecio Calermo, a bilingual schoolteacher and Wichi Indian chief led 200 Indians in another blockade of the highway in Salta province. The Indians, who belong to the Chorote, Wichi, Toba, Chulupí, Tapiete, Guaraní, and Chané tribes, demanded land and 1,200 jobs for their community.

Farming community in Neuquén erupts

The following article is an example of some of the numerous small-scale social explosions that have erupted in Argentina's provinces in recent months. The article, titled “Violent incidents at Neuquén tollgate,” appeared in the October 29 issue of *Clarín*, one of country's main dailies. The translation is by the *Militant*.

It was a veritable pitched battle between the police and the people. As we go to press, the mood remains hot. It happened on Provincial Route 7, which links this city to the farming community of Centenario. The population there, furious about having to pay tolls

and being met with repression in response to their protests, burned a truck belonging to the toll company. Rubber bullets and tear gas were fired, leaving one person wounded and two overcome [by tear gas].

The cities of Neuquén and Centenario are closely linked on a daily basis. To travel from one to the other, residents must pay a 75-cent toll. This is why they cut an alternate road through the surrounding farms about two months ago. The company Caminos de Comahue [which runs the toll road] closed off that road and launched a legal battle involving mutual charges, while local residents continued to open new paths and the company continued to shut them down.

The most recently built road was blocked

yesterday by a semitrailer. At 6:00 p.m., outraged residents arrived from both sides. It began with about 200 people and grew to 1,000.

The police on the scene received reinforcements of officers, who began to descend from the hills firing tear gas.

Federico Frachia, 42, a member of the antitoll movement, was hit in the neck by a tear gas canister and ended up in the Centenario hospital, unconscious but not in danger. Two other people were overcome by the gas.

The police, however, ran out of ammunition and took refuge in the toll booth. That's when some demonstrators set fire to the truck blocking the road they wanted to travel through.

El Salvador moves to adopt U.S. dollar

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a move to attract foreign investment into El Salvador, President Francisco Flores announced November 22 that his government would introduce a law in Congress to fix the local currency, the colon, to the U.S. dollar and allow free circulation of the dollar in the economy. Working people will bear the brunt of this move, which will mean high prices for basic necessities and reduced buying power for their wages.

Washington and the International Monetary Fund welcomed the Salvadoran regime's currency plan. But they stressed that adopting the dollar by itself would not be enough, making clear that austerity measures must also be adopted to meet the approval of imperialist bankers and businessmen.

If approved, El Salvador would be the third Latin American country to formally adopt the dollar. Earlier this year, the government of Ecuador scrapped the national currency, the sucre, and replaced it with the

U.S. dollar. The move sparked numerous protests by Ecuadorian unions and Indian organizations opposing its ruinous effects on the big majority of the population. Panama has used the dollar as official tender since U.S. imperialism imposed its domination on that nation in the early 1900s.

In addition, Argentina has pegged the value of its peso to the dollar, one for one, and the U.S. currency is freely used for most transactions there. There is also debate in big-business circles about Mexico adopting the dollar as official currency.

The U.S. government insists it will not change its monetary or exchange rate policies for the benefit of economies that have adopted the dollar, nor would the Federal Reserve stand behind their banking systems.

The Salvadoran government's plan is for the dollar to enter circulation on Jan. 1, 2001. The colon would also remain legal tender, at a fixed exchange rate of 8.75 colons to the dollar.

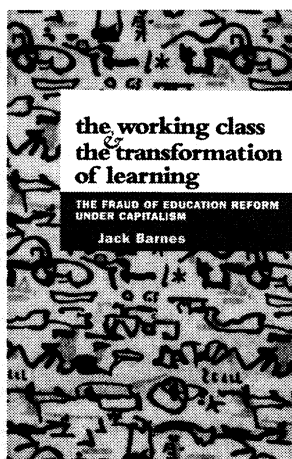
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Peru rulers oust Fujimori, seek stable regime

Continued from Page 12

Playing on widespread insecurity and fear of the future among the middle classes and other layers of society, he posed as an outsider untarnished by the corruption of the traditional capitalist politicians. He presented the image of a savior standing above classes who could "solve things" by drastic measures, even at the cost of curtailing democratic rights. This kind of regime, to which the capitalist rulers sometimes resort to restore stability in times of acute social crisis and political impasse, is historically known as Bonapartist.

Fujimori initially won support by claiming responsibility for bringing down inflation and dealing crippling blows to the Stalinist antigovernment guerrillas of Shining Path. In 1992 he gained further popular backing when he staged a "self-coup" by suspending the constitution and dissolving Congress on grounds that it was ineffective in dealing with the guerrilla insurgency and corruption.



Demonstration against the government of Fujimori in Lima, October 23.

As soon as he was inaugurated, the president decreed brutal austerity measures, meeting the International Monetary Fund's demands by eliminating government subsidies and lifting price controls, among other "Fujishock" measures. His regime went on to sell state-owned enterprises to capitalist investors, throwing thousands of workers out of work.

Today, more than half of Peru's population of 27 million live below the official poverty line. Last year the combined rate of unemployment and underemployment stood at 50 percent.

In the name of fighting terrorism, the regime gave expanded powers to the military and arrested thousands of working people and political activists, convicting them of terrorism charges in kangaroo courts with "faceless judges." Montesinos, who had longstanding ties to the CIA, oversaw this campaign of repression.

In April 1997, Fujimori ordered the storming of the Japanese ambassador's residence, killing all 14 guerrillas of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement who had been holding hostages for four months. The Clinton administration and other capitalist governments praised Fujimori's atrocity as a blow against "terrorism."

Washington also applauded the Fujimori regime's economic measures, and foreign investment began to pour in, as capitalists bought up former state-owned companies

for a song.

Nonetheless, over the years Fujimori's demagoguery wore thin with the irresolvable economic crisis, as working people began to recover from the retreat of the early 1990s. Protests began to mount.

In September, about 100,000 truckers joined public transportation workers in a nationwide strike demanding a freeze on gasoline prices and a cut in oil taxes. The truckers blocked several highways connecting the provinces, cutting off supplies to refineries and gas stations. "The prices of oil go up every time the government needs cash. A lot of taxes are paid on oil, an important input for the transportation sector," said Joaquín Ormeño, president of the Truckers Federation of Peru (CTP), who noted that fuel prices had increased 60-fold during Fujimori's regime.

In mid-October, 1 million farmers went on a 48-hour nationwide strike, staging public meetings and marches, including in Lima. They demanded cheap credit, debt relief, and other measures to compensate for the high prices of fertilizer and pesticides. Farmers blocked the Panamerican highway at different points in the southern provinces of Ica, Arequipa, Moquegua, and Tacna as well as to the northeast on the road to Ecuador.

This renewed labor and peasant resistance will be confronting the new regime in Lima. Working people are likely to sense the weakness of the government and gain confidence in fighting for their demands.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Cuban Revolution Today and the Intensifying Struggle of Workers and Farmers Worldwide. Speakers: Randy Jasper, Wisconsin dairy farmer, participated in U.S. delegation to year 2000 congress of National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) in Cuba and just returned from United Kingdom, where he met with farmers and truckers protesting fuel prices. Sun., Dec. 3, 3:00 p.m. Reception 2:30 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland in Chicago, 2nd floor (at Milwaukee and Division). Tel: (773) 342-1780.

IOWA

Des Moines

Farmers Confront Worldwide Crisis of Agriculture: From Iowa and Wisconsin to the United Kingdom and Cuba. Speakers: Randy Jasper, Wisconsin dairy farmer, activist in the American Raw Milk Producers and recently returned from London, where he participated in the protest demanding government relief from rising fuel prices that are crippling family farmers; Larry Ginter, Iowa hog farmer, member of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, active in struggles for immigrant rights in Marshalltown. Sat., Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 3720 6th Ave. Donation: \$4 for program, \$5 for dinner. Tel: (515) 288-2970.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Superannuation is a Right for All! Discussion on a proposed superannuation fund, and why working people must defend the social wage as an entitlement. Fri., Dec. 8, 7:00 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, (near the Theatre Royal) 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3)365-6055.

CALENDAR

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Boston

Cuba Today. Panel of activists who visited Cuba in 2000. Gabriel Camacho, president of Massachusetts Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, member of trade union delegation to Cuba in July; Dexter Randall, Vermont dairy farmer and rural activist. Part of observers' delegation of U.S. farmers to May congress of National Association of Small Farmers in Cuba; Nalda Vigezzi, leader of July 26 Coalition and member of U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange, just back from Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba, held in Havana. Sponsors: July 26 Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba; Roxbury Community College Caribbean Focus; Massachusetts Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. Wed., Dec. 6, 7:00 p.m. Roxbury Community College, Academic Building, Room 121, Tremont St. at Cedar. By T. Orange Line to Roxbury Crossing.

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Norton Sandler and Bill Estrada participated in the team staffing the Pathfinder booth at the just completed Guadalajara Book Fair, the largest in Latin America.

Report Back from Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico

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Pathfinder is a center of political discussion at book fair in Mexico

Continued from front page

tended period. In a few instances, the discussions continued over coffee after the fair ended for the night.

At last year's book fair a frequently asked question was, "Who are you and where do you come from?" The new Pathfinder pamphlet *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, just published in English and Spanish, has helped address that question and we have steered many visitors to this title and others for an explanation.

Questions about U.S. politics

At this year's book fair, the question often asked has been, "How can a publishing house that prints socialist and revolutionary books operate in the United States," the dominant imperialist country? The implication is that the United States is one reactionary bloc with a passive working class. We have answered by explaining that in the United States there is growing hunger for these kinds of books among workers and farmers as the resistance to the employing class and its government increases.

An attractive display of the cover of the Spanish-language edition of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* has drawn many to the booth. A number of youth who came over, however, said they identified with the image of Ernesto Che Guevara but not with Cuban president Fidel Castro or the Cuban revolution today. Some echoed a slander, propagated by opponents of the Cuban revolution, that Fidel Castro "stabbed Che Guevara in the back" by supposedly not supporting the guerrilla front Guevara led in Bolivia in 1967 when the Argentine-born revolutionary was captured and killed by

CIA-trained Bolivian army troops.

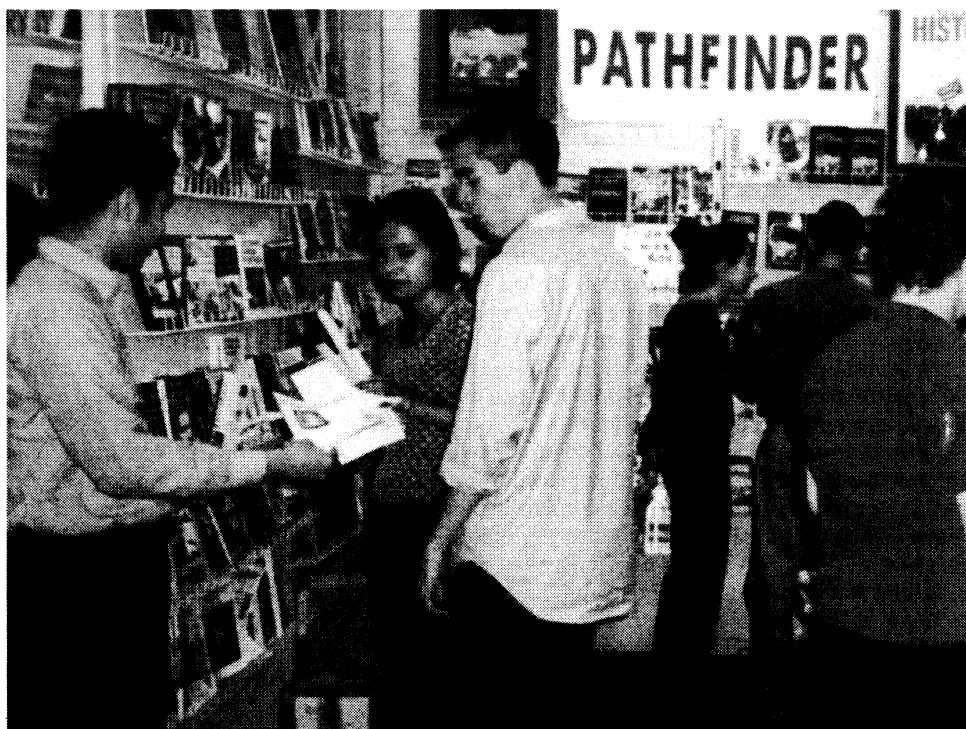
We have pointed to the range of Pathfinder books that present the facts about the Cuban revolution and help refute those charges. These books describe the example Cuba's revolutionary leadership sets in the world by standing up to imperialism, and what it means for workers and farmers to hold power, as they do in Cuba. We have urged the youth raising these arguments to study in particular the writings and speeches of both Guevara and Castro, which show their common revolutionary outlook.

One useful illustration of Cuba's internationalist course that we referred to was the stance Castro took in refusing to join in the imperialist "antiterrorist" campaign during the recent Ibero-American summit held in Panama in mid-November, and pointing to imperialism as primarily responsible for terrorism in the world.

Many visitors at the Pathfinder booth wanted to discuss fascism. Several were drawn to Leon Trotsky's *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It*. A few youth from a fascist group, Mexican Eagle, attended the book fair in uniforms wearing large swastikas around their necks. This sparked much discussion among youth attending the fair.

Daniel, a communications student at the Jesuit University in Guadalajara, explained that Mexico has many problems, but he did not initially view them in relation to other Latin American nations and their common exploitation by the wealthy imperialist powers, particularly the ruling families of the United States. Some of the Pathfinder books on display helped present this bigger picture.

Paco García was a regular visitor to the Pathfinder booth during the 1999 fair, pur-



Militant

Participants at last year's Guadalajara Book Fair promoting Pathfinder literature

chasing numerous titles. Born in Baja California in northern Mexico, García is now a student at the University of Guadalajara. He was interested, like many other visitors, in the fact that some of those staffing the booth are meat packers.

García spoke extensively about the brutal conditions that workers, particularly women workers, face in the maquiladora plants that dot the Mexico-U.S. border from California to Texas. He especially spoke of how the large number of women workers in these plants are a target of physical and verbal abuse.

García and many others have described the minimum wage structure in Mexico, which he said is different in various regions of the country. He said many are paid less than 1,000 pesos—US\$95—a month. A worker who buys a Pathfinder book typically has to pay a big portion of his or her wage, and even a slightly better-paid worker has to sacrifice financially to get a book. This reality has brought home to the volunteers

at the Pathfinder booth how important these revolutionary books are to the workers and youth who are buying them here at a 50 percent discount off their U.S. cover prices.

Pedro, a student at the Jesuit college, had met Pathfinder volunteers last year and said he was interested in forming a Young Socialists chapter here. He was particularly interested in issue no. 5 of *Nueva Internacional* because it includes the Young Socialists Manifesto and features the article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," which among other questions explains the roots of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the problem this creates for Washington and the other imperialist powers.

Many who visited the booth were industrial workers. A young worker hanging the display lights above our booth just prior to the opening of the fair told us he had recently returned from a few years of working at an Excel meatpacking plant in Dodge City, Kansas.

Another visitor explained that she had worked in the early 1990s at the Swift packing plant in Worthington, Minnesota.

The Pathfinder best-sellers in the first four days of the book fair have been the Spanish editions of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, with 45 copies sold; *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, with 20 sold; *Capitalism's World Disorder*, with 18 sold; and *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, with 16 sold.

There has also been a strong interest in the writings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Leon Trotsky, and V.I. Lenin, and in books on women's rights.

Roberta Black is a packinghouse worker in Minnesota. Chessie Molano is a student at the University of Arizona. Both are members of the Young Socialists.

Expanding 'Militant' circulation at plant gates

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* around the country have been seeking to regularize and expand their sales of these socialist publications since the recent circulation campaign, in which more than 900 *Militant* subscriptions and almost 400 *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions were sold, together with more than 1,800 copies of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

Over the past two weeks socialist workers in Chippewa Falls have sent two teams to sell these publications at the entrance to the Farmland meatpacking plant in Albert Lea, Minnesota, which employs about 600 workers.

During their first sale at the plant gate, the team sold three copies of the *Militant*, and one subscription to *PM* and one single copy. The following week three workers purchased the *Militant* and one worker purchased *Perspectiva Mundial*. "The person who bought the *PM* sub happened to be one of our co-workers who was dropping off a friend," reports Karen Ray. "We figure we should sell at this plant gate every week."

Regular sales at factory gates broadens the presence of the *Militant* and *PM* among industrial workers. Socialist workers in New

York have begun to meet workers at a laundry in Oceanside, New York, where 250 workers waged a three-day strike in mid-October that forced the bosses to agree to their demand for representation by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

"We set up a literature table there on a Saturday and sold 10 copies of the November special edition of *Perspectiva Mundial*," said Jason Vergara, a garment worker. "We had sold there before and some of the workers expected us to come back since the *PM* special issue carries an article about their struggle on the back page."

On November 28 negotiators for UNITE reached a tentative contract agreement for 4,000 workers at industrial laundries serving New York City's hotels, restaurants, and hospitals. The proposed contract reportedly provides for raises of around 20 percent over three years, as well as improved benefits. The laundry workers will be voting on the contract over the coming week.

Socialist workers in Chippewa Falls have followed up their sales at plant gates and other venues with classes on *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* involving co-workers, students, and others who purchased copies of the pamphlet. "I was part of a discussion this past Sunday with two co-workers in a class we held at the library," said Kevin Dwire, a meat packer. "We are going to have another class next Sunday and are contacting everyone who has bought the pamphlet."

Karen Ray, also a meat packer, said, "It was a bilingual meeting and everybody participated." Two of the workers who attended the class are originally from Mexico. Some who participated speak little Spanish while one worker speaks little English.

"We talked about conditions on the job, and the fact that no matter how hard we work, the bosses keep cranking up that line speed in the plant. We also spent a lot of time discussing how to build unity within the working class."

One of the workers, Felipe, had been a farmer in Mexico and bought *Perspectiva Mundial* for the first time when he was a farm worker in Homestead, Florida, a number of years ago. "The bosses want us to think that it's normal to work long hours with low pay," he pointed out in the class. "As long as we accept that, we can never get anywhere." In the class they discussed how the mood is beginning to change among growing numbers of working people.

In several other areas around the country socialist workers are finding that many who have bought the pamphlet are interested in discussing its contents and in participating in classes on other Marxist literature.

Mechanics at Northwest Airlines fight for contract

BY TOM FISHER AND JENNY BENTON

MINNEAPOLIS—Northwest Airlines has filed a motion in federal district court against the mechanics' union in retaliation for an alleged slowdown. According to the company, 56 flights were canceled for maintenance reasons in the morning and afternoon of November 23, more than five times the normal daily rate.

Northwest Airlines (NWA) has accused the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) members of systematically refusing overtime. But under the existing contract, overtime is voluntary. Mechanics have been working under an extension of the previous contract, which expired four years ago. Union officials insist they have complied with the restraining order, but admit that many rank-and-file members are frustrated with the lack of progress in negotiations. Lee Seham, an attorney for AMFA, reported to the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, "When union leaders have met with mechanics to stress the importance of following the law, they have at times been met with profanities."

AMFA began negotiations with Northwest about a year ago, after they won a union representation election against the Interna-

tional Association of Machinists (IAM) in 1998. The mechanics voted for AMFA representation seeking a change from the practices of the IAM officials, who failed to win a new contract despite growing profits by NWA. AMFA is a craft union.

The mechanics have the support of airline workers who are members of IAM. One worker, a baggage handler at Northwest for three years stated, "I believe NWA is making enough profits and should bargain with the mechanics. [Negotiations] will be a catalyst for better pay" for ramp workers as well. Kurt Jaspers, a flight attendant for fifteen-and-a-half years, explained, "They shouldn't take four years to get a contract."

Others are opposed to Northwest taking the union to court. When asked if he thought the company has a right to tie up the union in federal court, Harry Jovet responded, "Not really. The company always wants everything for themselves. And forget about everyone else." One flight attendant stated, "The federal government should not interfere."

A number of workers said the company sent a letter to employees stating the mechanics are demanding wages of \$170,000 a year. The workers see this as an attempt to create hostilities among the workforce.

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THE DEBATE ON GUERRILLA WARFARE IN LATIN AMERICA

Joseph Hansen

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Workers' resistance on the rise

The general strike by millions of workers in Argentina and the rapid collapse of the Fujimori regime in Peru have focused an international spotlight on the acute social and economic crisis that is common to most of Latin America.

Argentina drew the attention of the big-business news because of concerns by international finance capital that the government there might default on its foreign debt. An International Monetary Fund team was rushed to Buenos Aires to give its stamp of approval to brutal austerity measures the de la Rúa government is implementing to win additional loans in order to pay on the already massive \$123 billion debt. These measures include dismantling state-run pensions and health-care funds, an end to union collective bargaining rights, and slashing social funding in the impoverished provinces.

Conditions are even more critical in Peru—a nation where half the workforce is jobless or underemployed, and the majority of the population has been pushed below the official poverty line. Democratic rights were curtailed, while wages and living standards were driven down under the regime's economic "shock" measures. International investors were delighted with Fujimori as long as his regime could allow them to reap a bonanza in profits while maintaining relative political stability.

But in Peru and Argentina, as in other semicolonial countries, the normal functioning of the capitalist system—aggravated by government policies benefiting the rich—has also become the main source of subversion of the existing order. These intolerable conditions have generated increased resistance by workers and farmers

throughout Latin America.

In Peru, Fujimori served to keep a lid on resistance by posing demagogically as a savior who appeared to rise above the corruption of the hated traditional parties while bring order with an iron hand. He was popular—and effective for the capitalist rulers—as long as he seemed to produce results.

But, as working people began to recover from a long retreat and regain their confidence, they increasingly spoke out against the assault on their rights and living standards. Fujimori suddenly lost his "charm," and abruptly exhausted his usefulness to the ruling classes.

Likewise, in Argentina, millions of working people shut down industry and services for 36 hours. In a relatively new development, unionists have increasingly joined forces with unemployed workers, who have been protesting for years through roadblocks and social explosions throughout the provinces.

These struggles are one more sign that the retreat of working people in Latin America and worldwide has bottomed out, with renewed combativity and confidence by workers and farmers to fight and link up with each other.

In the front ranks of this worldwide resistance to the capitalist rulers and imperialist system stand the working people of Cuba and their communist leadership. By making a socialist revolution and establishing their own class government, Cuban workers and farmers wield the most powerful weapon possible to defend their interests and join in the fight to change the world. They point the road forward for working people and the oppressed everywhere.

Expand use of socialist press

Some 1,300 workers, farmers, and young people subscribed to the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial* over the past 10 weeks, and more than 1,800 purchased a copy of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. These results are not simply the end of the circulation campaign. Above all, they can be the beginning of a steady, weekly effort by socialist workers and Young Socialists to meet and work side-by-side with an increasing layer of politicized working people, including many who are involved in labor struggles around the country, and to win them to the communist movement.

The use of *The Transformation of Learning* pamphlet as a central piece of the circulation effort and the Socialist Workers 2000 election campaign has been a step forward. Its political explanations provide a working-class framework for understanding the consequences of the bipartisan assault by the U.S. capitalist rulers. In some cities, workers who purchased the booklet have asked for classes to discuss the politics in it.

As socialist workers have become more integrated into the working-class resistance today, they have met an identifiable layer of vanguard workers who are open to the

need for a revolution in this country and the need to join the communist movement.

The key to taking advantage of these palpable openings is to organize consistent, *cumulative* work with the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books. This means taking these political tools to wherever workers and farmers are in action—from the nationwide protests by airline workers to union meetings by textile workers responding to the bosses' "bankruptcy" moves. And it means setting up literature tables in workers districts every week, in the same locations, meeting and becoming known by a growing number of working people.

Through these efforts, interested workers and young people can be brought to Militant Labor Forums, classes, labor and farm actions, and other political activities. This includes following up with the hundreds of new readers of the socialist press who are interested in discussing the political questions they are reading about every week in the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial*. Many of them are among those seeking not only answers but a political organization that can be part of a revolutionary fight to change the world.

Pathfinder supporters place revolutionary titles in bookstores

BY SARA LOBMAN

Pathfinder supporters in several cities are off to a good start in their renewed efforts to place Pathfinder books in stores, libraries, and other outlets.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, Michele Smith and Ellen Haywood visited a large retail bookstore in Berkeley that has had an account with Pathfinder for years. They placed a \$610 order for some 40 different titles, including 10 in Spanish. The order included titles by Leon Trotsky, Ernesto Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Jack Barnes, Farrell Dobbs, Thomas Sankara, Nelson Mandela, and others.

"The book buyer asked to be faxed whenever new books come out and to be visited twice a year," Smith writes. "Ellen and I are willing to take on these responsibilities. Also, I think we should look over our Spanish-language titles again and fax him the list of any that were not brought to his attention during the visit."

Smith also visited a store in Oakland, this time with Barbara Bowman. The store placed a \$260 order for 26 different titles, including *El manifesto comunista* (The Communist Manifesto), *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*.

Bowman and Mary Lipman secured an order for \$85 from a small bookstore in Capitola, California. Titles included *Che Guevara habla a la juventud* (Che Guevara Talks to Young People) *Haciendo historia* (Making History), *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*, and *Che Guevara Speaks*. About half the titles were in Spanish.

Pathfinder volunteers in San Francisco also visited a Borders store in the region. The buyer there explained

that they order from their central warehouse and that he had already placed an order for three Pathfinder titles, including two in Spanish. He said he would place an order for an additional 20. Supporter Mary Lipman plans to follow up.

Lauren Hart sent in an order she got from a store that sells mainly used books in Charlotte, North Carolina. The owner said he would place the Pathfinder titles in a small new books section in the store. He placed an order for one copy each of 74 titles.

Mary Ann Schmidt and Cindy Jaquith visited the public library in a small town in central Florida earlier this month. The area is dominated by the sugar industry. "The head librarian had reviewed the Pathfinder catalog prior to our arrival and had a list of books he wanted," Jaquith writes. "He told us that a new branch of the library would be opening soon in the heart of the Black community, right next door to the sugar refinery. He planned to give some of the books as a gift to the new library. He ordered two sets of *W.E.B. DuBois Speaks* and a copy of *Cointelpro*."

Pathfinder volunteers set up a new account at a public library in northeastern Pennsylvania.

After commenting favorably on the notes and indexes in several of the titles and the high quality of the binding, the librarian ordered eight books, including *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877*, *The Truth about Yugoslavia*, *Fascism and Big Business*, and *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*. She took two copies of the Pathfinder catalog to circulate among the library staff and asked that another meeting be set up for January when more funds become available.

New Jersey officials admit Blacks targeted on turnpike

BY MARK BARTON

NEWARK, New Jersey—Ninety thousand pages of documents, released in Trenton November 27 after more than a decade of resistance and denial by cops and the highest state officials, confirm what every working person who drives the New Jersey Turnpike already knows: Four out of five drivers stopped and searched by state police are selected simply because they are Black or Latino.

This blatant, daily practice of racial discrimination—"profiling" in the sanitized terminology used by the cops and their superiors—has a long history in New Jersey and elsewhere. Its roots go back to the attack on democratic rights launched by the federal and state governments in the 1980s under the guise of a "war on drugs." Since the Drug Enforcement Administration set up "Operation Pipeline" in 1986 as a federal program allegedly aimed at "drug couriers," the DEA and Department of Transportation have financed and organized an range of programs that "emphasize the ethnic and racial characteristics of narcotics organizations," according to the *New York Times*. These were backed locally in New Jersey by such legislation as the 1987 Uniform Drug Reform Act, and gave cops a virtually free hand to stop and search vehicles. Among the characteristics cops are trained to look for are people with dreadlocks and two Latino males traveling together, the *Times* reports.

One newly released state police file is an internal review dated September 5, 1989, and marked "Confidential." It shows how complaints over "profiling" were, in the past, simply dismissed with openly racist arguments.

No "bias" was involved in "the fact that more blacks are arrested than whites," the 1989 review found. To the contrary, state police maintained, arrests turn out that way because more criminals are Black or Latino.

Most turnpike arrests were on charges related to drugs and weapons, they said in the review, and it is a "documented criminal phenomenon" that this is an area "heavily comprised of *American blacks, Jamaican gangs, Colombian cartels, Cuban exiles and Dominican criminals*."

Lying behind the release of the documents are a number of developments over the last few years in which normal, everyday past practices have turned out to carry, today, a higher than anticipated political price.

One is the case of four basketball players—three Black, one Latino—who were stopped on the turnpike near Trenton in April 1998 by two white troopers who fired 11 shots into the van they were driving. Anger over this chilling incident of police brutality, although far from the first of its kind, simply refuses to go away. The case returned to the news at the end of October, just a few weeks prior to the current release of documents, when a state court dismissed all criminal charges against the troopers.

Another was the racist public statement made by state police superintendent Carl Williams in February 1999. In a question of drugs, he told the Newark *Star Ledger* in a published interview, "it's most likely a minority group that's involved." Governor Christine Whitman, who in general had defended the troopers and their brass against all criticism, was forced to fire Williams the day the interview appeared.

A third was the debate on police conduct that erupted unexpectedly in the state legislature for three months in the spring of 1999. Whitman had nominated to the state supreme court Peter Verniero, then attorney general and responsible for the state police at the time of the turnpike shooting. The nomination, under normal circumstances a shoo-in, barely received the minimum number of votes needed in the state legislature.

A fourth was the fallout over the unplanned and unexpected publication in the national big-business media in July of a forgotten photo of a smirking Whitman personally frisking a Black "suspect" during a 1996 police operation in Camden.

The documents themselves are being reviewed by lawyers for 150 of those arrested in cop operations on the turnpike, who have filed suit demanding the cases against them be dismissed. More suits are expected, including by working people put behind bars after New Jersey state cops illegally searched their vehicles.

CORRECTION

The headline "11 killed in Pretoria factory fire" in the December 4 issue was inaccurate. It should have indicated, as the article does, that the fire was in a plant near Johannesburg. In the same issue, the headline "Quebec truckers end 17-day stoppage," was also in error. The article correctly reports that the strike lasted 28 days, with the truckers defying the government's strike-breaking legislation for 17 of these days.

'Our country will become a giant university'

Continued from page 5

visitors from Sweden, delegates at the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba, how he and others prepare the next day's shipment, speeding up the ripening of the bananas by putting them in water for a couple of hours.

In the CPAs, farmers pool their land and work it together. The 232 cooperative members here farm 600 acres, quite a change from the 14 farmers who originally pooled 80 acres of land to found the cooperative in 1981. The main crops are bananas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, taro, and sugar. They also grow beans and rice for their own consumption, as well as tomatoes, cucumbers, and chickens for tourist restaurants, which helps the cooperative earn hard currency to pay for supplies that would otherwise be unavailable. Most of their products are sold to the state for distribution to hospitals, day care centers, and other institutions.

"The cooperative produces a surplus, although our machinery is old and outdated," says Carlos Marces, president of the cooperative. He and the six other board members are elected at an assembly where all the members of the cooperative have decisive vote. The monthly assembly is where all decisions concerning the cooperative are taken, including admitting new members.

'We have to invent things all the time'

"Our irrigation equipment and our 32 tractors are all from the Soviet Union," says Marces. Tractor drivers later explain that spare parts are impossible to find for these machines. Despite this they are well kept, with shining symbols on top of them. "We have to invent things all the time," says one driver, who is resting during the lunch hour while his son plays at the wheel of the tractor.

Two brigades of 60 work in the fields weeding and harvesting. Today they are weeding soybeans. The tractors and other machines are driven by 25 members. Fourteen do the repair work and maintenance on the machines, and 15 work in transport and services. Fifty workers tend the pigs, chickens, and calves, and milk the cows. All milking has been done by hand in Cuba since the Special Period began.

The average wage for the members is 350 pesos a month. That is a fairly high wage—the average income in Cuba is 225 pesos a month. "The members who work in the fields are paid more than those of us who work inside, because the work in the fields is heavy and hard," says Alfredo Capote, the accountant of the cooperative.

The yearly surplus of the cooperative is divided each July. Fifty percent of the surplus goes to new investments for the cooperative; the rest is divided among the mem-

bers according to the amount and kind of work done by each individual member. Cooperative members also benefit from a plentiful supply of food.

"We learned a lot and gained politically from going through the Special Period," says Marces. With chemical fertilizers unavailable or unaffordable, farmers learned how to use biological fertilizers, he explains.



Teachers and students at Juan Alvarado Day-Care Center in Havana. "Women who used to be behind doors in their homes came out to do voluntary work in agriculture and in the construction of schools in the mountains," said revolutionary leader Vilma Espín.

And, he tells us, the spread of *Thrips palmi*—an insect that evidence suggests was deliberately introduced into Cuba in 1996 by a plane flying to the United States and that had devastating effects on all kinds of crops such as potatoes, beans, corn, and tomatoes, both in 1996 and the following year—has now been brought under control, although it will never be entirely eliminated.

'We are waging a battle for women'

Vilma Espín, president of the Cuban Federation of Women (FMC), led a discussion with more than 50 participants in the world solidarity conference. "As women took part in the revolution, their sense of solidarity grew," Espín told the delegates. "The changes have been enormous, a real revolution within the revolution."

From the earliest days of the Cuban Revolution more than 40 years ago, the revolutionary leadership has taken initiatives to expand the participation of women in society.

"Women who used to be behind doors in their homes became active in the FMC. They came out to do voluntary work in agriculture and in the construction of schools in the mountains," Espín said.

In the 1961 literacy campaign, which in one year virtually eliminated illiteracy throughout the island, Espín noted, both a majority of the teachers—who were high

school students—and those learning to read, a majority of them peasants, were women. The land reform also gave women the right to own land.

Increased workload for women

Espín described the challenges that the difficult decade of the 1990s, which Cubans call the Special Period, has posed for women. After the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries, and the abrupt drop in aid and favorable trade relations that followed, accompanied by a tightening of the U.S. embargo against the country, Cuba suffered widespread shortages of food, fuel, and parts. The gross domestic product plunged by some 35 percent between 1989 and 1994.

A massive effort drawing on the energy and creativity of Cuban working people to restructure agricultural and industrial production, as well as measures to win foreign capital investments and establish new trade relations, have made progress. But the standard of living today remains substantially below what it was a decade ago, as Cuba, a country underdeveloped by centuries of colonial and imperialist domination, has abruptly been forced into the world capitalist market. Shortages of food, detergent, electricity, gas for cooking, and problems in transportation, have meant an increased workload in the home for women especially.

In confronting these challenges in recent years, Espín said, the FMC has come out stronger, with a larger and more active membership. Nieves Alemany, a full-time member of the FMC National Secretariat, who was a farmer until recently, described how the FMC is now financed by its own members.

While according to law there are no restrictions on women taking any kind of job, explained Yolanda Ferrer, general secretary of the FMC, "the FMC wants to encourage women to take on nontraditional jobs. There are women who drive trucks, trains, and sugar combines. We have women leaders in the sugar industry, in laboratories, and in scientific work," she told the group. "It is a long process to develop women who are leaders, but it has been something we and Fidel have encouraged throughout the revolution," Ferrer said.

Women make up 27 percent of the National Assembly of People's Power, Cuba's legislature, according to Julio Espinosa, general coordinator of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly.

"This is a very high figure, although lower than in the Nordic countries," he said, "but there they have quotas, and we don't. Quotas would undermine the authority of the delegates who are female," he said. "We are waging a battle for women."

The Special Period has also meant extra hardships for women because of the lack of contraceptives. "Abortions have always been

available on demand for women, from the beginning of the revolution, and despite opinions from some that there were too many abortions," Espín explained. But of course, she said, it was never intended that abortion be a general method of contraception.

Cuba always had to import contraceptives, Espín said, which was difficult because many of the companies producing contraceptives were U.S.-owned. Recently a factory in Cuba has started production of birth control pills, she noted. But even with donations from China and Germany, except for condoms there is still not a sufficient supply of contraceptives.

During the Special Period many day-care centers were obliged to cut back hours and services.

Centers no longer care for infants less than one year old, for example. Before the Special Period, day care was available starting with infants 45 days old.

The trade union resolution addresses these challenges. "The union movement will continue fighting every case of discrimination against women in the distribution of available resources and in the reorganization of labor," states the theses being discussed throughout the country. "The reduced capacity of day-care centers has forced many female workers to pay high rates to individuals to care for their children. In addition to being an economic burden, this also confers the education and health care of the child on people who do not always have the training or the material resources to do it." In addition, the theses commit the union movement to promoting the creation of day-care centers in workplaces where working mothers need them.

'A joint venture with capitalists, but not a capitalist enterprise'

BrasCuba is jointly owned by Cuba and BAT, a British tobacco company that also has operations in Brazil.

We met with Adolfo Díaz Suárez, Cuban vice president of the enterprise. The factory is modern and well-equipped.

Díaz told us, "This enterprise was created five years ago with British capital. Our objectives were to guarantee a certain level of exports for Cuban cigarettes, to obtain modern equipment, and to learn new techniques of production, marketing, and quality control. We began with 17 workers. Now we have 270. Most cigarettes produced in this plant are sold in dollars in Cuba, but we have progressively increased exports to 40 percent of production as we reduced costs and improved quality and appearance," he said.

"The surplus generated by workers in this plant made it possible for us to finance the opening of a second plant in Holguín in the eastern part of the island that is 100 percent Cuban-owned," Díaz told us. "This has resulted in a significant reduction in production costs and increased quality of cigarettes sold in Cuban pesos." The Holguín factory will sell the cigarettes it produces in Cuban pesos.

The plant was clean and well-lighted. Workers were wearing clean blue uniforms. As in factories throughout Cuba, the cafeteria provides meals at subsidized prices, Díaz told us, and the company provides transportation to and from several points in the city.

"Workers who achieve targets for quality and quantity," Díaz told us, "receive bonus pay in hard currency." The basic wage is 160 Cuban pesos a month, he said, but a worker who meets the targets receives another \$16 in U.S. dollars (336 pesos at the current exchange rate of 21 pesos to the dollar), and often more. The average here, Díaz told us, is \$26 a month above the wages.

Workers work Monday through Friday, and receive 30 days of vacation a year.

Díaz told us that joint ventures in Cuba account for employment of a little more than 1 percent of workers. "But they represent a high percentage of exports," he added.

There are monthly meetings of all personnel where the managers, three of whom are Brazilian, report on production. "The meetings are chaired by the union," Díaz said. "This is a joint venture with capitalists, but not a capitalist enterprise. This revolution is for workers."

Rebecca Arenson, Luis Madrid, and Mary-Alice Waters contributed to this article.

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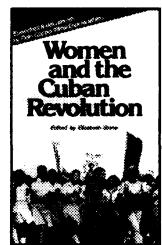
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New Zealand: antilabor law is repealed

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—The antiunion Employment Contracts Act, widely hated by workers throughout this country, was repealed October 2 with the passage of the Employment Relations Act (ERA) by the Labour Party-led coalition government.

Most working people welcomed the new law, seeing it as legitimizing their right to join a union and removing obstacles to their ability to organize on the job. Unions have reported a significant growth in membership over the past year.

The new legislation makes some concessions to the labor movement, while seeking to divert workers away from struggle into legal channels and red tape.

Repeal of the Employment Contracts Act (ECA) was one of the central planks that Labour and its junior coalition partner, the Alliance, campaigned on in elections to Parliament a year ago. During that election campaign, for the first time since 1984, Labour politicians put forward a platform that sought to distance the party from "free market" policies followed by successive Labour and National Party governments over the previous 15 years.

This bipartisan course had seen sweeping privatizations of state-owned enterprises, the lifting of import tariffs and export subsidies, the removal of many protective labor laws and guaranteed prices to farmers, the erosion of publicly funded education and health care, and reductions in benefits and pensions.

The election of the Labour-Alliance coalition reflected a response to the growing mood of resistance among workers in face of the capitalist rulers' offensive. It registered a shift by sections of the New Zealand capitalist class who recognized the limits of what they had achieved and the need to find alternative ways to advance their assault on workers and farmers.

The Labour-Alliance government's first year in office has been marked by efforts to demonstrate to the wealthy rulers its responsible stewardship of New Zealand's capitalist economy and to counter criticism that it is "antibusiness." For example, Prime Minister Helen Clark and 10 cabinet ministers hosted 85 selected "business leaders" at an all-day forum in Auckland October 24 to "listen to their concerns."

Over the course of the past year, employers and their organizations mounted a vocal campaign against the proposed Employment Relations Act, blaming it for plummeting "business confidence" and threatening job cuts and factory closures if it became law. The government in turn sought to reassure the bosses that the new law would incorporate their concerns. The coalition was a "pro-business government that did not see business as a cash cow," said Finance Minister Michael Cullen March 16. As a result, the law as it was finally passed was significantly amended in favor of the bosses.

The union officialdom, which welcomed and promoted the measure, has put forward similar reassurances. "I guess we're very conscious of our responsibility to make this new act work," said Council of Trade Unions vice president Darien Fenton. "The last thing we want to be doing is getting into irresponsible demands." Union officials have touted the law as opening a new era of "fairness at work."

Improvements in workers' rights contained in the ERA, however, were from the outset extremely limited. Minister of Labour Margaret Wilson explained in an article in *Employment Today*, "In looking at what we wanted to replace the ECA, we went back into history to see what we should bring back from the old system.... We did not find much there that we thought matched the needs of New Zealand in the year 2000: we did not want compulsory unionism back; we did not want national awards; we did not want compulsory arbitration and relativity systems, which meant that wage rises—or the lack of them—in one industry affected totally unrelated industries. So these elements of the 'bad old days' are gone for

good."

Central to the ERA is a "Code of Good Faith Bargaining" between employers and unions. Parties are required to "deal with each other in good faith and must not do anything to mislead or deceive each other." The law is designed to direct workers' struggles into legal channels, setting up mediation services and an Employment Relations Authority that can investigate cases and instruct parties to resolve their dispute through mediation.

As Wilson, seeking to counter employers' accusations that the ERA would lead to increased industrial action, explained, "The new law makes it more difficult to strike. For example, there's a waiting time of 40 days after a proposal for an agreement is lodged. And there has to be a proper organization set up with which the employer can deal."

Concessions to right to organize

The new law does include some concessions to workers' right to organize. Union membership remains voluntary, but unions are now the only agents that can negotiate collective contracts. It is now legal to strike for an agreement covering more than one employer. Provisions for paid stop-work meetings and union education leave are included, and union organizers are granted greater access to the workplace. The new law also states that employers cannot compel employees to do the work of striking workers. Under pressure from bosses about this, Finance Minister Michael Cullen responded that workers who "volunteered" to

do other jobs should not be precluded from doing so.

The Employment Contracts Act, enacted by the National Party government in 1991, registered the retreat of the unions under the bosses' offensive of the 1980s, and gave the rulers a new weapon to use to further weaken workers' rights and the unions. Building on earlier antilabor legislation passed in 1987 by a Labour government, the ECA removed almost all remaining protective labor legislation, outlawed the closed shop, restricted the right to strike to the immediate period around the expiration of a contract, and dismantled the structure of national awards in industry.

Mass street protests by workers against the ECA in 1991 were derailed as union officials drew workers into accepting the new situation. As the bosses drove home attacks against the unions under the ECA, work hours were extended, real wages declined, and union membership plunged.

In May 1991 there were 603,000 union members, 41 percent of the total workforce. By December 1998, the number had declined to almost 307,000, or 17.7 percent of the workforce. The number of work stoppages fell to levels not recorded since the early 1930s. In 1998 there were 35 work stoppages, compared with 137 in 1990 and 215 in 1986. The number of workers involved also decreased.

Longer work hours, more part-time jobs

More workers are working longer hours, and increasingly without overtime rates of pay. The number of workers laboring 50 or

more hours per week increased by 33 percent between 1991 and 1996. There has been a considerable growth in casual work, and part-time employment has grown by 21 percent in the last five years.

While big-business organizations mounted a vocal campaign to pressure the government to minimize the changes in the labor legislation, ruling-class opinion has generally accepted the ERA in its final version adopted by Parliament. As the *New Zealand Herald* editorialized on the day the ERA was passed, "The sky will not fall in today.... [T]here is cause for confidence that good sense will prevail on both sides."

Some employers moved to strike deals with unions in anticipation of the new law. For example, McDonald's negotiated a collective agreement in February for 5,100 workers at 146 restaurants, giving most a 3 percent pay raise, and recognizing union coverage for the first time in five years. Workers had been on individual contracts since 1994 and only a few hundred had remained union members.

In a different example, The Warehouse, a large retail outlet that employs more than 5,000 people nationwide, moved to set up its own company union, "People First," in July to represent Warehouse staff. For the past nine years the company has refused to recognize the National Distribution Union, the main union covering retail workers.

Annalucia Vermunt is a member of the Meat Workers Union. Felicity Coggan, a member of the National Distribution Union in Auckland, contributed to this article.

Peru rulers oust Fujimori, seek stable regime

BY HILDA CUZCO

Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori's political demise was as abrupt as his rise to power a decade ago. Having lost his political usefulness to the ruling families and increasingly unpopular, Fujimori took refuge in Japan and then resigned November 19.

Congress, dominated by Fujimori's opponents, immediately declared him "morally unfit" and named Valentín Paniagua, head of the legislature, as the interim president until new elections take place in April of next year.

Paniagua, a 64-year-old lawyer, was appointed after the country's two vice presidents jumped off Fujimori's sinking boat and resigned. Paniagua served as a minister in both administrations of President Fernando Belaúnde, in the 1960s and later in the early 1980s. His party, Popular Action (AP), received barely 1 percent of the vote in the April 9 presidential election.

In an effort to clean up the tarnished image of the government, Congress assigned a special prosecutor to investigate Fujimori and his right-hand man, Vladimiro Montesinos, the hated former secret police chief. The prosecutor has already filed a complaint against both men for illegal appropriation of funds of at least \$58 million in the sale of two Panamanian companies they co-owned, a charge Fujimori has denied. Congress is also moving to set up a commission to investigate the disappearances of 4,000 people arrested during Fujimori's brutal "antiterrorist" campaign.

Fujimori, who ruled for a decade on behalf of big business through a combination of anti-elite demagoguery and an iron fist, had begun to lose his popular appeal over the past year. In the April elections he ran for a third five-year term but failed to win a clear majority. His main rival, Alejandro Toledo of the "Peru Possible" opposition coalition, called the elections a fraud and boycotted the May runoff, allowing Fujimori to win it uncontested.

An ignominious end

Fujimori's inauguration on July 28 was overshadowed by a protest of tens of thousands of angry demonstrators who poured into the streets of Lima, the capital. Toledo headed the demonstrations, calling for new



Public transportation workers joined the truckers nationwide strike in September

elections. Some 40,000 cops were mobilized, firing tear gas and live bullets and leaving 100 people injured.

Fujimori's end was sealed September 14 when Montesinos was seen on a video, broadcast on national television, bribing a legislator to gain support for the president. After failing to obtain political asylum, Montesinos returned to Peru and reportedly went into hiding. Fujimori, trying to save his own skin, led a raid on Montesinos's house, where he had more than 50 cartons of goods confiscated, including 1,200 Christian Dior shirts, numerous gold and diamond watches, and other luxury items.

Meanwhile, an army lieutenant colonel, Ollanta Moisés Humala Tasso, launched a mutiny at the end of October in the southern copper mining town of Toquepala in the province of Tacna. At the head of a platoon of soldiers and civilian supporters, Humala

Tasso, 36, held an army general hostage and demanded the resignation of Fujimori and prosecution of Montesinos. After two days they released their hostages and dispersed in the highlands, but in downtown Lima hundreds of youth demonstrated in support of the revolt.

As many of Fujimori's allies in Congress quit his coalition, he left for an Asia-Pacific summit meeting in Brunei, only to resign unexpectedly during what was supposed to be a stopover in Japan on his return.

Fujimori regime: product of social crisis

A previously unknown agronomist and university professor, Fujimori came to power in 1990 on a platform of "honest government" and "saving the people" at a time of deep economic crisis, including hyperinflation of more than 7,000 percent.

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