

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

New Jersey welfare cuts  
target working-class women

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 64 NO. 48 DECEMBER 18, 2000

## National conflicts erupt in Indonesia

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Thousands of heavily armed Indonesian soldiers descended on the province of West Papua during the last week of November, under orders to prevent anniversary celebrations of the region's declaration of independence 39 years ago. Nearly 50 West Papuan independence activists were arrested and 10 people killed during the military-police crackdown. The Indonesian security forces proceeded to enforce a newly passed government ban on raising West Papuan flags, tearing them down and hoisting Indonesian flags in their place.

In a nationally publicized speech on the same day, Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid warned that his government would not tolerate any efforts to "secede."

The government of Indonesia is seeking to stem the various pro-independence movements—from West Papua to Aceh in the east—in this diverse, sprawling nation of 224 million people. The weakening of the central government in Jakarta since 1998, when a popular revolt in Indonesia ended the Suharto dictatorship, has accelerated the tendencies toward breakup in a country that was created under the Dutch colonial boot and held together for more than three decades under the iron rule of the imperialist-

Continued on Page 6

## Alabama miners stage walkout

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BERRY, Alabama—Some 260 union coal miners struck the North River mine here for several days at the end of November to stop the company from implementing changes that would limit workers' ability to take vacations and individual days off when they want and need to. The mine, located northwest of Birmingham, is owned by Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. The miners are members of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1926.

The company wants to force workers to give 30 days notice before taking time off. In addition, they want to schedule vacations so that no more than 15 percent of miners would be off at any one time, declaring that this is needed to increase productivity. The issue has been in negotiations since February.

On Monday, November 27, the union called a "memorial day," one of 10 contractual days off the union can call each year. UMWA Local 1926 president Joe Perkins told the *Tuscaloosa News* that the atmosphere around the proposed changes had become "volatile." Describing workers' outraged reaction, he said, "It's just impossible for me to know 30 days in advance whether my wife is going to be sick and can't drive herself to the doctor."

Perkins said he called the memorial day to allow workers to cool off, hoping to settle the conflict "in the mine."

The company responded by calling work-

Continued on Page 7

## NY laundry workers score gains in contract

Long Island workers win raise, benefits following strike for union

BY JORGE LERTORA  
AND OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

OCEANSIDE, New York—"The company feels the presence of the union now," said Francisco Zapata, a shop steward at the newly organized Oceanside Institutional Industries, a large industrial laundry in this Long Island town. In a phone interview, Zapata was commenting on the victory won by workers at this large industrial laundry on Long Island in gaining a union contract and pushing back abusive conduct by the bosses.

Speaking to *Militant* reporters at the plant gate a few days after a tentative contract was reached, Mauricio González, 19, said, "This is our first contract ever. In the three years I have worked here, I never had medical insurance. Now we will all have insurance as well as a wage increase." Another worker, Beto, said that while he didn't know of all the provisions in the agreement, he was glad they now had a union, and saw the contract as a gain.

The 250 workers at Oceanside struck for three days in mid-October and won recognition of their union, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). They then immediately joined workers at 35 unionized laundries in the New York metropolitan area in fighting for a contract.

UNITE negotiated through its regional structure, the Manhattan-based Amalgam-

ated Services Allied Industries Joint Board. On November 28 the workers at these industrial laundries won a tentative contract settlement containing a number of gains.

Under the three-year pact, some 4,000

workers in commercial laundries that service hospitals, restaurants, and hotels in New York and New Jersey will receive raises of 75 cents an hour the first year, 45 cents

Continued on Page 11



Workers at laundry in Oceanside, New York, picket during October strike that forced company to recognize UNITE. "We want respect and dignity," reads one sign in Spanish.

## Volunteers gear up for Pathfinder projects

BY STEVE CLARK  
AND PAUL MAILHOT

An international volunteer effort set for December 14-24 in New York City, plus the successful completion of the year-end goals of the Pathfinder Reprint Project, will reg-

ister new steps forward in the transformation of the production and sales of revolutionary books and pamphlets.

With just a few weeks remaining in the year, volunteers are nearing their goal, set in July, of completely converting another 30

Pathfinder books to a print-ready electronic format.

That's an average of six books per month over that period—a substantial increase from the pace of the previous year

Continued on Page 5

*The Militant Labor Forum presents*

**New York & Newark**

At the Pathfinder bookstores listed below

**SPEAKER: NORTON SANDLER**

**Fri., Dec. 8 - Garment District**  
545 8th Ave., 14th Floor  
Tel: (212) 695-7358

**Sat., Dec. 9 - Newark**  
506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor  
Tel: (973) 643-3341

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**

**SPEAKER: BILL ESTRADA**

**Fri., Dec. 8 - Upper Manhattan**  
540 W. 165 St. (165th and St. Nicholas). Tel: (212) 740-4611.

**Sat., Dec. 9 - Brooklyn**  
1068 Fulton St., 3rd Floor  
Tel: (718) 398-7850.

**Donation requested: \$4.00**  
*Translation available*

**Join special Pathfinder volunteer project**

**December 14 to 24—**  
**New York City**

Volunteers are needed for an 11-day effort to take another step in facilitating the expanded sales and more efficient production of revolutionary books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press. There will be mobilizations on the weekends of December 16-17 and 23-24; volunteers are needed during that week as well. There will be classes, forums, and social events, including a wind-up Christmas Eve banquet to celebrate completion of the effort.

If you are interested in joining this important project, please call one of the phone numbers listed in the ad to the left, a number in your area listed on page 12, or send an e-mail to nygd@usa.net. Further information is included in an article on this page.

**Thousands at Mexico book fair drawn to Pathfinder titles — page 9**

# Ruling rejects antibusing decision in North Carolina

BY LAUREN HART

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—In a victory for opponents of racial discrimination, a federal appeals court on November 30 overturned a court order to end school desegregation efforts in this city and surrounding Mecklenburg County. The next day, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board voted 5-4 to scrap its "school choice" plan for 2001-02, a plan that would have accelerated resegregation.

The ruling by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court rejected major portions of a September 1999 ruling by federal district judge Robert Potter, who had declared the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools fully desegregated and ordered the school board to end any consideration of race in school assignments.

Potter's ruling came in a suit brought by white parents who claimed their children were denied admission to their preferred school because of desegregation measures. It was one of a number of court rulings in recent years aimed at rolling back gains won in the 1960s and '70s in the struggle for Black rights.

In its divided November 30 decision, a panel of appeals court judges in Richmond, Virginia, stated that Charlotte-Mecklenburg officials had not fulfilled their desegregation obligations.

They cited the fact that schools have been built in largely white neighborhoods, making them difficult to integrate. School buildings in predominantly Black neighborhoods have been allowed to deteriorate. Those students who are bused for integration are overwhelmingly Black. And school administrators did not monitor student transfers to ensure they did not lead to resegregation.

In the course of the massive struggles against Jim Crow segregation that swept the South in the 1950s and a '60s, working people who are Black won court-ordered busing in the historic *Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* ruling in 1969. From 1970 to 1992, desegregation was carried out through county-wide mandatory busing.

Since the early 1990s, however, there has been a pattern of resegregation, as the school board emphasized "magnet" programs over crosstown busing. A lottery system has kept the magnet schools integrated, but in many other schools racial disparities have grown.

When Judge Potter ordered the end of all further desegregation measures, his ruling was appealed by Black parents and a majority of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board. More than 100 people turned out for the appeals court hearing in Richmond in June, many of them traveling on an NAACP-organized bus from Charlotte in defense of desegregation.

Opponents of school desegregation say they will now appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. As things now stand, school assignments next year will be made under the same rules as the last several years.

Debate over the various school assignment plans is continuing. One high school student told the daily *Charlotte Observer*



Militant/Charles Rosenberg  
**March for school desegregation in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1975. Desegregation of public schools throughout United States was product of massive battles by Blacks for civil rights that swept the South in 1950s and '60s.**

she hoped the "school choice" plan would be rejected. Under the current set-up, Christine Taylor said, she goes to school with friends who are Black, white, Asian, and

Latino, and that would change if desegregation ended. "It's good that we have the racial mix. All my friends say the same thing," she said.

## Supreme Court: no drug search roadblocks

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a 6 to 3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled November 28 that roadblocks set up by police to stop cars randomly in search of drugs are a violation of the Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Starting in August 1998 the police in Indianapolis, Indiana, officially began setting up roadway checkpoints, especially in "high-crime areas." At least six times that year, some 30 cops were stationed at each checkpoint, where they would pull over cars in sequence and demand to see a driver's license and registration, and then a specially trained dog would be led around the car in order to sniff for drugs. During a three-month period there were 1,161 police stops and 104 arrests. Fifty-five were on drug charges.

Two individuals, James Edmond and Joell

Palmer, after being subjected to such treatment in September 1998, filed a lawsuit demanding a halt to these roadblocks on Fourth Amendment grounds. The case was backed by the American Civil Liberties Union. A trial court rejected the plaintiffs' claim, but a U.S. appeals court last year declared the police tactic unconstitutional. The Supreme Court then upheld the appellate court ruling.

"We cannot sanction stops justified only by the generalized and ever-present possibility that interrogation and inspection may reveal that any given motorist has committed some crime," wrote Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for the majority of the court. If roadblocks were permitted, "there would be little check on the authorities' ability to construct roadblocks for almost any conceivable law enforcement purpose."

She added, "Without drawing the line at roadblocks designed primarily to serve the general interest in crime control, the Fourth Amendment would do little to prevent such intrusions from becoming a routine part of American life."

Previous court rulings, however, have backed the use of such highway checkpoints by the police for other purposes, whittling away Fourth Amendment protections for individuals, especially when in their cars.

In 1976, the Supreme Court declared that roadblocks set up to intercept undocumented workers were constitutional. In 1990, the court held that police can also set up drunk-driving checkpoints on city streets. In 1983, the court backed the use of trained dogs to sniff travelers' luggage to see if they contain any narcotics. In 1999, however, the

court ruled that immigration cops violated bus passenger privacy rights by squeezing the luggage in overhead racks in search of drugs.

In a dissenting opinion supported by judges Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, Chief Justice William Rehnquist asked why cities that set up roadblocks for sobriety checks and driver's license examinations could not do drug searches as well. "Why can't the city have a multipurpose stop?" he wrote.

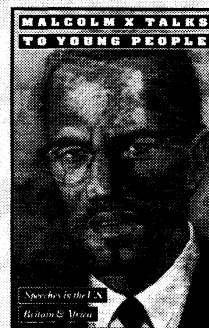
In a brief filed with the Supreme Court, the National League of Cities stated that a number of other city governments were ready to adopt the Indianapolis checkpoint system if the court were to uphold it.

### Malcolm X Talks to Young People

"I for one will join in with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth"—

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

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12



## THE MILITANT

### Newspaper workers strike for dignity

After five months of stalling by the bosses, newspaper workers in Seattle walked off the job for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Read the 'Militant' for on-the-scene coverage of this and other labor battles, and where they fit into the broader picture of the class struggle. Don't miss an issue!



## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

### NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

#### RENEWAL

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

PHONE

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

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 500 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,700 • New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

## The Militant

Vol. 64/No.48

Closing news date: December 6, 2000

Editor: MARTÍN KOPPEL

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Greg McCartan, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ELENA TATE

Published weekly except for two weeks in August and one week in December.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

E-mail: TheMilitant@compuserve.com

The Militant website is: www.themilitant.com

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

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

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

**Latin America, Caribbean:** for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80.

**Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

**Canada:** Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4613 St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2T 1R2.

**Britain, Ireland:** £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. **Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East:** £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address.

**France:** Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U. **Belgium:** BF 2,400 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of 1Mei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp.

**Iceland:** Send 5,800 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. **Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark:** 550 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

**New Zealand:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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



# Workers oppose Pennsylvania waste dump

BY CANDACE WAGNER

HOMETOWN, Pennsylvania—Two hundred area residents jammed into the local firehouse November 20 to hear and respond to a proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the cleanup of a pile of 250,000 cubic yards of waste in this eastern Pennsylvania town. The "fluff pile," as the EPA calls it, contains significant quantities of hazardous materials, including lead, dioxin, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), a probable carcinogen.

Many of those attending the meeting reacted strongly to the EPA representatives' proposal to cap the waste pile in place.

"We didn't bring it here," Ted Hafer declared. "We don't want it here. We want it out of here." The cheers Hafer received reflected the majority sentiment that the toxic wastes should be removed to a landfill designed to completely contain these hazardous materials.

Hafer spoke a week earlier before the Schuylkill County Commission, explaining that leakage from the site has contaminated the Little Schuylkill River and Lake Hauto.

"This is going to affect everybody in the area. They always said that Three Mile Island was one of the safest nuclear power plants in the world, and look what happened," he said, referring to the 1979 nuclear disaster near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The major component of the waste pile is plastic discarded by Eastern Diversified Metals Corp. from a wire reclamation operation between 1966 and 1977. After a series of fires on the site in the late 1970s, residents began to demand cleanup of the site. In 1987 a fence around the pile was erected. Today plastic sheets held down by rocks partially cover the debris.

The EPA representative stated that a system to test and treat runoff from the site was put in place before the company closed and that some of the most hazardous material has been removed.

Testimony after testimony pointed to high incidences of cancer among the families living near the site.

"I'm one of those kids who used to play in the 'fluff' piles," Sue Sturgis said, confronting the EPA representative. "My concern is with the cancer question. Why hasn't a health study been done? I'll tell you why not. Because this is a small rural community. That's why."

Residents who addressed the hearing were particularly insulted by one of the stated arguments to cap the waste in place—it costs less than moving it. "You say that removal is expensive," declared Chester

Carroll. "Well, all these companies [that dumped] had a lot of money. I have the same question I had 10 years ago. What is the solution if capping doesn't work?"

To derisive laughter, the EPA spokesman replied, "That's a very hypothetical situation."

The meeting was called by the EPA to solicit opinions from the community. A 60-day "Public Comment Period" ends December 16. Many at the meeting voiced the opinion that a decision to cap the waste had already been made by the EPA and Lucent Technologies, the present owner of the site.

"The EPA is supposed to protect the environment, but who do they really protect?"

Vicky Mackin, of the Concerned Citizens of Schuylkill County, asked. Mackin pointed out that Lucent and the other companies responsible for the dumping don't want to pay the estimated \$24 million to have the material transported to contained dump sites.

"The EPA says it will take 1,200 truckloads to move the stuff, but we're used to coal trucks in this community. You can't put a price tag on our health and lives," she said.

This fight takes place in an area devastated for years by the underground and strip mining of anthracite coal. A large nonunion mining company closed operations last spring rather than comply with EPA sanctions. During the United Mine Workers

strike at the Jeddo mine in nearby Hazleton in 1998-99, the miners joined with others to fight a landfill of hazardous materials in a worked-out part of the mine.

Today a struggle is brewing against the use of chemically treated sewage sludge in the reclamation of land destroyed by strip mining in towns adjacent to Hometown and in central Pennsylvania. The sludge has been linked to illnesses among miners and the death of an 11-year-old boy in Clearfield County.

*Candace Wagner is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.*

## Chicago meat packers walk out, block firing

BY DAVID ROSENFELD AND LISA-MARIE ROTTACH

CHICAGO—A walkout by all 80 meat packers on second shift at the Chicago Meat Authority pushed back a company attempt to fire a fellow worker and forced the company to rescind a rule that banned talking on the job. Earlier this year, the company threatened to suspend or fire any production worker who talked on the job. Workers at the plant were outraged.

"We are human beings and have the right to speak," said Carmen, one of 30 women on second shift who walked out. "We spend more time in the plant than we do at home. How can they deny us the right to talk to each other? We work with our hands, not our mouths."

About 20 meat packers, almost all Mexican-born immigrants in their 20s, talked about their strike recently with two *Militant* reporters outside the plant.

Some 250 workers process beef and pork at the factory, located in a meatpacking district on the city's South Side. Workers at the plant start at \$5.96 per hour, a wage that eventually tops out at \$7.47.

On September 28 the company accused a butcher on second shift of talking and threatened to fire him.

Word of the threat spread throughout the workforce. As the butcher punched out to leave, all the other workers on the shift walked off the line, leaving production at a standstill.

"We did not organize this ahead of time," said one of the workers. "We felt this rule was unfair from the beginning. When they tried to fire the butcher, that was the final straw. He punched out, and then we all



Militant/David Rosenfeld

**Gabriel Rosas, center, with co-workers at Chicago Meat Authority who pushed back firing of co-worker and bosses' no-talking rule. "We had to take action because they weren't treating us like human beings," said Rosas.**

punched out. The company couldn't do a thing, because we all left. The bosses' jaws dropped."

The next day, all of the workers on second shift met at their union hall. They elected a committee made up of three men and one woman to present their demands to the company.

### 'We demand respect'

Workers at the plant are members of Local 100-A of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

"We had to take action because they weren't treating us like human beings," said Gabriel Rosas, 26, one of the workers elected to the committee. "They shout at us like animals. They try to make us afraid of being fired if we stand up. We don't have to be afraid. We demand respect."

The committee has continued to meet, discussing ways workers can press for improvements in their next contract. The old contract expired in November.

After the company agreed to not fire the butcher and to eliminate the no-talking rule, workers agreed to return to work. Before being allowed to punch in, every worker on the shift was required to sign a written statement pledging not to walk out again. "I had to sign it because I need this job," said one worker. "But what we did that night was right."

*David Rosenfeld is a meat packer in Chicago and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Lisa-Marie Rottach is a garment worker in Chicago and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.*

## Worker killed at Illinois steel plant

BY BILL ARTH

GRANITE CITY, Illinois—Thomas Schwartzkopf, a worker at National Steel's Granite City mill, was killed November 22 when he was thrown from a larry car, a vehicle on rails used to carry coal to coke ovens. An autopsy revealed he had suffered massive abdominal injuries and crushing injuries to his legs.

Schwartzkopf was the fifth worker killed at the plant in the last three years. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is investigating the death.

OSHA cited Granite City Steel for safety violations in 1998 and 1999, including a "willful citation" for failing to correct problems it was aware of in the death of Samuel Burch in 1998.

Janice Barrier, district superintendent for OSHA, downplayed Granite City Steel's responsibility for the high incidence of deaths on the job. "We've had a couple of contractor fatalities, so those are not really under the auspices of Granite City per se. The contractors are responsible for their people," she said.

OSHA fined Granite City Steel a total of \$7,000 for safety violations that led to the death of David Jones from an September 8 accident in which he was crushed due to a lack of clearance.

Two blast furnace workers leaving work, who did not give their names, told the *Militant* they thought overtime was a factor in the most recent death. Mike DeLost, a member of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 16 at Granite City Steel, said, "The company uses blanket safety directives to look like they are doing something about safety. And they say it is always your fault."

Jack Parton, director of USWA District 7, said, "There's a lot of overtime being worked. I just think people who work over eight hours a day—a lot of them work 16 hours, work seven days a week—clearly you're not as alert." The USWA organizes the 3,000 workers at Granite City Steel.

*Alyson Kennedy, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, contributed to this article.*

**THE CHANGING FACE OF U.S. POLITICS**  
Working-class politics and the unions

from Pathfinder

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

**Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions**

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

**LABOR'S GIANT STEP**  
The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55

**Labor's Giant Step**  
The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55

**Art Preis**  
The story of the explosive labor struggles and political battles in the 1930s that built the industrial unions. And how those unions became the vanguard of a mass social movement that began transforming U.S. society. \$26.95

**LENIN**  
On Trade Unions

**On Trade Unions**  
A Collection of Articles and Speeches

**V.I. Lenin**  
The role of unions in workers' struggles to win and hold political power. Discusses the experiences of the revolutionary movement in Russia before and after the 1917 revolution. \$17.95

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

# Student sit-in backs Iceland teachers' strike

BY ARNAR SIGURDSSON  
AND HEDINN BJORNSSON.

REYKJAVIK, Iceland—A teachers' strike for a new contract began in all public senior high schools around the country on November 7. Their previous contract expired in the fall. This is the fourth teachers' strike since 1983.

Members of the Young Socialists together with a group of other students—two of whom had participated in the translation into Icelandic of the pamphlet *The Working Class and The Transformation of Learning*—organized a sit-in of about 70 people at the Ministry of Finance to demand that the government agree to the teachers' demands for better wages.

Demonstrators practically filled the staircase in one part of the building, singing, playing the guitar, and holding signs saying: "Teachers' fight = Students' fight" and "More money for education." Forty students continued the demonstration the next day.

The protest got some coverage on television and other media. The following Saturday night, several minutes of Iceland's most popular news show (Kastljós) was devoted to analyzing the spelling of a press release falsely claimed to have been sent to them by the demonstrators. The host argued that since the teachers taught such bad spelling, they didn't deserve higher wages.

## Low wages deter student teachers

"This is the first time in this school that we have had serious problems finding people to teach. This is because of the low wages," said Thorsteinn Thorsteinsson, principal of FG senior high school. Outside of the capital, schools have had this problem for a long time. Very few young people take up teaching; only 35 of the 1,300 senior high school teachers in Iceland are under the age of 30. Teachers on other levels of the public school system from kindergarten through secondary school face a similar situation.

The day before the strike began, The Organization of Senior High School Students held a demonstration outside of the parliament building in support of the need for higher wages for teachers. But the group also insisted that "both sides" had to accommodate, and expressed concern about damage to students' education careers as a result of the strike. Around 250 students showed up.

Slogans carried by the Young Socialists, all of which unconditionally gave support to the teachers' struggle, received attention from demonstrators and the media. One copy of *The Truth About Yugoslavia* and three *Militants* were sold.

The minister of education noted on his web site that, although he understood the students' concerns, a 65-70 percent increase in teachers' wages was "outside the limits of the economy." Economic growth has been about 4.5 percent in the years 1997-99. The National Economic Institute estimates economic growth of 3.6 percent in the year 2000 and 1.6 percent in 2001. There is consider-

able inflation and the rate of Iceland's currency, the krona, has been falling.

## Action receives wide support

Teachers here, however, are widely supported by working people. The ASI (The Icelandic Federation of Labor) representing unions with 70,000 members—two-thirds of the organized workforce in Iceland—adopted at its national congress a resolution unconditionally supporting the teachers' struggle. This amendment to the final declaration passed with two-thirds of the vote, despite a campaign by the leadership of ASI who argued that economic stability is threatened by the teachers' actions.

At a meeting organized by The Organization of Senior High School Students, Marta Margrét Rúnarsdóttir noted, "Most of us here today have few years left of school and would like to go back as soon as possible, but we must also think of the students who follow. It is not in their interest that the strike ends without gains for the teachers."

## Campaigning for Palestinian self-determination

BY DANIEL AHL

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Over the past two months, the Young Socialists here have been campaigning along with the Communist League in support of the Palestinians' fight for self-determination and against the brutal Israeli crackdown. The YS has participated in a number of protests called by Palestinian organizations, and helped build a rally and march of 1,500 people in central Stockholm on November 11. YS members carried a banner

with the slogan "For a democratic, secular Palestine."

During weekly booktables set up near working-class suburban high schools, which have a high percentage of immigrant youth, the YS has had many discussions on the fight against imperialism in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Gabriella Alan, a student from Södertälje, first met the YS when the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president, James Harris, visited her school in early October. Along with a friend, she attended a YS class on the pamphlet *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*. She has been urging her friends to attend the next class. "You get to learn new things and discuss them with others," Alan said.

Two other high school students from Södertälje, who have attended weekly protests

against Israeli repression organized by the Södertälje Palestinian Association, attended a YS class on the Pathfinder pamphlet *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*. They became interested in studying this pamphlet after attending the November 11 protest in Stockholm.

The Young Socialists also took part in the annual march commemorating the victims of the Nov. 9, 1938, Nazi-organized pogrom against Jews, known as the Crystal Night. A new sight at this year's march, which drew some 500 youth, was a contingent of Sami rights activists, protesting the government's racist policies against Sami, the indigenous people of northern Scandinavia.

Ann-Sofie Jonsson carried a sign saying, "Sweden: world conscience oppressing Sami." The term "world conscience" refers to Swedish imperialism's hypocritical posing as a friend of oppressed peoples.



Militant/Claudio Burgos

March in solidarity with Palestinian struggle in Stockholm, Sweden, on November 11. Young Socialists members participated, carrying banner reading, "For a democratic, secular Palestine."

# Welfare cuts in New Jersey target women

BY PRISCILLA SCHENK

NEWARK, New Jersey—State officials here have initiated moves to speed up the elimination of thousands of women from welfare assistance. About 11,000 women who are single and solely responsible for the care of their children are being targeted.

In 1997 New Jersey's Republican governor, Christine Whitman, signed legislation called "Work First New Jersey," which has already cut 55,000 women from government-guaranteed assistance. The state's legislation was modeled after the federal 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, signed by President William Clinton.

This legislation eliminated federally guar-

anteed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and cut off food stamps for many working people. The AFDC program was won during rising labor struggles more than 60 years ago as part of the Social Security Act.

The New Jersey government limited welfare eligibility to a lifetime total of five years. The state requires anyone receiving assistance, such as food stamps, to get a job, enroll in school, or accept a workfare arrangement to pay back their welfare grants. If a single mother cannot meet one of these requirements within two years, the state takes away all assistance. The state's welfare agency through the "Work First New Jersey" program, which replaced AFDC, is now pushing "to make sure anybody who can get off welfare does so before they hit the five-year time limit," according to state welfare director David Heins.

County social workers are now conducting hour-long "interviews" of the women reaching the end of their assistance to force them to answer 38 pages of personal questions, from how often they go to "soup kitchens to whether they are drug users or victims of domestic violence," according to a report in the Newark *Star-Ledger*. The state has allocated \$5 million to each New Jersey county welfare office to get the answers to the 38-page questionnaire.

## Degrading treatment

Several women who have been through the humiliating experience of having to answer the welfare agents' "questionnaires" talked with this reporter. One woman, a warehouse worker who raised four children as a single head of household, said, "They want you to prove that you don't have a husband, don't have a job, don't own a car, and don't go to school. If you meet these requirements you could qualify for some type of assistance. Now they are taking away even that." She described the experience of waiting in long lines at the welfare office, being made to feel stupid or incompetent, and having welfare agents come to her home

to search for evidence of any violation of the state's requirements.

Another woman, Karen Weathers, who received some government assistance while raising her two young children as a single parent, now works in an Essex County welfare office. She said she works with women who have no other means to support themselves and their children. And now the state is "taking them off just like that. It's going to be rough for a lot of people. There has to be a better way than doing this."

The number of single-parent households, the overwhelming majority of which are headed by women, has grown rapidly from 12.7 percent of all families in 1960 to 32 percent in 1998. The 1996 "welfare reform" act is the first time an entire category of working people—single women and their dependent children—have been eliminated from protection by the Social Security Act, which had guaranteed some social protection for children, women, workers injured or thrown out of a job, and others affected by the instabilities of the capitalist system.

Of the 55,000 women and their children who have been eliminated from any type of government-guaranteed economic or medical assistance, most are now employed in jobs that do not meet their needs. Their wages are low and they have few benefits. According to the state's overview of the "Work First New Jersey" program, "most of these jobs are entry-level clerical and service-oriented positions." The average wage is \$7.20 per hour.

Thousands of women cannot find work because of their responsibilities for the care of young children, lack of transportation, pregnancy, physical disabilities, and the discrimination faced by those who do not speak English. In a *Star-Ledger* interview, Melville Miller, president of Legal Services of New Jersey, said that "a significant number of the long-term people will ultimately not be able to find work for a variety of reasons." Meanwhile, another 11,000 women are facing the devastating effects of being thrown off government assistance over the next year.

## Laundry workers in Chicago picket to demand union recognition



Militant/Cappy Kidd

Around 25 people protested November 20 in Chicago at United Airlines offices in support of the fight by Royal Airline Laundry workers for recognition of their union, UNITE. United Airlines is a major Royal customer.



# Volunteers mobilize to carry out two Pathfinder projects

Continued from front page and a half.

"It will be a push," said Tom Tomasko, a member of the steering committee for the Pathfinder Reprint Project, "but with only eight more titles to go, I'm confident we are going to make it."

Building on their successes, the volunteers have also begun taking on additional aspects of the production of Pathfinder books: the formatting and proofreading of new books as well as reprints; more of the quality checks to make sure files are ready for the presses; and preparation of newly digitized reprints going back to press for a second or third time.

This effort by the Pathfinder Reprint Project will converge with an 11-day volunteer project being organized in New York City to transfer all of the inventory and financial records for Pathfinder, the publisher's printshop, and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to an easy-to-use Internet-based accounting program. The move will streamline business operations and register another advance for the publishing efforts of the communist movement.

This important project will be carried out by teams of up to 20 volunteers, with special mobilizations over the December 16-17 and December 23-24 weekends and ongoing efforts during the intervening five days. Volunteers are coming from cities across North America especially—and *many more are needed*. Some are laid-off or are taking time off from work or school. Volunteers from New York and New Jersey will shoulder the biggest load, with many joining in teams before or after work.

On the two weekends, the New York and New Jersey units of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists—which will host the volunteers from other areas—are organizing classes on Marxism, evening public forums, and social events.

## National Committee meeting

These efforts will coincide with the December 16-18 meeting of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee in New York. The meeting will address the political need for a round of regional public conferences at the opening of next year to discuss several strategic and theoretical questions of importance to the communist movement and other vanguard workers and farmers.

The SWP leadership will assess the deeper social and political roots of the seemingly accidental events surrounding the extraordinarily close 2000 U.S. presidential election. Party leaders will propose that each of the regional conferences feature a talk on "Factionalism and Polarization in U.S. Politics: The Changing Struggle for a Proletarian Party."

Two other questions posed by the deepening polarization throughout the capitalist world will be discussed as central presentations at the proposed conferences.

One is the Jewish question—the structure and character of an oppressed people on a world scale, and the concrete nature of the state of Israel as an oppressor nation. These talks would address the assimilationist illusions that arise among broad layers of the Jewish population during periods of extended imperialist economic expansion and working-class retreat, as well as the weight and place of combating Jew-hatred in the proletarian struggle for a socialist revolution in the United States and elsewhere.

The other presentation would focus on the historic change in the family structure—the sharp rise in households headed by "single women"—in the imperialist world (outside Japan) and the implications of this process for the character of coming political and social conflicts. These effects are registered in the sharpening battle over the social wage ("welfare," Social Security, etc.), the fight for women's liberation, and on many fronts of the so-called cultural war.

The SWP National Committee will settle the dates and locations of the conferences. Gatherings in four regions—the South, Northeast, Midwest, and Western United States—are currently under discussion, over the New Year's and Martin Luther King ex-

tended weekends, or perhaps others in January. Speakers will include SWP national secretary Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, Norton Sandler, Dave Prince, Jack Willey, James Harris, and other central party leaders.

## Campaign by reprint project volunteers

Inspired by the growing opportunities for the communist movement to get revolutionary books into the hands of workers and youth involved in struggles, more than 200 volunteers have been busy scanning, proofreading, formatting, and recreating graphics for 350 Pathfinder titles since the early part of 1998. About 140 volunteers were active in the project during November.

As a result of this work over the past two years, 111 books from the communist political arsenal have been reproduced in more attractive and readable format, with less time and labor needed to turn them around in Pathfinder's printshop.

At the Active Workers Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, in July, steering committee member Ruth Cheney announced to the 450 people in attendance that the volunteers had set themselves some ambitious goals—30 more books by the end of the year, and 50 percent of Pathfinder's titles fully digitized by May 1, 2001. The volunteers' production web site, where the workflow is organized, has been counting off every book as it is produced.

Since July an impressive collection of reprinted titles, which offer workers and farmers the lessons of the class struggle and a Marxist explanation of today's world, has been completed. These include: *Labor's Giant Step*, by Art Preis; *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, by Leon Trotsky; *Lenin's Final Fight*; *Nelson Mandela Speaks*; *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*; issue no. 2 of *Nueva Internacional*; *Fidel Castro's Political Strategy*; the Spanish-language edition of *The Second Declaration of Havana*, and many others. Books that are in the home stretch of preparation include *Out Now!* by Fred Halstead, *Maurice Bishop Speaks*; *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon; and *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara.

The volunteers are registering advances in their work as they drive to meet their goals. By last New Year's, every Pathfinder book had been scanned. A year later, only 25 titles out of the 350 remain on the list to go through a first proofread. Ruth Cheney reports that only 70 books still need to be proofread a second time.

"We really have to report the progress on indexing," Cheney said. "That used to be a bottleneck, but now the indexers are really up there producing five books a month." Almost 40 volunteers are now working to bring the books' existing indexes into line

# 'Militant' supporters organize classes

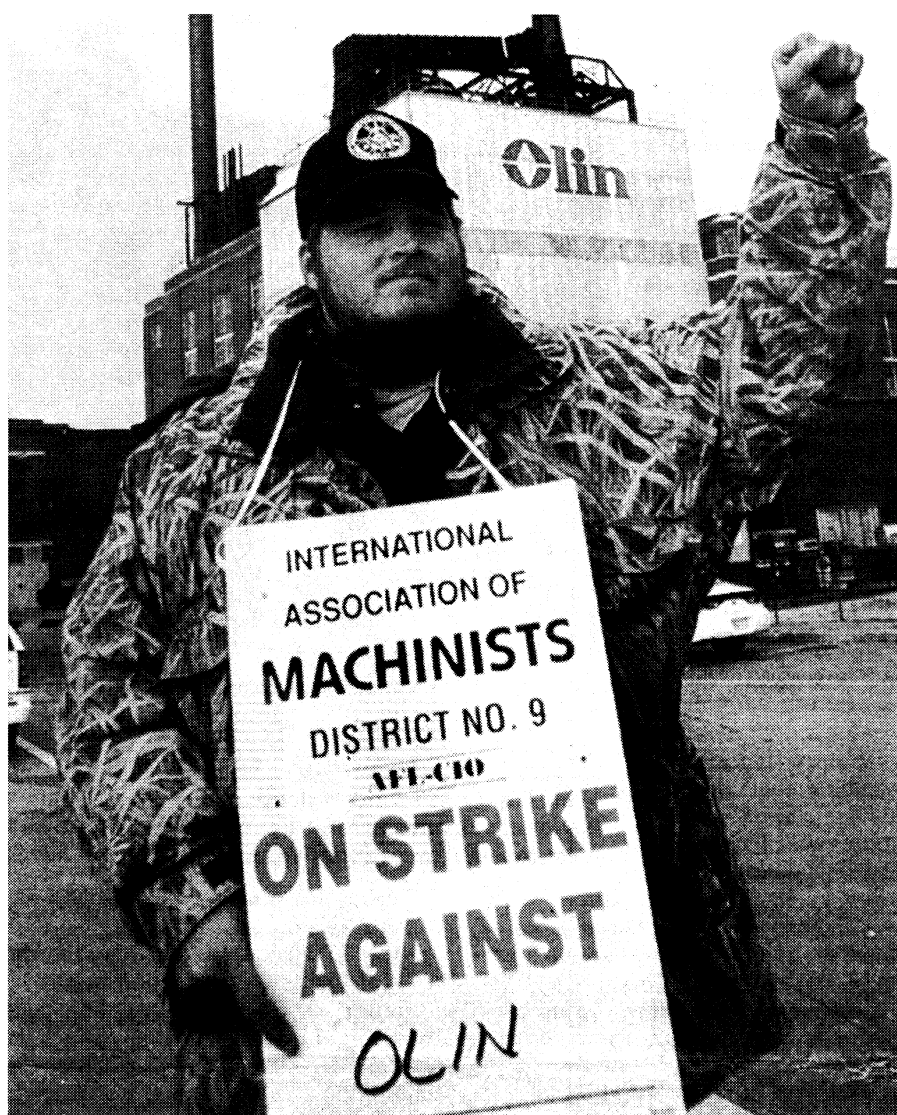
BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* utilize these socialist publications to join in the struggles and discussions of workers and farmers, they are also in several cities holding classes on *Militant* articles as well as Pathfinder titles.

"This past Sunday we held a class at our bookstore in Newark on *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* after setting up street tables in workers districts in two areas of the city where we are looking to establish a headquarters," said Nancy Rosenstock, who works at a garment shop in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. She said they sold 6 copies of the *Militant*, 1 PM subscription, 6 copies of *The Transformation of Learning*, and one each of *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, and *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*.

"One of the people who came to the class is a Puerto Rican youth who works at Port Newark," said Rosenstock. "He had bought the new Pathfinder pamphlet along with a sub to the *Militant* during the circulation

## Illinois Machinists strike for wages and benefits, against two-tier setup



Some 2,700 members of the International Association of Machinists in East Alton, Illinois, went on strike December 4 after rejecting a contract proposed by Olin Corp. The workers said no to company proposals to increase deductibles for health insurance. They demanded cost-of-living wage increases and a more equitable pension plan for retirees. They also called for an end to the two-tier wage system set up by the company, under which newly hired workers start at 80 percent of the regular pay rate. Workers belonging to four smaller unions voted to accept the contract, but are honoring the IAM picket lines. The company is trying to run the plant with administrative personnel.

with their new pagination. The formatting of books is also getting a boost from new volunteers. Jerry Gardner, another steering committee member, reports that at least eight new people have joined the formatting team in the past month or so.

With the redeployment of forces—many proofreaders have moved to other areas of the project—and several new volunteers joining the effort every month, they plan to maintain their average of six titles a month and gradually raise it. According to Tomasko, the volunteers are ahead of schedule to have 50 percent of all Pathfinder titles in digital format by May Day.

Bobbi Sack, who organizes the graphics volunteers, reports that 11 new volunteers are working on this aspect of production as of December. "It's a big challenge to train so many people," she said, "but those of us who learned how to do it ourselves just a couple of months ago are busy passing along

our skills."

## First new title

With the volunteers now taking on responsibility for formatting and proofreading new books, the first new title produced as a result of this labor has just come off the presses: *Pathfinder was Born with the October Revolution* in Spanish, with the English-language edition due by December 16. The printing of the Spanish-language edition was expeditiously prepared so volunteers staffing the Pathfinder booth at the recent Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico would have it on hand.

Quality checking is another stage of the production process now being taken on by the volunteers. Using diagnostic tools, they are checking every computer file in the print-ready Portable Document Format (PDF) to make sure all of the fonts are em-

Continued on Page 12

campaign. 'Clinton says he's for defending public education, but how can we take this seriously when he sends his daughter to a private school?' he said to us, noting the point made in the pamphlet on how schools for the working class and schools for the ruling class are qualitatively different things."

A young Black worker who came to the class decided to buy a subscription to the *Militant*. He had attended the Active Workers Conference held in July in Oberlin, Ohio. Both workers said they plan to attend the next class and the upcoming Militant Labor Forum featuring a reportback from the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico.

## Sales to newspaper strikers in Seattle

Ernie Mailhot, a meat packer in Seattle, said many unionists on strike against the *Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* were very interested in the article he wrote on their struggle. "We sold more than 30 copies of the *Militant* to strikers and their supporters at the December 2 march and rally," said Mailhot. "One striking member of the Pa-

cific Northwest Newspaper Guild, who had been interviewed by the *Militant* a week earlier, read the *Militant* article on the newspaper strike while at the rally. 'It's really good. I liked it,' she said as she told her friend about the article."

Mailhot said that while rally participants were especially interested in the article on the newspaper strike, many bought the paper after seeing that it covered the growing labor resistance throughout the United States and around the world, as well as broader political questions. Several asked about the general strike in Argentina.

"A young striker at the P-I had gotten the paper at an earlier picket line," said Mailhot. "She pointed to the coverage of the Cuban revolution and stated, 'I'm really interested in that.'" Mailhot said she indicated she would show the paper to her roommates, at least one of whom is an anarchist. She planned to show him a recent *Militant* article headlined, "Anarchism vs. the revolutionary fight for state power," which included excerpts from the writings of Frederick Engels.

# National conflicts flare up in Indonesia

Continued from front page backed Suharto dictatorship.

The imperialist governments of the United States, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, which have great economic and strategic stakes tied up in Indonesia and the broader region, are worried about the growing instability in this huge country, as various peoples and other national groups that chafed under Suharto's brutal rule voice their national demands.

Adding to the concerns of the imperialist powers and the Indonesian capitalists is the continuing ferment among working people throughout the archipelago, including frequent and hard-fought labor struggles.

The first national conflict that erupted after the resignation of Suharto was in East Timor, whose people have fought for independence for decades, first against Portuguese colonialism and then against the U.S.-backed Indonesian regime. This led to a 1999 referendum in which a majority voted for independence. In response, rightist gangs, with the collusion of the Indonesian armed forces, waged a terror campaign against the Timorese population, culminating with imperialist military intervention under the UN flag.

## Struggle flares up in West Papua

The Timorese independence struggle spurred pro-independence and autonomy forces elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago. One simmering conflict that has flared up is in West Papua, where the Indonesian regime, which calls it Irian Jaya province, has stationed thousands of troops. Since the referendum in East Timor, the Wahid government has refused to conduct any such votes elsewhere.

"Your guns are not toys or decorations. They must be used to defend the unity of the Republic of Indonesia," said Daud Sihombing, the police chief in the West Papua capital of Jayapura, at a briefing of



West Papua pro-independence leader Theys Eluay, center, is arrested in late November by Indonesian police. National demands in West Papua, called Irian Jaya by Indonesian regime, have long been suppressed by government in Jakarta, with imperialist backing, but have erupted again since end of Suharto dictatorship.

however, do not share in the province's natural wealth. Infant mortality there is the highest in the country, and other indicators of exploitation and oppression are also high.

In the early 19th century, the island of New Guinea was carved up by Dutch, British, and German colonialism. The western area, known as West Papua, was placed under Dutch rule, together with what later became Indonesia. After Indonesia won its independence following World War II, the regime in Jakarta claimed West Papua, and eventually took it over in 1963, establishing military rule there. Washington has supported Indonesian rule over West Papua from the beginning in order to guarantee stable conditions for exploiting the natural wealth and labor.

The indigenous population of West Papua, however, has a culture and history in common with the people in the eastern part of the island, which is now the independent nation of Papua New Guinea. The

support of independence. At least 5,500 people have been killed over the last decade, most of them by the military. Wahid has ruled out granting independence, instead offering autonomy and, most recently, a \$10.5 million emergency aid package.

Also in recent months, the Moluccas or Maluku Islands, dubbed the Spice Islands in the period of Dutch colonial rule, have been the scene of bloody clashes between the indigenous population and settlers from other parts of Indonesia. The conflicts are a product of the Indonesian regime's decades-long "transmigration" policy—moving unsuspecting peasants from other parts of the archipelago, eager to gain land to farm and to escape poverty, to Maluku. Indonesian army units have been involved in the latest fighting.

## Workers press for labor rights

Since the end of the Suharto regime, many working people throughout Indonesia have sought to organize and expand their rights. Gaining confidence in their own strength, they have been less inclined to be intimidated by military violence as they pursue their demands.

Some 20,000 workers employed by Indonesia's main cigarette manufacturer, Gudang Garam, staged a one-day strike November 25 in Kediri, East Java. They demanded company-issued work clothes and a ration of cigarettes. The company agreed to provide uniforms, but claimed the demand for cigarettes ran against a government regulation.

The action by workers at Gudang Garam to ease some of the burden of the cost of living has been repeated in other industrial workplaces big and small. Eight unions organized mass protests in Indonesia November 15 to demand an increase in the minimum wage. Oil workers in the town of Riau have waged protests for higher pay at Caltex, which is controlled by Chevron and Texaco.

Also in November, 2,000 supermarket chain workers rallied demanding pay increases.

The economic fragility and political instability in Indonesia—the world's fourth most populous country—is of concern to the imperialist powers. The Australian foreign minister, Alexander Downer, stated shortly after a congress of pro-independence leaders in West Papua, "We don't want [secession] to happen at all." He ranked Indonesia with Japan, China, and the United States as the four most important countries in the Australian government's foreign policy.

The major powers are also concerned about the weak recovery of the Indonesian economy since the devastating crisis that swept Southeast Asia in 1997-98. Indonesia's present upturn is buttressed by the international rise in the price of oil, a major export earner. The country's rate of growth currently stands at around 4 percent, half that of Malaysia and Singapore, and lower than Thailand and the Philippines.

Earlier this year the U.S. ambassador in Jakarta, Robert Gelbard, attacked the Indonesian government for "corruption" and criticized Wahid for his slow pace of "reform"—that is, for not moving quickly enough to bring down barriers to foreign capitalist investment and buyouts of Indonesian assets and corporations. U.S. mining, energy, and clothing companies have huge investments in Indonesia.

The Consultative Group on Indonesia, an umbrella organization headed by the World Bank, met in October to discuss how much to loan the Wahid government and on what terms. The loan would go to pay interest, and nothing more, on the country's \$60 billion foreign debt.

Indonesia is second only to Russia in loans held by the International Monetary Fund. Jakarta's single biggest creditor is Japan.

## Washington restores military links

U.S. president William Clinton announced on May 23 that the U.S. military would begin restoring links with its Indonesian counterpart, officially broken during the East Timor events. Joint exercises are planned in what U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright described as a "carefully calibrated" plan to renew ties.

The move indicated the importance the U.S. rulers place on trying to restore stability in Indonesia and to slow down its disintegration. "Indonesia at the end of the day has a very big strategic importance in the region," said Singapore-based Vincent Low of the U.S. investment firm Merrill Lynch in October. "From a geopolitical point of view, it's too big to fail."

Recently, Wahid has moved to increase incentives for foreign oil companies to invest in the country's oil reserves. Indonesia is the sole Asian member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Companies. After months of hesitation, he moved in October to make initial cuts in the subsidies on fuel prices, increasing the prices and the potential profits for the Western oil companies.

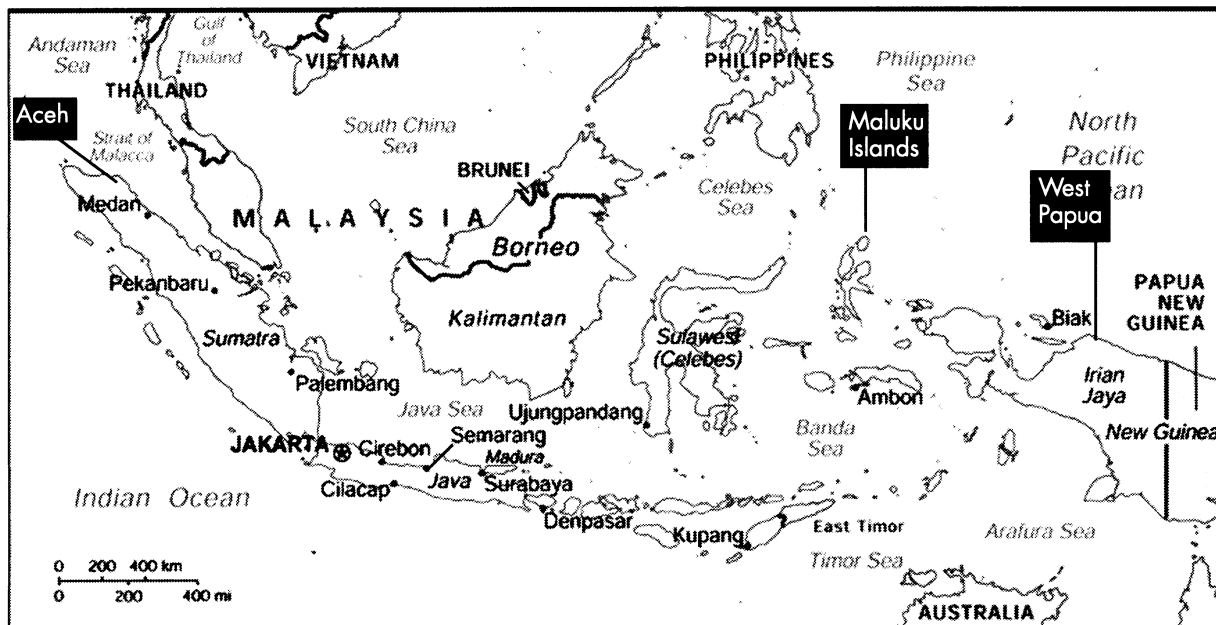
Workers immediately disrupted the Sumatran operation of PT Caltex Pacific Indonesia, the country's biggest oil contractor. Companies such as Caltex sign up for contracts with the state-owned Pertamina oil company.

It was the attempt to slash fuel price subsidies by the former dictator Suharto, as demanded by the IMF, that sparked massive protests by students and working people in 1998. Suharto stepped down in May of that year under pressure from the U.S. rulers.

Washington had backed Suharto since the 1965 military takeover and massacre of some 1 million workers and peasants that consolidated his rule. During his dictatorship, called the "New Order" regime, Suharto relied on the military—whose officers are part of the landlord and capitalist classes and play a prominent part in government to this day—to repress workers, peasants, and national struggles.

Suharto claimed credit for the uneven but rapid industrialization fueled by substantial overseas investment. Capitalists from the United States, Japan, and elsewhere were attracted by the apparently limitless supply of cheap labor power and the growth of a substantial middle class with some money to spend.

That 30-year rule came to an abrupt end under the pressure of economic crisis and popular unrest. Similar ingredients lie beneath the weakness of the Wahid government and the social conflicts bubbling throughout the country today.



2,000 riot police, soldiers, and marines on December 1. More than 10,000 such security forces are now stationed in the province.

That day, troops killed at least six people in a crowd of 200 gathered to mark the anniversary of the independence declaration, opening fire after activists armed with bows and arrows tore down the Indonesian flag in the town of Merauke.

U.S., British, and other foreign capitalist interests as well as the Indonesian rulers have big stakes in West Papua. Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Inc. of Louisiana owns 81 percent of the Freeport gold and copper mine, one of the world's largest, with \$1.5 billion a year in income.

Atlantic Richfield, a subsidiary of the British-based oil giant BP Amoco, is developing the world's largest gas field in the sea off West Papua. Exploitation of the rich forests is under way.

Today the region ranks sixth among Indonesia's 23 provinces in its contribution to the national income. The vast majority of the 3 million inhabitants of West Papua,

heavy-handed rule of Jakarta has spurred an independence movement led by the Free Papua Movement (OPM).

## Conflict in Aceh

Another regional struggle with a long history is unfolding in Aceh, near the northern tip of Sumatra, a large island in the western part of Indonesia. Aceh, with a population of 4 million, has a distinct historic and economic identity, including a hard-fought struggle against Dutch colonial rule. Today it is an officially designated "special region," but the regime has resisted national demands in Aceh, where rich reserves of oil and gas are being tapped.

On December 4, Indonesian police forcibly removed hundreds of flags of the Acehnese independence movement, raised to mark the 24th anniversary of the region's declaration of independence.

For many years the Indonesian military has carried out a ferocious campaign aimed at the Free Aceh Movement, which organizes a guerrilla war and mass actions in



# Seattle newspaper strikers win solidarity

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

SEATTLE—"Union busting is disgusting" was the chant by 600 newspaper workers and their supporters, gathered in Cascade Playfield on the 12th day of the strike against the *Seattle Times* and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (P-I). The strikers are members of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild.

As the crowd grew, one of the speakers who received a big ovation was Carol Marshall, a press operator and member of Graphics Communications Union Local 767M at the *Times*. Marshall explained that, while the press operators' union had voted not to honor the Guild's picket lines, she and some other members of her local were refusing to go to work.

Another speaker, a nonunion newspaper carrier at the *Times*, expressed his support to the strike and added, "I don't think I would have been here 10 years ago. I just didn't believe then what I believe now." He explained that the conditions he faces on his job, including not being paid for stuffing the newspapers with several sections and ads, no medical benefits, and no gas allowance, helped him see the need for unions.

A truck driver who is a member of Teamsters Local 174 talked about her local's decision to honor the Guild's picket lines. She explained that if it wasn't for the union she wouldn't have this job and that she was proud to be a woman and a union member. Local 174 is facing a contract fight at the *Seattle Times* in February when their contract expires.

Robbie Stern, from the Washington State Labor Council, denounced the *Times* and P-I management for placing chain-link fences around its property, boarding up windows, and hiring Vance Security, the notorious union-busting outfit. He referred to them as "jack-booted goons who try to intimidate the strikers." The crowd roared approval when part of a chain-link fence with cut-outs of black-clad Vance security guards on each side was symbolically knocked down.



Members of Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild march to back fight for contract from *Seattle's* two major newspapers. The strikers have won support from other unions in the region.

Workers then marched to the *Seattle Times* in a sea of strike signs. Passing cars and trucks honked along the short march route. When the crowd approached the *Times* building strikers shouted to the replacement workers to come out. Members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), who won a 40-day strike against Boeing earlier this year, provided security monitors along the march route.

Rallying in front of the *Times* building, strikers spoke of the broad backing for their strike, including support for the newspaper they are producing, the *Union Record*, which can also be read online. The *Union Record* is designed as an alternative news source to the *Times* and P-I. Guild representatives called for a campaign to cancel subscriptions to the struck newspapers.

Many contributions have come into the Guild's strike relief fund. At the rally SPEEA added \$5,000 to the fund and the Washington State Employees Federation contributed \$1,000. Among the many unions present were the United Farm Workers, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Seattle/King County Building Construction Trades, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, United Food and Commercial Workers, International Association of Machinists, and unions representing teachers, sheet-metal workers, stagehands, and many more.

After the final rally, many people stopped by the strike headquarters down the street from the *Times* in the bricklayers' union hall. As one walks into the building there is a small strike office. A button machine is on one of the desks. Among the buttons being

produced is one identifying Local 174 with a heart on it. This is in appreciation of the Teamsters members who are honoring the Guild's picket lines.

Vanessa Arrington is one of the strikers staffing the office. She was on the job for six weeks as a copy editor before going on strike. Prior to this Arrington spent two years in Bolivia as a journalism teacher, where she said she saw some of the injustices that keep 80 percent of the population in poverty. "Before the strike I looked at both sides and asked the managers theirs," she said. "The bottom line is that the contract is horrible. It's a six-year contract with 45 cents in the sixth year. That's ridiculous."

The company has offered the Newspaper Guild a contract with \$3.30 in raises over the six years, while the union is fighting for a three-year contract with \$3.25 in raises. It is also asking for matching contributions to the 401 (k) retirement plan.

The walls along the stairs to the basement of the strike headquarters are covered with messages of support. Downstairs, the walls are filled with large maps and picket sign-up sheets. Food, coffee, and expressions of solidarity are plentiful. Jessie Garrison, a 17-year driver with Teamsters Local 174, explains that he walked his first picket line at age four when his mother took him to civil rights actions. She was a leader of the NAACP in his hometown of Savannah, Georgia.

"Local 174—100 percent are picketing," said Garrison. "The last contract we got had a raise of \$1.50 over five years. In February our contract is up. What the Guild is doing is good because it's breaking the pattern." Garrison was referring to management's demands that the poor contracts pushed on some unions in the past be used as patterns for the others. "We didn't always have solidarity," he said, "but it has to start somewhere."

## Owners resort to scabs, cops, courts

The strikers are in an upbeat mood on this day of rallies and solidarity, but they are also sober. They know the newspapers owners have dug in their heels. The bosses are hiring replacements, have their security thugs in place, have asked for a bigger police presence, and have gone to court for injunctions against the pickets. They continue to give out their scab papers free in order to maintain their readership.

The strikers also know their ranks remain overwhelmingly committed to the strike and that they have broad support among unionists and other working people that can be brought to bear in this fight.

One recent example of this was the 100 members of the Newspaper Guild who picketed the *Portland Press Herald* in Portland, Maine, December 1. Their signs called for support for the *Seattle* newspaper strikers and for a decent contract for themselves. The *Press Herald* is owned by The *Seattle Times* Co.

Ernie Mailhot is a worker in the meatpacking industry in Seattle.

## Teamsters end strike at Safeway warehouse

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

STOCKTON, California—Members of Teamsters Local 439 ended their 47-day strike against Summit Logistics by approving a six-year contract by a vote of 717 to 404.

The Summit Logistics warehouse in nearby Tracy, California, distributes groceries and produce to Safeway stores in northern California, Nevada, and Hawaii.

As part of the settlement, the company agreed to dismiss all replacement workers once strikers return to work. It had hired and housed 1,600 replacement workers in an attempt to break the union.

Under the new contract warehouse workers will receive raises totaling \$3.10 an hour over the next six years; the pay for new hires will go from \$11 to \$13.50 an hour. Drivers will receive a raise of almost 16 percent. A labor/management committee will be established to review drivers' pay periodically.

Workers also won modest gains in health and pension benefits.

The two main demands of the strike, however, remain unresolved. These are lowering the production standards for warehouse workers and basing drivers' pay on hours worked instead of deliveries made.

Strikers also expressed concern that the 29 union members suspended during the strike on charges such as rock-throwing must have their cases reviewed individually to determine if the company will take them back.

"One thing I've learned is you can say strike and go through the motions, but to win a strike you need serious backbone," warehouse worker Ben Richer, 29, told the *Militant* at the contract ratification meeting held December 1 in Stockton.

Many workers interviewed expressed the feeling that a future strike is inevitable. "When we go back in, I'm going to be sure

to educate my people," said Julio Rangel, a shop steward in the warehouse. "I'm going to tell them to start saving right now because next time its not going to be a strike, it's going to be a war." Rangel said, "If you want a better life you have to fight for it. It's the fight that gets you better pay and benefits—that earns you the right to hold your head up—and builds the union. No one can do that for you."

Warehouse worker Tony Cordova, 26, anticipated that the bosses' harassment and intimidation will continue. "But we're much stronger now," he added. "I stood up for what I believe in. We all stood together and I think that will continue once we're back on the job. And we're in better shape. I know people from all the other departments now."

Richer expressed a similar sentiment. "We've put 'Brother' back into the 'Brotherhood' [of Teamsters]. I'm proud to be a Teamster."

## Alabama miners hold walkout

Continued from front page

ers at home to get them to come to work, claiming they were needed for emergency tasks in the mine. One of the "emergencies" was to finish filling a train with coal for Alabama Power, the main electric utility in the state.

Union members did not return to work, stating that to work on a memorial day would be a violation of their union oath. After finding out how many workers had been called by the company, union members were so angered that they decided themselves to walk out the next day, November 28. The company immediately turned to the Northern District Court of West Alabama, which issued a return-to-work order that evening. The company claimed the walkout violated an "implied no-strike clause."

Despite the court order, workers stayed off the job until afternoon shift of Novem-

ber 30. They decided to go back in after the federal court in Birmingham ordered the union to show why they should not be held in contempt of court. If the union were held in contempt, the punishment, left up to the judge, could range from personal fines to imprisonment. Meanwhile, the original restraining order has been extended for an indefinite period of time.

The company says the new vacation rules will be implemented in January. In the meantime, UMWA officials said the union will continue to protest the changes through the grievance procedure.

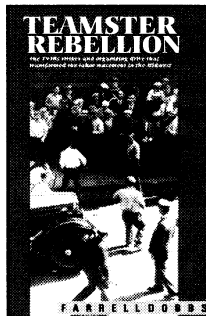
The North River mine produced about 2.3 million tons of coal last year, making it the second-largest in the state. Alabama Power buys most of the mine's production.

Susan LaMont is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees and works in Centreville, Alabama.

### For further reading

#### Coal Miners on Strike

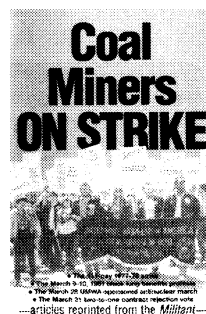
Articles on the 111-day 1977-78 strike, the 1981 strike and the contract rejection vote, the United Mine Workers of America and the fight against nuclear power, the fight for health benefits and compensation to black lung victims, and more. \$5



#### Teamster Rebellion

Tells the story of the 1934 strikes that built an industrial union and a fighting social movement in Minneapolis. \$16.95

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



# Why capitalism offers no solution for Jews

A working-class explanation of the rise of anti-Semitism and how to fight it

Printed below are excerpts from *How Can the Jews Survive? A Socialist Answer to Zionism* by George Novack. The pamphlet was first published in 1969. In his article, Novack refers to Isaac Deutscher, a historian who opposed Zionism and defended the Marxist view on the Jewish question. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Marxism takes issue with the mystique of the chosen people in reference to the Jews or any other nationality. It gives a historical and materialist explanation for the exceptional endurance and peculiar characteristics of the Jews since their dispersion. The Jews have maintained existence and individuality as a nationality primarily because of the special role they played as a people-class in precapitalist society, where they were agents of the money economy among peoples living in a natural economy. Judaism and anti-Semitism had common roots in the distinctive functions which marked off the commercial Jew from the rest of the nations.

The coming of capitalism eliminated the necessity and changed the possibilities and prospects for perpetuating Jewry as a people apart, since its special function became the general condition of the social economy. During the 19th century both liberals and Marxists held the view that the Jews would shed their distinctive traits and separate identity through gradual absorption into an enlightened bourgeois or a future socialist society. Progressive capitalism did institute a certain degree of assimilation in Western Europe and North America, although it failed to complete it there. The process of social and cultural homogenization was barely begun in Eastern Europe because of its backwardness.

## Anti-Semitism used by capitalists

The development of world capitalism in

this century upset this perspective. Imperialistic, crisis-torn capitalism swung over to an exacerbated nationalism of its own. One of its most malignant manifestations was the resort to anti-Semitism, a ready-made means for diverting the wrath of despairing and deluded people away from the real authors of their misery by making the Jews a scapegoat for the crimes of a decaying capitalism. This relapse into barbarism was consummated in Germany, the most highly developed capitalist country of Europe, through the frenzied chauvinism of the Nazis capped by Hitler's extermination of six million Jews.

The degeneration of capitalism coupled with the failure of the socialist movement to replace it in time gave the Jewish question an acuteness and urgency unanticipated by the first generations of Marxists....

[Isaac] Deutscher addressed a sober warning about the fate awaiting them if they clung to capitalism and chauvinism, not only to the Israelis, but to those Jews in the imperialist metropolises who complacently live under the mistaken impression that anti-Semitism is a spent force there. They are blind to the fact that such prejudice festers in many crevices of the Western countries and, in the event of acute insecurity, can burst forth with sudden ferocity, as it did in crisis-ridden Germany between the wars.

"Let this society suffer any severe shock,



Protest at 1996 rally of ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan. Novack explains that capitalism in decay has upset the process of assimilation of Jews, by resorting to anti-Semitism and breeding ultrarightist movements that scapegoat Jews for the crimes of the capitalist system itself.

such as it is bound to suffer; let there be again millions of unemployed, and we will see the same lower-middle-class alliance with the Lumpenproletariat, from whom Hitler recruited his following, running amok with anti-Semitism," he wrote. "As long as the nation-state imposes its supremacy and as long as we have not an international society in existence, as long as the wealth of every nation is in the hands of one national capitalist oligarchy, we shall have chauvinism, racialism, and, as its culmination, anti-Semitism."

Such a prediction may seem far-fetched and unduly alarmist to those privileged and shortsighted Anglo-American Jews who have been sunning in the prolonged prosperity and social stability of the post-war decades. Yet it is based upon a keen insight into the ultimate direction of the main motive forces of capitalist development in our time. The warning has direct relevance for American Jews, young and old, who regard the Jewish problem as something remote from them and confined to Israeli-Arab relations or to the recurrence of anti-Semitism in East Europe and the Soviet Union.

They forget that the Jewish question is as pertinent to the United States as to Israel. More than twice as many Jews live in this country as in Israel. (According to the 1967 estimates of the Jewish Statistical Bureau, 5,721,000 live in the United States to 2,669,000 in Israel.) Like many other crucial questions of our era, the fate of the main body of Jewry will ultimately be settled by what happens on American soil....

While they misjudge the real nature of their relations with the Afro-American community and its nationalism, patriotic Jews cherish the illusion that American big business is constitutionally different from the German industrial and financial establishment that pressed Hitlerism into its service. The grounds for such confidence are very flimsy. The past record of the American ruling class in protecting the Jews from harm is shameful.

During the 1930s Roosevelt's liberal Democratic administration did not heed the cries of the victims of Nazism and refused to open the doors guarded by the Statue of Liberty to more than a handful of Jewish refugees who were lucky enough to find sponsors here. In the last manifesto he drafted for the Fourth International in 1940, Leon Trotsky wrote: "The world of decaying capitalism is overcrowded. The question of admitting a hundred extra refugees becomes a major problem for such a world power as

the United States.... In the epoch of its rise, capitalism took the Jewish people out of the ghetto and utilized them as an instrument in its commercial expansion. Today decaying capitalist society is striving to squeeze the Jewish people from all its pores; seventeen million individuals out of the two billion populating the globe, that is, less than one percent, can no longer find a place on our planet!"

During World War II the democratic imperialist governments did not lift a hand to deter Hitler from consigning the Jews to the gas ovens.

White racism, not anti-Semitism, is by far the most pervasive and powerful current of discrimination and source of persecution in the United States today. But if, with Deutscher, we look beyond the present conjuncture, there is danger for the Jews lurking over the horizon. Should there be a grave social crisis and a strengthening of ultrareaction, anti-Semitism could experience a frightening growth here.

The American ruling class, whose agents dropped the first atom bombs on the Japanese, conduct genocidal warfare in Vietnam, stood ready to use the H-bomb in the Caribbean confrontation of 1962 and maltreat their minorities at home, has shown itself capable of monstrous crimes. In case the survival of its power and profits hangs in the balance, why should it consider the six million American Jews to be less expendable than the six million European Jews it let Hitler exterminate? Inconceivable? So assimilated German Jews of the 1920s thought, too....

The salvation of the Jewish people cannot come from reliance upon Zionist chauvinism, American imperialism or Stalinist bureaucratism. Every expedient short of the struggle for socialism, any substitute for that, will end in calamity for the Jews. They cannot achieve security for themselves or anyone else so long as the root causes of discrimination, racism and reactionary nationalism continue to exist.

Indeed, the Zionists have dealt fatal blows to themselves by succumbing to these practices. These curses can be removed only by abolishing capitalism, as the East European Jewish workers formerly believed and the non-Jewish Jews of the Marxist school taught.

The Jews have to link themselves with those forces in their own country and on a world scale that are fighting to overthrow imperialism and striving to build the new society. The solution of the Jewish question is indissolubly bound up with the complete emancipation of humanity that can be brought about only along the road of international socialism.

## The Jewish Question

A Marxist Interpretation

ABRAM LEON

Traces the historical rationalization of anti-Semitism to the fact that Jews—in the centuries preceding the domination of industrial capitalism—were forced to become a "people-class" of merchants and moneylenders. Leon explains why the propertied rulers incite renewed Jew-hatred today.

\$17.95

## Israel and the Arab Revolution

Fundamental Principles of Revolutionary Marxism

GUS HOROWITZ

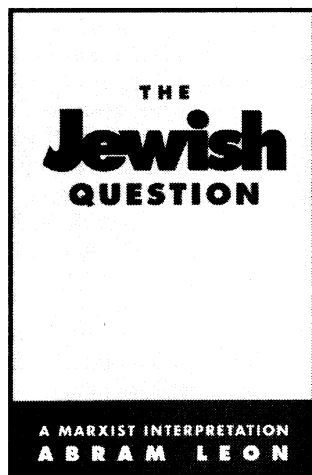
\$7.00

## How Can the Jews Survive?

A Socialist Answer to Zionism

GEORGE NOVACK

Booklet, \$2.50



## On the Jewish Question

LEON TROTSKY

"Never was it so clear as it is today that the salvation of the Jewish people is bound up insuperably with the overthrow of the capitalist system." —Leon Trotsky, 1940.

Booklet, \$4.50

## In New International no. 10

### Imperialism's March toward Fascism and war

JACK BARNES

### What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold

Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution

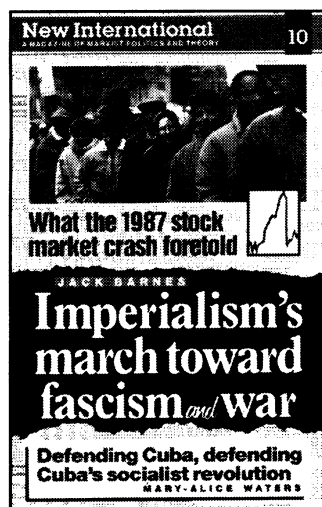
MARY-ALICE WATERS

### The Curve of Capitalist Development

LEON TROTSKY

\$14.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail, please include \$3.00 for shipping and handling.





# Pathfinder titles draw interest of thousands at Mexico book fair

BY NORTON SANDLER

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—The Pathfinder Press booth, decked with attractive blowups of several titles, drew thousands of visitors at the Guadalajara International Book Fair, held here November 25-December 3. A total of 570 books and pamphlets, on a wide array of political topics, were sold from the Pathfinder stand during the book fair.

The annual Guadalajara Book Fair held in Mexico's second-largest city, is the most important trade book fair in the Americas. Fair organizers reported in their wrap-up news conference that 9,000 booksellers, distributors, and librarians attended this year from across the continent. Some 82,000 titles were on display in the large Guadalajara Expo, with about 35 countries represented.

Though the huge majority of the titles were in Spanish, books in English, French, Italian, and Portuguese were also available. Participating in the fair for the first time this year were publishers from the United Kingdom, Belize, and the Caribbean nations of Trinidad and Tobago and St. Martin, a French-Dutch colony.

According to organizers, some 345,000 people attended the fair, which was open to the public a substantial portion of the nine days. On November 30 alone, 20,000 high school and pre-university students were bused to the fair.

Each year one country is featured. This year the nod went to Spain, which resulted in many bookstores, distributors, and writers from that country having a presence here.

## A literary crossroads for Americas

Many writers from throughout the Americas attend the annual Guadalajara event. Each day, several programs featured prominent authors discussing their works or symposiums on a range of topics. The annual literary prize given to a Latin American writer was awarded this year to poet Juan Gelman from Argentina. Gelman spent time in exile in Mexico during the late 1970s when a U.S.-backed military dictatorship was in power in Argentina. Gelman's son and other relatives were among the thousands who disappeared under this regime. This aspect of Gelman's life received prominent press coverage.

Vicente Fox from the National Action Party (PAN) was inaugurated as the new president of Mexico on December 1 in Mexico City while the book fair was taking place. The event marked the end of the seven-decade-long control of the presidency by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The inauguration day was a national holiday in the country. A few book fair panels were organized to discuss the new Mexi-

can government.

One panel, featuring Felipe González, a social democratic politician and former president of Spain, was titled, "Globalization and Democracy in the Third Millennium." This was part of a series of panels in which speakers argued for a "third way" between capitalism and socialism and for "creative market socialism."

The book fair received prominent coverage here. Each morning the daily newspapers—*Informador*, *Público*, and *Mural*—carried several-page special sections reporting on the previous day's activities and the schedule for that day.

Free concerts attracting many youth were held in the pavilion outside the expo in the evenings following the fair. Scores of street vendors had an crafts and T-shirts on sale there as the large crowds exited the building.

## Pathfinder booth a center of discussion

From November 27 to 29 until 5:00 p.m. each day, the fair was open only to those in the book trade. The team staffing the Pathfinder booth made use of this time to meet with various book distributors, librarians, and chain stores in Mexico. They had follow-up meetings with a few companies that are vying to sell Spanish-language books over the Internet that Pathfinder had initiated contact with at the previous book fair. New meetings were held this year with potential distributors in Brazil and Spain.

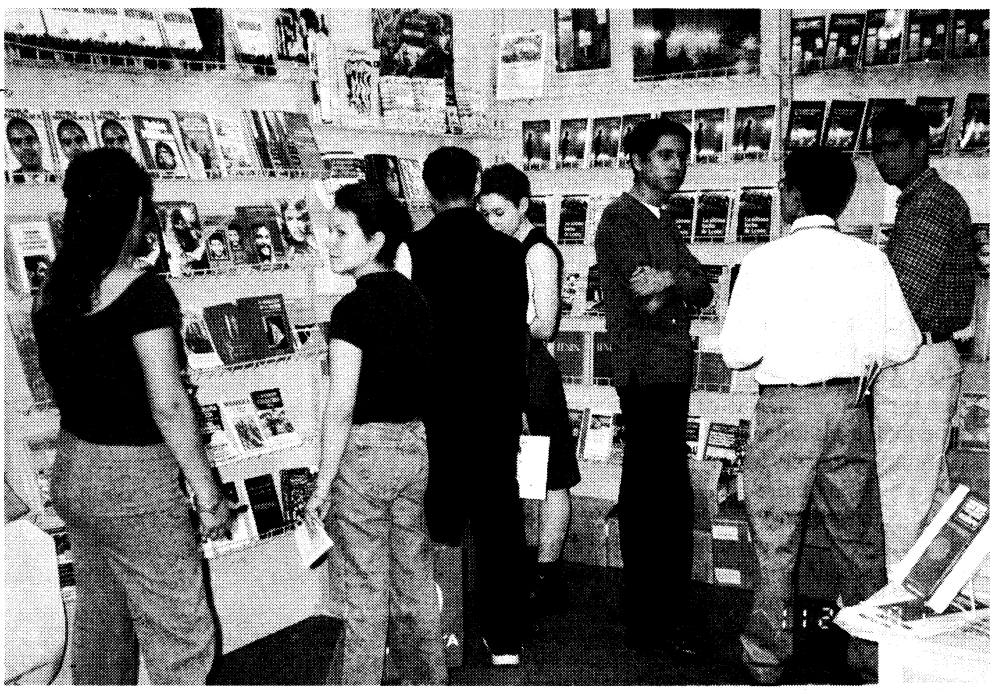
Many U.S. librarians visited the Pathfinder stand during the hours open only to the book trade. Several commented that they had received the promotional mailing sent out by the Pathfinder office in New York prior to the fair.

The booth featuring Pathfinder titles was a constant center for political discussion during the public sessions. Many youth crowded into the booth looking at the books and asking questions about them. Several people indicated they had visited the booth last year. On a couple of occasions the discussions would continue over coffee.

The booth was staffed by a team of nine volunteers—from New York; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Houston; Des Moines, Iowa; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Tucson, Arizona. Most of the team members participated for about half of the nine-day event.

Four members of the team were workers in meatpacking plants in various U.S. cities. This fact proved interesting to many who wanted more political discussion. Four team participants were also members of the Young Socialists.

A number of workers from the area passed through the booth in addition to wave after wave of students. A young worker hanging the lights as the team was setting



Janice Prescott/Militant

## Participants at Guadalajara book fair talk to volunteers staffing Pathfinder booth

up commented that he had worked until recently at the Excel meatpacking plant in Dodge City, Kansas. Another worker, in her 40s, told us she had worked for a few years in the early 1990s at the Swift packing plant in Worthington, Minnesota. After receiving a Pathfinder flyer featuring the publishing house's new titles, a hotel worker came back to the booth to purchase the Spanish-language edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes.

The books at the Pathfinder stand were sold at half their U.S. cover prices. A copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* was offered for \$12.50, or 120 Mexican pesos, at the fair. A relatively well-paid worker in Mexico is paid in the range of \$100 a week, or 950 pesos. Most workers are paid considerably less. The minimum wage in this country varies by region, but averages between \$3 and \$4 a day. It was common for young people to pool their money to obtain the book they wanted.

On numerous occasions we were asked: how can a publishing house like this one—containing revolutionary and communist books—exist in the United States?

This was an opening to show them the new Pathfinder title in Spanish, *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*. More than 40 copies of this title were sold.

"We would explain that the struggles of workers and farmers in the United States is on the increase," said Roberta Black, a meat packer from Minnesota who was part of the team. "We often showed those who asked this question a display of 'Pathfinder in the world,' with photos of socialist workers and Young Socialists selling Pathfinder literature as they participated in demonstrations and strikes by coal miners, meat packers, janitors, and other unionists."

A wide range of Pathfinder titles were sold from the Pathfinder stand, including a few dozen in English and a few in French. Many people would pick up the couple of titles we had on display in Farsi to show their friends.

## Discussions on U.S. politics

Booth staffers were often asked their opinion about the disputed U.S. presidential election. They responded that the sharp factionalism in the U.S. big-business parties has its roots in disagreements among the wealthy ruling-class families about how to address the sharpening competition they face from their imperialist rivals and the fact that the workers and farmers—from Russia and Eastern Europe to semicolonial countries such as Mexico, to the United States—are not defeated and are increasingly resisting the assaults on their living standards and rights emanating from Wall Street.

They urged visitors to pick up a copy of the Pathfinder pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. The introduction to the pamphlet by Jack Barnes outlines the stepped-up bipartisan assaults in recent years, from moves to un-

dermine social security to the accelerated use of the death penalty, to attacks on the rights of immigrants. Eighty-two copies of this pamphlet were sold.

Books on or about the Cuban revolution were the most popular Pathfinder titles at the fair. The biggest seller by far was *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, with 63 copies in Spanish and four in English sold—all those that were brought to the event.

Some guests to the booth argued that Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro had turned his back on Ernesto Che Guevara during the guerrilla campaign that Guevara headed in Bolivia. In October 1967 Guevara was captured in combat and murdered by Bolivian army forces, in an operation organized together with the CIA.

The real record of the Cuban government in supporting the campaign led by Guevara was addressed by Cuban president Fidel Castro in a speech he gave in 1987 on the 20th anniversary of Guevara's death, which can be found in the Pathfinder title *Socialism and Man in Cuba*. We also urged them to read *Making History*, interviews with four commanders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba that give concrete examples, through their lives, of the kind of men and women that a revolution helps create. Thirty-two copies of the Spanish-language edition of *Making History* were sold.

Others wanted to know why it appeared that U.S. president William Clinton had received a warm welcome in Vietnam during his recent visit to that country, given the ferocious attacks directed against that Asian nation by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. This led to discussions in which Pathfinder supporters compared the leader-

Continued on Page 12

## 'Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution' will be available in English

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Pathfinder Press has announced that the English-language edition of the new pamphlet *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters will be available in mid-December.

The new pamphlet is based on a talk given by Waters at a 1998 conference in Havana sponsored by Cuban publishing house Casa Editora Abril. Waters is the president of Pathfinder Press and is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

The talk, which originally appeared in the Feb. 16, 1998, issue of the *Militant*, provides an introduction to the unique political role that Pathfinder literature plays in the world today.

For more than 80 years, Pathfinder and its various predecessors, Waters explains, "have had one and only one objective: to publish and distribute as widely as possible the books, pamphlets, and magazines that are necessary to advance the construction of a communist party in the United States—an objective inseparable from the building of a communist movement internationally."

The Spanish edition of the pamphlet was published last month, just in time for the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico. It sold well there, with more than 40 people purchasing copies.



Bill Estrada/Militant

Young Socialist member Ana Ramirez from Los Angeles (on left) discusses politics with other young people in the dining facility at the book fair. A total of 570 Pathfinder titles were sold during the event.

# Venezuela regime moves to bring unions to heel

BY HILDA CUZCO

The regime of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez has taken steps to bring the country's trade unions to heel by subordinating them more directly to the capitalist state. It is doing so under the demagogic banner of "democratizing" the labor movement and fighting corruption.

In a December 3 referendum, the government won approval of its proposal to suspend the national union leadership for six months, during which new union elections are to be held.

The referendum was approved by a 65 percent majority. The turnout, however, was only 22 percent of the 11 million eligible voters. The vote was accompanied by municipal elections.

The referendum has been strongly opposed by the officials of the four established trade union federations. Officials of a fifth, recently founded federation, the Bolivarian Workers Force (FBT), align themselves with the Chávez regime.

Carlos Navarro, secretary general of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation (CTV), the largest of the labor federations, with 1.7 million members, declared that he would not accept the results of the referendum, calling it "unconstitutional." CTV officials have threatened to stage civil disobedience actions if the government moves to implement the measure.

## Playing on hatred for labor bureaucracy

The Chávez regime has won support for its move to shackle the unions more tightly to the state by taking advantage of widespread hatred for the labor bureaucracy, which he terms "corrupt and rotten."

The 2 million union members in Venezuela belong to one of four trade union federations. The CTV, an affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), organizes a substantial percentage of Venezuela's unionized workforce, especially among public employees. The other, smaller labor federations are the United Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CUTV), General Confederation of Workers (CGT), and the Confederation of Autonomous Unions (CODESA).

The majority of the CTV officialdom supports the social-democratic party Democratic Action (AD). A minority backs the Social Christian COPEI party or the Venezuelan Communist Party, a Stalinist group (PCV), or other parties in the workers movement.

Chávez has appealed to working people by accusing top union officials of cutting backroom deals with the traditional parties on issues that benefited employers. One example was the 1997 change in the labor law covering severance pay for workers who were laid off or quit a job. The law was replaced by an employer-backed plan with fewer benefits. Chávez called this measure a "betrayal."

The Venezuelan president campaigned for the referendum by criticizing the unions for not having direct elections of the leadership. Placed on the defensive, the CTV adopted new rules in April 1999 requiring direct election of the union leaders, with a term of four years. The promised elections have not taken place, however.

Chávez has so far gained popular support among many working people and middle-class layers because of his promises to address the critical situation facing the majority of the population in Venezuela. A section of the Venezuelan capitalist class supports him as their main hope for stabilizing a situation of incessant social turmoil.

## Acute economic crisis

Venezuela, although the third-largest oil exporter in the world, has been going through a recession for more than two years, in which thousands of companies have gone bankrupt, leaving 600,000 workers unemployed in 1999. More than half the workforce is jobless or underemployed. Some 80 percent of the 24 million Venezuelans live below the official poverty line. Inflation runs at 20 percent.

Raising hopes among many working people, Chávez announced on national television and radio in early September a program that he said would create 100,000 jobs and social programs, including the construction of housing, schools, industrial, agricultural, and tourist projects.

The president said these projects are part of a plan to "accelerate" the recovery of the



Unionists protest in Caracas against referendum held by Venezuelan regime, which played on widespread hatred of labor bureaucracy to win approval of measure December 3.

Venezuelan economy, which shrank 7 percent last year. Capitalists have taken \$8 billion out of the country due to fears of instability.

The government hopes to rely on oil revenues, with projected profits of \$5 billion this year because of the high price of oil, according to Finance Ministry estimates. The United States, its main customer, buys 1.4 million barrels a day an equivalent of about half Venezuela's total production.

In October, oil workers went on strike demanding hourly wage increases of 6,500 bolivars, or about \$9 an hour, against the state-owned oil company, PDVSA. The current minimum wage for oil workers is 10,000 bolivars, or \$14; the company had offered \$5. The labor action took place in the western state of Zulia, where workers occupied areas of some refineries and oil distribution ports. The National Guard and the police were mobilized to intimidate the strikers. Oil workers also went on strike in March against a government order to sus-

pend collective negotiations of a contract that had expired in November.

Since the end of the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez in 1959, a two-party system of AD and COPEI had dominated politics in Venezuela, including control of the Supreme Court, Congress, and state governorships. Both parties have imposed austerity programs and are hated and discredited in the eyes of working people.

In the midst of these acute crisis conditions, Chávez emerged, relying on his image of an honest military man above the corruption of traditional parties and willing to take radical action against the "establishment."

## Centralization of power

Since he took office in 1999, Chávez has taken steps to centralize executive power. He has relied on referendums and decrees to get backing from the population in carrying out his moves against the traditional institutions—what he calls a "peaceful revo-

lution."

A new constitution approved in December of last year gave Chávez the power to dissolve the Senate and take over the judicial system. The National Assembly, where the president enjoys a majority, passed an "enabling law" giving Chávez the authority to enact a range of measures now pending and decree others over the year, on economic matters ranging from banking regulations to land reform.

To defend these measures, Chávez argues that he is calling for "direct democracy." In a speech earlier this year, he stated, "We are setting up a democracy according to our own needs.... We will never let anyone impose their models of democracy on us," adding, "Merely representative democracy doesn't work here."

The current moves against the trade unions are the most recent steps by the government to consolidate its central authority.

Officials in Washington and other imperialist capitals are hoping the Chávez government can keep a lid on social protests. But they also object to a government in a semicolonial country not toeing its line in foreign policy, such as the Venezuelan government's increased trade relations with Cuba and its more aggressive role in promoting the interests of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. As a result, some voices in U.S. and other imperialist ruling circles have sought to pressure the Chávez government by accusing it of not being "democratic."

This stance has been echoed by the trade union officialdoms in the imperialist countries. The AFL-CIO officialdom, along with the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), condemned the Venezuelan referendum, calling it a violation of international labor protocols.

The AFL-CIO, ICFTU, and International Labor Organization have floated the threat of trade sanctions against Venezuela. Calls for sanctions or boycotts against governments in semicolonial countries are typical of the AFL-CIO officialdom, which echoes U.S. government foreign policy.

# Leon Trotsky on trade unions and the state

Printed below are excerpts from an article entitled "Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay" by Leon Trotsky. This unfinished article was found in Trotsky's desk after his assassination in August 1940. The entire text appears in *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* by Trotsky. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade union organizations throughout the world: it is their drawing close to and growing together with the state power. This process is equally characteristic of the neutral, the Social Democratic, the Communist, and "anarchist" trade unions. This fact alone shows that the tendency toward "growing together" is intrinsic not in this or that doctrine as such but derives from social conditions common for all unions.

Monopoly capitalism does not rest on competition and free private initiative but on centralized command. The capitalist cliques at the head of mighty trusts, syndicates, banking consortiums, and so on, view economic life from the very same heights as does state power; and they require at every step the collaboration of the latter. In their turn the trade unions in the most important branches of industry find themselves deprived of the possibility of profiting from the competition among the different enterprises. They have to confront a centralized capitalist adversary, intimately bound up with state power. Hence flows the need of the trade unions—insofar as they remain on reformist positions, that is, on positions of adapting themselves to private property—to adapt themselves to the capitalist state and to contend for its cooperation.

In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement, the chief task lies in "freeing" the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position

is in complete harmony with the social position of the labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of superprofits of imperialist capitalism. The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the "democratic" state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of war. By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state, fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in imperialism.

Colonial and semicolonial countries are under the sway not of native capitalism but of foreign imperialism. However, this does not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthens the need of direct, daily, practical ties between the magnates of capitalism and the governments that are in essence subject to them: the governments of colonial or semicolonial countries. Inasmuch as imperialist capitalism creates both in colonies and semicolonies a stratum of labor aristocracy and bureaucracy, the latter requires the support of colonial and semicolonial governments as protectors, patrons, and sometimes as arbiters. This constitutes the most important social basis for the Bonapartist and semi-Bonapartist character of governments in the colonies and in backward countries generally.<sup>1</sup> This likewise constitutes the basis for the dependence of reformist unions upon the state.

In Mexico the trade unions have been transformed by law into semistate institutions and have, in the nature of things, assumed a semitotalitarian character. The

<sup>1</sup> Bonapartism refers to a type of class rule that is dictatorial in form and is usually headed by an individual appearing as a "strong man." Originating in a period of social crisis or stalemate of contending class forces, a Bonapartist regime tends to elevate itself above the country's classes and acquire a certain independence of action. The term originates from the regime of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte in France, 1852-70.

statization of the trade unions was, according to the conception of the legislators, introduced in the interests of the workers, in order to assure them an influence upon governmental and economic life. But insofar as foreign imperialist capitalism dominates the national state and insofar as it is able, with the assistance of internal reactionary forces, to overthrow the unstable democracy and replace it with outright fascist dictatorship, to that extent the legislation relating to the trade unions can easily become a weapon in the hands of imperialist dictatorship....

It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilize the masses, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy....

Inasmuch as the chief role in backward countries is played not by national but by foreign capitalism, the national bourgeoisie occupies, in the sense of its social position, a much more minor position than corresponds with the development of industry. Inasmuch as foreign capital does not import workers but proletarianizes the native population, the national proletariat soon begins playing the most important role in the life of the country.

In these conditions the national government, to the extent that it tries to show resistance to foreign capital, is compelled to a greater or lesser degree to lean on the proletariat. On the other hand, the governments of those backward countries that consider it inescapable or more profitable for themselves to march shoulder to shoulder with foreign capital destroy the labor organizations and institute a more or less totalitarian

Continued on Page 12



# Workers at Texas Goodyear plant fight concession demands

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—"We'll be out here until we get a contract we can accept," said Jim Warner Jr. as he picketed Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.'s chemical plant here November 25.

"What Goodyear is asking from me is a house note and a car note. They want to push my wages back to less than I made 11 years ago. For others it means their job, period.



We can't accept that."

On October 10, some 350 members of Local 347 of the International Union of Operating Engineers walked out at this plant, turning down a company proposal that would allow the bosses to contract out 150 union jobs and cut the pay of remaining operators by 20 percent. Maintenance workers, who are organized by several different unions and work under a different contract that runs for three more years, have remained in the plant.

As soon as the strike began, Goodyear immediately bused in replacements to fill the jobs of the striking workers. As the weeks have gone on the company increased pressure on individual strikers to return to work.

As of December 5, 69 members of the Local 347 bargaining unit have returned to work.

Union switchmen working for Union Pacific Railroad have refused to cross the picket line from the first day of the strike. Goodyear was forced to get a nonunion rail company to move the rail cars bringing in rubber to the plant.

Court orders directed strikers to stop following the company vans that transport scabs and to limit the number of pickets to six.

The strikers hold that line 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They have built a strike camp across the road under the highway overpass. There, sheltered from rain and winds, strikers gather daily, bar-



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Photos above and at left: strikers and supporters picket and collect donations from passersby at picket line outside Goodyear plant near Houston, November 25. Bosses are seeking to contract out jobs and cut workers' wages.

becue donated food, update their message board, share information, and take turns relieving the pickets. Other strikers collect donations from passing cars, and encourage honking in support. On the weekends in particular, whole families participate in strike activities.

On the Thanksgiving weekend, spirits were high on the picket line. A full table of food remained stocked with donations from individual workers, other unions, and other groups. "Friday we got a donation of 100 turkey dinners from unionists and church members in Texas City," reported striker Tim Risse. "We've had more food than we can eat."

Kesha Johnson, 15, and Meagan Hegman, 14, both daughters of strikers, spent the Sat-

urday after Thanksgiving on the picket line. With buckets and strike flyers in hand, they stopped passing motorists, explained their case and asked for donations. According to Hegman, they also tell their friends at school why they should support the strikers. "Goodyear wants to bring in contract workers and pay them less than union workers," she explained. "Goodyear is just in it for the money. They don't care about workers," Johnson added.

## Contract workers also need union

Several unionists expressed concern for the conditions that contract workers face. Warner remembered when he worked for contractors. "You work with no benefits. I have done it. You hurt yourself and you have to hide it or you will be fired," he said.

"They are just like us. They are going to realize they need a union too," added Tim Risse.

Shakka Shabazz, who has worked at the Pasadena plant for 14 years, commented on Goodyear's contract offers. "On November 7 they gave us an offer that was even worse than the one that made us walk out October 10. In the second offer they asked us to pay 10 percent toward our insurance. And that's on top of the same cuts in jobs and pay."

"At the same time they are making record profits," Shabazz pointed out. "They are one of the top corporations in profits. These companies are very greedy. The only way unions are to become stronger is to get together."

Jacque Henderson is a sewing machine operator in Houston.

## NY laundry workers gain in UNITE contract

Continued from front page

the second year, and 40 cents the third year, said Claudia Preparata, of UNITE's research department, in a December 5 phone interview.

For workers at the Oceanside plant, this amounts to a 31 percent wage increase over the three-year term, from their previous starting wage of \$5.15. They also won medical and pension benefits for the first time.

Overall, laundry workers in the region reportedly won a 20 percent wage increase plus improved medical benefits and pension plans.

Quoted in the November 29 issue of *Hoy*, a Spanish-language New York daily, UNITE spokesperson Katie Shaller stated that on retiring, a worker with 30 years on the job will receive a pension of \$600 a month.

### Workers win language rights

Shaller also pointed to what is called "Model Immigrant Rights Language" in the new contract. She reported that "when the companies issue communications to the workers, they must make them in the predominant language of the workers" in the plant. Most of the laundry workers covered by the contract are Spanish-speaking immigrants. At Oceanside, the majority are originally from El Salvador.

Under the new contract, *Hoy* reports, workers will be allowed to take time to resolve immigration matters, including a leave to return to their countries of origin for up to 60 days without losing their job or their seniority.

Workers would also be allowed a certain amount of time off work to go to immigration offices when they need to.

Preparata reported that workers ratified the contract in voting organized in each of the laundries over a three-day period.

From the beginning of negotiations, the laundry bosses resisted the workers' demands for a wage increase. According to the November 29 *New York Times*, the companies' chief negotiator said that labor costs would go up by at least 30 percent because of the wage increases and what he called "substantial improvements in health and pension benefits." Attorney Stanley Israel, who negotiated the package for 15 large laundries, told the *Times* that the pact was "by far and away the most costly contract that's ever been negotiated in New York in this industry." Laundry workers are among the lowest-paid unionized workers in New York.

The big-business media picked up on the fact that the laundry workers were ready to go the distance to win their contracts. The *New York Times* article stated that UNITE "had rallied the laundry workers to authorize a strike, and negotiators for both sides said that the threat of a strike hung over the negotiations when the settlement was reached shortly after 3:00 a.m.," three hours after the deadline. Bruce Raynor, the union's secretary-treasurer, told the *Times* that 25 laundries had signed the agreement, and that those unionized facilities that didn't sign faced a strike.

At Oceanside Institutional Industries, before the strike there had only been a com-

pany "union." Workers fought for real union representation in response to low wages, lack of benefits, and poor conditions. They were tired of being exposed to unsanitary conditions while handling bedsheets and other hospital linen. Workers also protested the insulting behavior of supervisors, who would curse them in English, thinking they didn't understand. The company had recently arbitrarily fired two workers, and their co-workers fought back and got their jobs back.

Workers felt more self-confident by their actions. Mauricio González put it this way: "If we hadn't had a struggle here, we wouldn't have a union and we wouldn't have a contract."

## Steelworkers end strike at Philadelphia plant

BY JOHN STAGGS

PHILADELPHIA—After three weeks on strike, workers at three Johnson Matthey plants in this area voted November 22 to accept a contract and end their strike. The workers at the facilities, members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), share a contract that covers 400 production and maintenance workers. Johnson Matthey is a catalytic converter manufacturer.

The contract that workers voted on was the same one rejected three weeks earlier except for \$250 added to the signing bonus.

At the first vote on the contract, November 4, workers were outraged that the proposed contract gave the company the right to start a 12-hour shift in one department at the Devon catalytic converter plant. Although the shift was voluntary for all the current workers, it would be mandatory for new hires. Many workers saw it as a way the company could get around paying time and a half for Saturday work and double time for Sundays.

The company also proposed increasing workers' payments for medical insurance by doubling copayments for doctor's visits to \$10 and doubling the family coverage copayments to \$40 a week.

The strike began immediately after the contract was voted down. No union member crossed the picket lines, which were kept up around the clock.

The second vote on the contract was held November 22, the day before Thanksgiving. Union workers from each plant held separate meetings to hear a report on the

further negotiations.

Norman Hayman, a Steelworkers staff representative, gave the report to all the meetings. Bob Stanford, a line operator at the Devon catalytic converter plant, said he thought the report painted a bleak picture for the prospect of continuing the strike. Stanford said he reported that the company hadn't budged on the 12-hour issue or the medical payments. He also said it was announced that if the contract was ratified, the company would pay workers for the two-day Thanksgiving holiday. Stanford said he was still against the contract because of the poor medical benefits alone.

Gary Coladonato, a line operator at the Devon plant, said he felt pressure to accept the contract. At his plant meeting the vote from the other two smaller plants was announced. Workers at the West Deptford,

New Jersey, plant voted 70-1 in favor of the contract proposal, and those at the West Whiteland, Pennsylvania, plant voted 81 to 9 for the contract. The vote at the Devon plant was 110 to 79 in favor of the contract.

Coladonato thought it was wrong to have workers have separate discussions at each of the three plants, because the 12-hour schedule didn't affect the two smaller plants, so they never got to hear why workers at Devon were concerned about it.

Darien Washington, a production worker at the West Whiteland plant, said he thought it was a poor contract, but that if three weeks later the union negotiators could not win more than \$250 in added signing bonus, it was not wise to vote down the contract again.

All workers returned to work, and the company dropped charges over alleged picket line incidents during the strike.

FROM *Pathfinder*

### Israel and the Arab Revolution

Fundamental Principles of Revolutionary Marxism

In response to the upsurge in the national liberation struggles in the Mideast in the 1960s and growing solidarity with the struggles of workers and peasants in the region, the Socialist Workers Party adopted the resolution *Israel and the Arab Revolution*. This

Education for Socialists bulletin contains the full text of the resolution, and other documents written to guide revolutionary workers and farmers in the struggle against imperialist exploitation and Zionist rule. **\$7.00**

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.



# Pathfinder titles draw interest at book fair

Continued from Page 9

ship of the Cuban Communist Party, which has consistently refused to buckle to imperialism and continues to set an example in the world today, and that of the Stalinist leadership in Vietnam, which has a long history of accommodation to Washington despite the heroic effort of the Vietnamese people in successfully resisting Washington's aggression.

We also pointed to the role that the Cuban leadership had played during the November 17-19 Ibero-American Summit in Panama, when it refused to sign a pro-imperialist resolution condemning the Basque independence organization ETA as terrorist without mentioning either the U.S.-sponsored terrorists attacks against Cuba or the

repression of Palestinian people by the Israeli government.

Cuba has also refused to allow the establishment of the kind of "free-trade" zones existing elsewhere that give employers from imperialist countries free rein to hire and fire workers and establish the conditions of work in plants set up in these zones.

A big topic of discussion was fascism and anti-Semitism. Several dozen people visited the Pathfinder booth asking for books by Nazi leader Adolph Hitler, a noticeable increase over the previous year, and a sign of deepening class polarization in Mexico. In stores and markets in Guadalajara it is not uncommon for pins with a picture of Cuban revolutionary leader Che Guevara to be

on display next to a bin of pins with swastikas on them.

On November 28, three young uniformed skinheads wearing swastikas wandered from booth to booth, provoking a big discussion among other youth there.

On the evening of December 2, when large crowds were inside the Expo, the booth of a Mexican City store containing books on sexuality was vandalized, resulting in several books being destroyed. In their final press conference, fair organizers complained about the presence of right-wing groups distributing literature inside the book fair.

Many youth also asked us about our views on anarchism. Pathfinder booth staffers pointed out sections of V.I. Lenin's *State and*

*Revolution* and other titles that explained why communists reject the middle-class political outlook of anarchism and why "youth radicalism" without a working-class foundation and orientation can play into the hands of the fascists.

Titles by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V. I. Lenin were very popular, as were those presenting a communist explanation of the roots of the oppression of women, and those on the Palestinian struggle.

Other top sellers were the Spanish-language edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, with 46 copies sold, and *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks), with 20 copies sold.

Team members were able to pay brief visits to the University of Guadalajara, ITESO, a Jesuit University, and a high school connected to the University of Guadalajara where Young Socialists were invited to speak to classes by a professor who had earlier visited the booth and purchased books.

## Cuban publishers participate

Publishing houses from Cuba displayed books, videos, CD-ROMs, posters, and T-shirts from four contiguous stands. With a Cuban flag flying from the rafters overhead, this was one of the most popular stands in the fair, packed from beginning to end of the public sessions. Several of the 55 or so Cuban participants in the fair had received delays in their visas issued by the Mexican government, which resulted in some materials arriving late. By the end of the fair, however, most of the material on display there had been sold.

Cuban minister of culture Abel Prieto spoke one evening on his novel *El vuelo del gato* (The flight of the cat), a novel about Cuba both in the 1970s and during the special period of the early to mid- 1990s, following the collapse of that country's favorable aid and trade with the Soviet Union. Prieto was interviewed by the press on culture in Cuba today.

Another program featured six Cuban novelists and poets discussing their work. A third program featured presentations on a range of other books and CD-ROMs on display at the Cuban stand.

Brazil has been selected as the featured country for the 2001 Guadalajara Book Fair. Cuba has been given the honor for the following year. In noting that Cuba would be the featured country in two years, Prieto told the press that this would provide an opportunity to display not only Cuban books but other aspects of Cuban culture, including music, dance, painting, and sculpture.

# Volunteers gear up for Pathfinder projects

Continued from page 5

bedded in the file, graphics have the right color combinations, and other elements of the book are correct, before sending the files to the printshop.

This work, previously done by the Pathfinder staff and the printshop itself, is a crucial part of the production pipeline. It ensures files can be loaded into the computer-to-plate machinery with no extra work.

Bobbi Sack noted that doing the quality checks is helping the volunteers learn how to do their jobs better. Catching some of their own errors in creating PDF files reduces the chance these same problems will recur.

In addition, supporters of the communist movement are also launching an organized effort to become volunteer sales representatives for Pathfinder, working to get its titles into bookstores, other retail outlets, and libraries. Their efforts will set the pace for expanded sales work by SWP andYS members and other workers and young people.

All of the work of the volunteers is self-financed. Nearly 100 members of the project give a monthly contribution to help defray costs for the maintenance of their web site, graphics material, shipping and phone expenses, and any special software needed for production. In all, nearly \$30,000 has been contributed by the volunteers themselves to the project.

## December 14-24 volunteer effort

While the volunteers are heading toward their goals for the end of the year, and beyond, volunteers in the printshop that produce Pathfinder books and in Pathfinder's business and editorial offices are also organizing to complete a major project.

As of Jan. 1, 2001, all of the inventory records and accounting books for the publishing house, printshop, and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* will be transferred to an easy-to-use Internet-based accounting program. This change is directly tied to the efforts of members and supporters of the communist movement to expand the distribution of revolutionary books and pamphlets worldwide.

Among the central jobs of the volunteers during the 11-day effort, for example, will be entering necessary information on each of the 700 paperback and hard-cover titles either published or distributed by Pathfinder, so orders can be filled in an accurate and timely way.

Volunteers will also enter information about some 700 retail bookstores, wholesalers, and libraries that are the most regular Pathfinder customers in recent years—a list the publishing house and its supporters are working hard to expand.

The move will allow those responsible for keeping the books to work—through a simple web browser—on different aspects of the bookkeeping, and immediately take advantage of upgrades in bookkeeping software as it is delivered from the Internet, rather than with software installed on numerous individual computers.

Five stand-alone computers—not part of the network system—used solely to run an accounting program will be eliminated as a result of the switchover.

The simplification of accounting software and record keeping through the use of an Internet program follows a number of steps taken in recent months to streamline the production process for Pathfinder books and other work going through the printshop. Beginning in October, a number of decisions were made to eliminate work that was draining resources and making it increasingly difficult to maintain the production apparatus for Pathfinder books. As of mid-Octo-

ber the printshop now only accepts print-ready PDF files, so that its modern computer-to-plate machinery can be used efficiently.

The switch to print-ready-only files has reduced dramatically what has to be done to get a job into production. It has made it possible to eliminate numerous computers whose main function was to run complicated graphics applications needed to fix up files. Six computers were eliminated right after the decision to accept only print-ready PDF files for shop work.

In addition to the other five machines that will be eliminated by bringing on-line the Internet accounting package, another two computers that run proprietary software for subscription fulfillment and two machines used primarily for scanning will be eliminated by January 1.

These steps will further reduce costs by simplifying the computer network that serves as a production tool for the printshop, Pathfinder, and the *Militant*.

Except for the computers that directly run the computer-to-plate machinery, only two stand-alone computers will remain—to handle graphics work, and the scanning of high-resolution images. All the rest of the computers are network machines drawing their applications, files, printing, and Internet services from a few central servers.

Substantial cost savings in administration and maintenance—the biggest expense of computers by far—are possible through this setup. All upgrades of software are done only once for all machines on the network, and most problems are solved on one server

# —IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP—

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

## UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA: Birmingham:** 1356 Hueytown Road, Hueytown. Zip: 35023. Tel: (205) 497-6088. E-mail: 73712.3561@compuserve.com

**CALIFORNIA: Fresno:** 438 E. Shaw Ave. #107. Zip: 93710 E-mail: swpfresno@netscape.net **Los Angeles:** 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. E-mail: 74642.326@compuserve.com **San Francisco:** 3926 Mission St. Zip: 94112. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: sfswp@hotmail.com

**FLORIDA: Miami:** 4582 N.E. 2nd Ave. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 573-3355. E-mail: Pathmiami@yahoo.com

**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 465 Boulevard, Suite 214. Zip: 30312. Tel: (404) 622-8917. E-mail: atlpathfinder@cs.com

**ILLINOIS: Chicago:** 1212 N. Ashland Suite 201. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. E-mail: 104077.511@compuserve.com

**IOWA: Des Moines:** 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. E-mail: 104107.1412@compuserve.com

**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** 683 Washington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 282-2254. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

**MICHIGAN: Detroit:** P.O. Box 441580 Zip: 48244. Tel: (313) 875-0100. E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

**MINNESOTA: St. Paul:** 1569 Sherburne Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

**MISSOURI: St. Louis:** Box 19166, 2910 Meramec Street. Zip 63118. Tel: (314) 924-2500. E-mail: stlsocialistworkers@yahoo.com

**NEW JERSEY: Newark:** 506 Springfield Ave. 3rd floor. Zip: 07103. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: swpnewark@usa.net

**NEWYORK: Brooklyn:** 1068 Fulton St., 3rd floor. Mailing address: PMB 197, 655 Fulton St. Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 398-7850. E-mail: swpbrooklyn@yahoo.com **Garment District,** 545 8th Ave. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30. Zip:10018. Tel: (212) 695-7358. E-mail: nygd@usa.net; **Upper Manhattan:** 540 W. 165 St. Mailing address: 3792 Broadway #250. Zip: 10032. Tel: (212) 740-4611. E-mail: swpuptown@usa.net; **Pathfinder Mural Bookstore:** 167 Charles St. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

**OHIO: Cleveland:** 7535 Broadway. Zip: 44105. Tel: (216) 641-9405. E-mail: 103253.1111@compuserve.com

**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks south of South St. at 5th St.). Zip: 19147. Tel: (215) 627-1237. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com **Pittsburgh:** 1003 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

**TEXAS: Houston:** 619 West 8th St. Zip: 77007. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: swphouston@cs.com

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 3541 14th St. N.W. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 722-6221. E-mail: 75407.3345@compuserve.com

**WASHINGTON: Seattle:** 126 SW 148th Street PMB #C100-189. Burien. Zip: 98166-0996. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: 74461.2544@compuserve.com

## AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern

NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533.

E-mail: 106450.2216@compuserve.com

## BRITAIN

**London:** 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

## CANADA

**Montreal:** 4613 St. Laurent. Postal code: H2T 1R2. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: 104614.2606@compuserve.com

**Toronto:** 2761 Dundas St., Postal code: M6P 1Y4. Tel: (416) 767-3705.

E-mail: milpathtoronto@cs.com

**Vancouver:** #202D-4806 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3R8. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: clvancouver@cs.com

## FRANCE

**Paris:** Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

## ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milph@mmedia.is

## NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. E-mail: milpath.auckland@actrix.gen.nz

**Christchurch:** Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: pathfinder.militant@paradise.net.nz

## SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com



**Like we say, nothing's perfect**—Three companies are recalling a total of 243,000 bicycle helmets because they failed govern-



Harry Ring

ment impact testing."—news item.

**In uniform?**—“Aviation officials have launched an inquiry af-

ter an ‘uncontrollable’ pig flew first-class on a six-hour flight from Philadelphia to Seattle. The two women with whom it was traveling told U.S. Airways it was a ‘therapeutic companion pet.’”—News item.

**Merely free enterprise**—A federal appeals panel upheld an Alabama judge who ruled that the Rite Aid pharmacy chain was within the law in concealing the fact that it charges uninsured customers more for their prescriptions than those with coverage.

The good judges apparently scoffed at the charge that Rite Aid

was violating a racketeering statute.

**Meanwhile**—An audit showed that Wisconsin’s insurance plan had overpaid prescription coverage by more than \$3 million in the past two years. The auditors said the state had inadequate control over what pharmacies charge for drugs.

**And you think it’s a sick society**—A doctor in England’s national health service was taken to court by a victim, 15, of the brain defect Down’s Syndrome.

The youth also suffers a heart defect that is operable. The doc had told the family that the hospital

performed surgery only on “normal” patients. He also advised that children with Down’s Syndrome didn’t “contribute to the community.”

**Beverly Hills it’s not**—With a second raid on a notorious slum apartment dwelling in Phoenix, Arizona, criminal charges were filed against its known owners. One former owner has, so far, escaped charges.

That’s Vicki Reynolds, mayor of the gilt-edge town of Beverly Hills. With the first raid, she insisted she had contributed her share of the property to a charity, but refused to

identify it. Her spokesperson declared: “The property had been conveyed to a charity, period. We’re not hiding anything. That would be fraud.”

**They do have tracks?**—A commuter rail line is set to begin operating December 4 between Burlington and Charlotte, Vermont. But there’s no permanent station or paved parking in Charlotte. And the train will bypass South Burlington where officials are still scouting for a station site.

If the trains make it through the state’s frequent blizzards, the ride, for the first few months, will be free.

## Why workers must fight to overturn the wages system

Printed below is an article entitled “The Wages System” by Frederick Engels. It appears in a pamphlet by the same name. The pamphlet is made up of 12 articles that Engels wrote between May and August 1881 for *The Labour Standard*, a weekly trade union newspaper published in London. The item below was first published in the May 21, 1881, issue. The pamphlet, published by Progress Publishers, is also available from Pathfinder Press for \$2.

BY FREDERICK ENGELS

In a previous article we examined the time-honoured motto, “A fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work,” and came to the conclusion that the fairest day’s wages under present social conditions is necessarily tan-

### from the pages of The Wages System

tamount to the very unfair division of the workman’s produce, the greater portion of that produce going into the capitalist’s pocket, and the workman having to put up with just as much as will enable him to keep himself in working order and to propagate his race.

This is a law of political economy, or, in other words, a law of the present economical organisation of society, which is more powerful than all the Common and Statute Law of England put together, the Court of Chancery included.<sup>1</sup> While society is divided into two opposing classes—on the one hand, the capitalists, monopolizers of the whole of the means of production, land, raw materials, machinery; on the other hand, labourers, working people deprived of all property in the means of production, owners of nothing but their own working power; while this social organisation exists the law of wages will remain all-powerful, and will every day afresh rivet the chains by which the working man is made the slave of his own produce—monopolised by the capitalist.

The Trades Unions of this country have now for nearly sixty years fought against this law—with what result? Have they succeeded in freeing the working class from the bondage in which capital—the produce of its own hands—holds it? Have they enabled a single section of the working class to rise above the situation of wage-slaves,



Some 1,000 people marched last year in solidarity with workers on strike for their first union contract at Wheels Inn Hotel in Chatham, Ontario. “The great merit of Trades Unions, in their struggle to keep up the rate of wages and to reduce working hours, is that they tend to keep up and to raise the standard of life,” wrote Engels.

to become owners of their own means of production, of the raw materials, tools, machinery required in their trade, and thus to become the owners of the produce of their own labour? It is well known that not only they have not done so, but that they never tried.

Far be it from us to say that Trades Unions are of no use because they have not done that. On the contrary, Trades Unions in England, as well as in every other manufacturing country, are a necessity for the working classes in their struggle against capital. The average rate of wages is equal to the sum of necessities sufficient to keep up the race of workmen in a certain country according to the standard of life habitual in that country.

That standard of life may be very different for different classes of workmen. The great merit of Trades Unions, in their struggle to keep up the rate of wages and to reduce working hours, is that they tend to keep up and to raise the standard of life. There are many trades in the East-end of London whose labour is not more skilled and quite as hard as that of bricklayers and bricklayers labourers, yet they hardly earn half the wages of these. Why? Simply because a powerful organisation enables the one set to maintain a comparatively high standard of life as the rule by which their wages are measured; while the other set, disorganised and powerless, have to submit not only to unavoidable but also to arbitrary encroachments of their employers: their standard of life is gradually reduced, they learn how to live on less and less wages, and their wages naturally fall to that level which they themselves have learnt to accept as sufficient.

The law of wages, then, is not one which draws a hard and fast line. It is not inexorable with certain limits. There is at every time (great depression excepted) for every trade a certain latitude within which the rate of wages may be modified by the results of the struggle between the two contending parties. Wages in every case are fixed by a bargain, and in a bargain he who resists longest and best has the greatest chance of getting more than his due. If the isolated workman tries to drive his bargain with the capitalist he is easily beaten and has to surrender at discretion; but if a whole trade of workmen form a powerful organisation, collect among themselves a fund to enable

them to defy their employers if need be, and thus become enabled to treat with these employers as a power, then, and then only, have they a chance to get even that pittance which according to the economical constitution of present society, may be called a fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

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

December 19, 1975

BALDWIN, Mich.—This small town about four hours outside of Detroit, is a predominantly Black community where Robert F. Williams has made his home for the past few years. Williams, the Monroe, North Carolina, civil rights leader who fled the country in 1961, returned in 1969, and has been fighting extradition since, has decided to return to North Carolina to fight trumped-up kidnapping charges.

The forty-nine-year-old Black man made his decision after the Michigan Supreme Court on December 1 refused to block his extradition.

“The time is ripe to take on these charges in North Carolina and get it over with once and for all,” Williams said in an interview. “And the sooner I can get through this mess, the sooner I can have my freedom.”

The alleged kidnapping occurred in 1961 when a white, out-of-town couple, the Stegalls, innocently drove through a Black section of Monroe and were taken from their car and led to Williams’s home by Blacks who feared for their safety. The measure was taken after some Blacks had threatened retaliation against any whites they saw because the Black community was under an armed attack by the Ku Klux Klan and other racist elements.

Williams, president of the Monroe NAACP, was a leader of Black resistance to the Klan. He was charged along with four others, with kidnapping.

“I have a taped interview that a British correspondent did with Mrs. Stegall, where she says that they had gone home and forgotten about the whole matter until the police came with the press and made it a kid-

napping,” Williams recalled of the incident.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

December 18, 1950

Agreement to top war councils in Washington that President Truman should declare a national emergency gives warning that the war on the home front against labor will be pushed with increasing determination.

The additional basic power the national emergency proclamation would give Truman is, perhaps, control of the hours of work. The danger now facing American workers is that under cover of the “emergency” wages will be frozen or even rolled back, the work week increased and job regimentation instituted.

A wage freeze would necessarily mean the outlawing of the escalator clauses in contracts now covering over a million workers.

That the capitalist rulers have decided a national emergency declaration is necessary as a psychological weapon to prepare for an all-out drive against living and working standards is at the same time a recognition of the discontent and distrust in the minds of the majority of the people.

The disaster in Korea and the obvious floundering of the ruling circles in Washington have naturally undermined the confidence of the masses in the government.

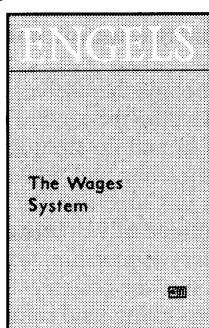
Far from feeling that great additional sacrifices are necessary, there is plenty of evidence that the American people feel they already have sacrificed enough.

Once the full effects of the real costs of war preparations are felt by the workers, it will take more than psychological blitzkriegs to quell their resistance.

### The Wages System

Frederick Engels

Is “a fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work” possible? Should workers build their own political party? Can trade unions play a revolutionary role? A series of articles written for the labor press in Britain. \$2.00



Available from bookstores listed on page 12

# Rulers target working women

The assault on working people by the U.S. government and the employers over the past two decades has hit working-class women particularly hard. Women are also a special target of the "culture wars" initiated by right-wing forces in bourgeois politics.

From the federal legislation that ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), passed by the Republican majority in Congress and signed by Democratic president William Clinton in 1996, to the New Jersey state government's cynically named "Work First New Jersey," an entire category of working people—working women and their children—has been eliminated from the kind of protection that Social Security had guaranteed for children, women, workers injured or thrown out of a job, and others affected by the instabilities resulting from capitalism's normal functioning. In 2001, as the five-year lifetime cutoff point is reached, many will be pushed to the cliff's edge.

The drive to push working-class women off state versions of AFDC builds on the ideological drive by the capitalist rulers to portray women receiving supplemental income as "welfare mothers" who prefer the "good life" on government programs rather than working for a living. The dehumanizing interviews and intrusions into the personal life of a worker, done under the guise of preventing "welfare cheats," goes hand-in-hand with these assaults.

AFDC and related programs were part of a social safety net won through the mass labor upsurge in the 1930s and extended through the battles for civil rights and women's rights in the 1960s and 1970s. This marked a historic gain for the working class, providing a minimum of protection from economic devastation and inhuman suffering for working people.

The struggles that compelled the government to establish these entitlements pointed in the direction of expanding the social wage to include health care, education, unemployment and retirement benefits, elder-care facilities, child care, and other needed measures. These working-class struggles took the moral high ground, rejecting the idea of "looking out for number one" and instead started with looking out for the interests of broad layers of working people.

From the point of view of the capitalist class, the role

of women is to be responsible within the individual family unit for what should be social tasks: education, care of the sick and elderly, and child-rearing. Women are supposed to see themselves as supplemental wage earners and, at best, temporary workers deserving lower pay than men. To give ground on either front means a shift in where surplus value created through the labor of workers goes. Progress in reducing wage differentiation between men and women and toward the socialization of the family's responsibility for the production and reproduction of labor power translates into a vast shift of wealth from the capitalist class to the working class.

The number of women working outside the home has grown from 5.3 million in 1900 to 18.4 million in 1950 and to 63 million in 1997. Women made up 29.6 percent of the workforce in 1950, a figure that grew to 46.2 percent in 1997. Of workers paid by temporary agencies, 55 percent are female, and a total of 70 percent of part-time workers are female.

Seventy percent of working women earned less than \$25,000 in 1996, compared with 48 percent of men. Women who worked year-round, full-time jobs saw their inflation-adjusted median annual earnings fall between 1989 and 1996. Women accounted for 85 percent of the total increase between 1989 and 1995 in the number of workers with more than one job. In 1996, women who worked full-time, year-round, earned 74 cents for every dollar earned by men. Over a lifetime the average woman will earn \$523,000 less than an average working man by age 65.

These figures speak for themselves about the central place women have in the labor force and the economic realities they face as well.

This situation is sharpened by the fact that a growing number of women are heading up households, which brings with it increased pressure on individual women and the seeds of social conflict with the onset of an economic crisis.

The labor movement needs to defend every single gain the working class has made as part of the fight against the devastating conditions being imposed by the employers, their government, and the normal workings of the capitalist system.

# Imperialist role in Indonesia

National conflicts, suppressed for decades under the iron rule of the U.S.-backed dictator Suharto, have erupted in several parts of Indonesia since his forced resignation in 1998. In particular, independence movements in the western region of Aceh and West Papua to the east have won widespread popular support.

Instead of seeking to address the grievances of the peoples of these regions, the regime in Jakarta has resorted to force, trying to hold together the heterogeneous territories that make up the Indonesian state. It has deployed thousands of army troops in West Papua that have opened fire on independence supporters. In Aceh, police have brutally suppressed independence celebrations, in a continuation of the decades-long occupation and war waged by the Indonesian military.

Big-business politicians in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and other imperialist countries often cry crocodile tears over the violent actions of the Indonesian military, as they did to justify imperialist military intervention in East Timor under the United Nations flag. Liberal, social-democratic, and Stalinist forces echo their arguments. They fail to point out the role and responsibility of the imperialist powers themselves—both in the origin of the crisis and in backing the capitalist regime today.

The governments in the imperialist countries and some of the biggest capitalist corporations have big stakes tied up in Indonesia, a country with huge mineral and agricultural resources and plentiful labor power that employers exploit to reap superprofits.

The biggest concern of Washington and its cohorts is maintaining stability to enable their plunder of the country's riches to continue undisturbed, for which they rely on the Indonesian regime. When Jakarta proves incapable of doing the job, they sometimes send in their own military, as they did in East Timor. Class-conscious work-

ers opposed that intervention and called for the withdrawal of all the occupation forces.

Indonesia took shape historically as the Dutch East Indies, part of the carve-up of Southeast Asia by the colonial powers. In spite of the powerful independence movement that finally forced the Dutch colonialists to withdraw in 1949, a cohesive modern nation-state was never fully consolidated. In the 30 years of Suharto's rule, it was held together by force, a situation that Washington backed and profited from.

Suharto himself came to power through a bloodbath in 1965-66 unleashed against the labor and peasant movements that had grown during and after the independence fight. Washington and other imperialist powers backed the regime as it slaughtered up to a million workers and peasants, whose potential power had been politically demobilized by the Stalinist-dominated misleadership. The imperialist powers continued to back Suharto during the three decades of his "New Order" regime.

As the Suharto regime weakened, especially after the onset of the economic crisis in 1997, and was eventually forced to resign, the national conflicts that had been suppressed inevitably reemerged. The disparities along class and regional lines that fuel the unrest, rooted in the normal workings of capitalist exploitation in the country, are deepened by the government's attempts to impose austerity measures in order to meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist creditors.

Those fighting against inequality and the callous suppression of their national aspirations are now pressing their demands more openly. The peoples of Aceh, West Papua, and throughout Indonesia, whatever the different conditions they face, have a common enemy—the imperialist powers, together with the Indonesian capitalists and landlords.

# What is nature of regime in Venezuela?

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In this week's letters column, reader Pablo Fernández disagrees with the *Militant's* description of the Venezuelan government headed by Hugo Chávez. He suggests that, given enough time, the regime will introduce "radical changes" similar to those enacted by the revolutionary government of Cuba, and that "leaders like Chávez" will not allow the nation's wealth to be plundered.

The facts show otherwise. To grasp the character of this government, it is necessary to review the class forces involved in Venezuela and the political context in which it has arisen.

Chávez's emergence as a political figure in this South American nation is a result of acute social crisis. Over the past two decades, the effects of the world capitalist eco-

## REPLY TO A READER

nomie crisis on Venezuela have wreaked havoc on the lives of working people and middle classes. Today, half the workforce is unemployed or underemployed. Nearly 70 percent of the population lives below the official poverty line in this oil-rich nation, while U.S. and other foreign capitalists continue to siphon the nation's wealth. Successive regimes have implemented austerity policies to meet the demands of imperialist creditors and pay on the \$32 billion debt. These conditions have provoked continuous social protests.

Despite cracking down on resistance by workers and peasants, Venezuela's capitalist rulers have been too weak to deal decisive blows to the toilers. At the same time, the working class, despite its resistance, lacks effective political leadership to point a way forward. The traditional capitalist parties have become discredited and hated, as has the official leadership of the workers movement. This situation has led to prolonged instability and uncertainty among millions.

This political impasse has produced a figure—Chávez—who presents himself as a strong and uncorrupted leader, someone outside the establishment, who will take decisive action to "get things done" in the interests of "the little man." Chávez has gained popular support for denouncing the two parties that alternated rule over Venezuela for the previous four decades. He takes a nationalist stand, evoking the figure of anticolonial hero Simón Bolívar, as a defender of the country's patrimony. His government's role is to protect the interests of Venezuela's capitalist class. In doing so, the regime will sometimes run into conflicts with imperialism, such as over its role in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba. Working people in the United States should defend the Venezuelan government against attacks by Washington, and should oppose any reactionary calls by U.S. trade union officials for trade sanctions against Venezuela.

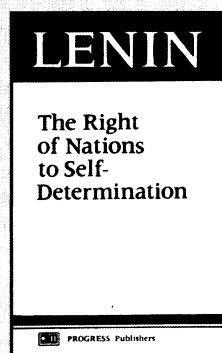
The kind of regime described above is historically known as Bonapartist: one that, originating in periods of deep social crisis, relies on a centralized executive power and presents itself as standing above conflicting class interests in order to maintain the power of the dominant social layer. Bonapartist methods of rule have been a common feature of regimes in many semicolonial countries, where the bourgeois class is relatively weak. Over the years, this has been the case throughout Latin America, from Mexico to Argentina.

Communist leader Leon Trotsky describes this phenomenon in an article that appears in the Pathfinder book *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*. Each such regime, he notes, has its own characteristics—some seek "support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship." Former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, who also initially enjoyed a degree of popular support, headed a Bonapartist regime marked by its repressive "antiterrorist" campaign.

Chavez's "left" image is aimed at channeling popular discontent away from independent working-class mobilizations and into relying on his regime. He wins support for denouncing the corruption of the discredited union bureaucracy. The government's move, through a referendum, to suspend the existing union leadership and tie the labor movement more directly to the state is a blow to the working class.

Only working people themselves, through their actions in struggle, can develop the kind of leadership they need. No one can step in and do the job for them. The main difference between Cuba and Venezuela is that there has been a *revolution* in Cuba, not just a change of administration. It was millions of workers and peasants in Cuba, with a revolutionary leadership, who carried out the social transformation of the country—from a broad literacy campaign to a deep-going land reform and the expropriation of the capitalist minority. This is how the Cuban people won true national sovereignty from imperialist domination. This is the road that is needed in Venezuela too. It will take time and experience for working people there to forge the leadership they need.

FOR FURTHER READING FROM PATHFINDER



## The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

V.I. Lenin

The working class advances and advocates the right of all nations to secede, Lenin explains, but it "values above all the alliance of the proletariat of all nations, and assesses any national demand from the angle of the workers' class struggle." \$4.00

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



# Evolution of Palestine liberation movement

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"We fight Israel because it occupies our land" reads a slogan painted on a wall in Palestine and captured in a historic photograph. The famous picture, taken as solidarity with the Palestinian people became increasingly international, gets to the heart of the Palestinian national liberation movement and why its enemies have been unable to crush it.

The Palestinians have waged a decades-long fight for their right to national self-determination against the Israeli state, which is built on their dispossession and stands as the main obstacle to the realization of their national aspirations. Their resistance is a major obstacle to the efforts by Washington to stabilize its domination of the region.

The Palestinian struggle goes back to the early decades of the 20th century, when the Arab peoples fought against domination by British imperialism, which sponsored Zionist settlements to help colonize and subjugate the Mideast. London and the Zionist forces met Palestinian resistance from the beginning, culminating in the popular revolt of 1936-39, which was eventually crushed.

After World War II, Washington, now the dominant power in the Mideast, backed the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 through the armed terror of Zionist forces that drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes. Despite this blow, efforts to forge a Palestinian national liberation movement steadily picked up steam over the next two decades as part of the rise of anticolonial and anti-imperialist struggles in the region, from Egypt to Algeria.

From the beginning, the Palestinian movement has been marked by the struggle to chart a revolutionary course independent of the capitalist regimes that claim to speak for the Arab and Muslim peoples. These have included the bourgeois nationalist regimes in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

"We were convinced," said Salah Khalaf, a Palestinian student leader in the 1950s, "that the Palestinians could expect nothing from the Arab regimes, for the most part corrupt or tied to imperialism, and that they were wrong to bank on any of the political parties in the region. We believed that the Palestinians could rely only on themselves."

## Founding of PLO

In 1964, the Egyptian government of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who enjoyed prestige because of his role in Egypt's fight against colonial rule, sponsored a conference of Arab heads of state that resulted in the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Its first leader, Ahmed Shukairy, was a bourgeois figure who strongly supported Nasser. The new organization was characterized by rhetoric but little action.

The Israeli regime's 1967 war on Egypt, Syria, and Jordan was a turning point. The Arab peoples were outraged by the Israeli seizure of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, and West Bank. The rapid defeat of the Arab regimes' armies also led the Palestinians to look more to their own strengths. Struggles by Palestinians against the Israeli regime stepped up, and several new resistance organizations were formed. Besides Yasir Arafat's Fatah, founded in 1962, these included the Popu-



Funeral for PLO combatant in 1969. Upsurge in late 1960s turned PLO into organization commanding mass Palestinian backing. Victory of movement will depend on charting a course not subordinate to capitalist regimes claiming to represent Arab peoples.

lar Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The upsurge spurred a struggle to transform the PLO, reforging it as a broad front of the fighting organizations of the Palestinian people. It became an organization commanding mass Palestinian support in the refugee camps and increasingly among those living within Israeli borders.

## 'For a democratic, secular Palestine'

In 1970 the leaders of Fatah—the organization with the biggest following—put forward a programmatic document called "Toward a Democratic State in Palestine." It called for the overthrow of the "racist oppressor state of Israel" and stated, "All the Jews, Muslims, and Christians living in Palestine or forcibly exiled from it will have the right to Palestinian citizenship." The document advanced the slogan of replacing Israel with a "democratic, secular Palestine."

This revolutionary democratic perspective was in contrast with the demagogic, reactionary call attributed to Shukairy—who resigned as PLO chairman in 1967—to "drive the Jews into the sea."

In September 1970 King Hussein of Jordan reacted against the growing strength of the Palestinian movement within that country. He viewed it as an obstacle to his regime's efforts to reach an accommodation with Tel Aviv, and above all a threat to the stable rule of Jordan's monarchy. The Jordanian army launched an all-out attack on the Palestinian refugee camps in Amman, the country's capital. In the civil war that followed at least 8,000 Palestinians were killed. The liberation fighters who survived the onslaught were forced to relocate their base of operations to Lebanon.

In 1973 Israel was once again at war with its neighbors, as the governments of Egypt and Syria attempted to regain territory seized by Tel Aviv six years earlier. Although the Israeli army eventually pushed back the opposing armies, its reverses in the first days of the fighting punctured the image of Israeli invincibility, and greatly encouraged

Palestinians fighting the occupation. The Palestinian national struggle gained wider legitimacy and support worldwide, while the Israeli regime's claims to be a beleaguered force for democracy and progress were discredited further. In 1974 the PLO was recognized by the United Nations General Assembly as "the representative of the Palestinian people" and granted observer status.

The Palestinians and other oppressed peoples received a huge boost, and Tel Aviv and Washington were dealt a major blow, by the 1979 Iranian revolution, in which workers and peasants overthrew the imperialist-backed monarchy. The post-shah regimes in Tehran have expressed their solidarity with the Palestinians, while seeking to bring sections of the Palestinian movement under their own influence.

Meanwhile, in Lebanon the PLO was forced to fight for its life, first in 1976 against a Syrian-backed offensive by rightist militias, and then in 1982 against an Israeli air and land invasion involving 60,000 ground troops, allied with rightist Lebanese forces.

Palestinian and Lebanese combatants in West Beirut, vastly outgunned, held Israeli troops at bay for more than two months, repulsing numerous attempts to overrun the Lebanese capital. This example of heroism and dignity won new supporters around the world and helped inspire protests opposing the war inside Israel itself. Eventually the PLO was able to negotiate an orderly retreat from Beirut of 9,000 guerrilla soldiers carrying their sidearms. The PLO leadership again moved its headquarters, this time to Tunis.

## Bourgeois leaderships exhausted

Over time, politics in the Mideast, like elsewhere in the semicolonial world, has become increasingly differentiated along class lines. The bourgeois nationalist leaderships that led anticolonial struggles have become historically exhausted. Those in power in the region have more and more sought an accommodation with U.S. imperialism as well as diplomatic and economic

ties with Tel Aviv. The Egyptian regime was the first, in 1978, to sign a peace treaty with the Israeli state and extend it diplomatic recognition the following year. The regime in Amman has made similar moves.

In this context, the Palestinian leadership has progressively carried out a political retreat, with a growing orientation to and reliance on the neocolonial, capitalist governments of the Middle East that have hosted and financed the PLO apparatus. PLO officials, based in Tunis, became more bourgeoisified and more distanced from the day-to-day lives of the masses of Palestinian working people in the refugee camps and inside "Greater Israel," where the liberation fight has increasingly been centered.

Some factions within the PLO became willing tools in the hand of these governments. Increasingly, the central PLO leadership also turned away from the workers and farmers toward middle-class and bourgeois layers of the Palestinian population.

The Palestinian National Council registered this political retreat by voting in 1996 to remove clauses from the PLO charter advocating the overthrow of the Israeli state and the construction of a democratic, secular Palestine.

With the wave of strikes, land occupations, and street demonstrations that erupted in 1987 and became known as the intifada, the leadership and initiative began to shift to the occupied West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, and inside Israel's pre-1967 borders. Working people and youth in those areas breathed new life into the struggle, helping to lay bare the bone-breaking, murderous brutality of Tel Aviv's occupation, and winning many new adherents around the globe to their national liberation struggle.

Ultimately, however, the movement was not strong enough to reverse the retreat of the PLO leadership or forge an alternative leadership and political course. The rise of bourgeois formations such as Hamas, which uses radical-sounding as well as religious rhetoric, has fed on the disillusionment in the PLO leadership among many Palestinians who want to fight the Israeli regime.

The creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) government in scattered pieces of the West Bank and a little more than half of Gaza, in agreements signed with Washington and Tel Aviv from 1993 to 1998 registered the continued bourgeoisification of the PLO leadership. The so-called Class A areas controlled by the PNA are surrounded by Israeli armed forces, police, and militarized settlements. The setup presents new obstacles to the Palestinian fight for national self-determination.

The PLO leadership now finds itself in the role of policing the Palestinian population at the demand of the Israeli and U.S. governments—to the point of relying on the CIA and Israeli secret police for training its police forces.

But the Israeli rulers and Washington face their own deepening problems in the Middle East and in the world, becoming politically weaker, not stronger. Despite their military strength, they have not been able to crush the Palestinian people's resistance.

A new advance in the fight for a democratic, secular Palestine and the development of revolutionary leadership will come out of further struggle in the Mideast, as well as anti-imperialist victories elsewhere in the world.

## LETTERS

### Analysis of Venezuela

Have you noticed that your analysis of Venezuela differs greatly from the analysis they have in Cuba about the Venezuelan situation? While you call Chavez a "Bonapartist" and compare him to Fujimori, Fidel calls him a "revolutionary" and says that if we have leaders like Chavez, Latin America's wealth will not be plundered.

I think your analysis of the Venezuelan situation is simplistic. Remember that Fidel did not declare the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution until two years after the triumph. Under the present juncture of imperialist hegemony in the world, it might take Venezuela longer to introduce radical changes.

Why are you so hard on the Venezuelan leadership, while you praise the South African leadership, which is not about to build socialism in the near future either?

You run the risk of missing the boat the same way the old Cuban Communist Party almost did, when in the 1950s it used to consider Fidel a wild card and a bourgeois nationalist.

Pablo Fernández  
Atlanta, Georgia

### Gets the truth out

I have just recently subscribed to the *Militant* and took advantage of the special offer on the pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes.

I find the *Militant's* coverage on

world events to be well reported, especially on Yugoslavia, Palestine, coal miners' strikes, and the environment. Unlike the capitalists' daily newspapers, the *Militant* gets the truth out about world events, and workers' struggles.

I found the educational pamphlet to be of great value in its explanation of what the government would like workers to believe. After reading the pamphlet, it gave me a greater understanding of the government's educational program, and of the real truth. I would gladly recommend the *Militant* and pamphlet to anyone. The following paragraph by Barnes sums up the pamphlet very well:

"I've been convinced for a long time that explaining the communist approach to education is part of pre-

paring the working class for the greatest of all battles in the years ahead—the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society, as we collectively educate ourselves and learn the exploiters in the process."

I think it's true to say that the biggest battle for us is throwing off the ideas about ourselves that the bosses make us believe.

L.K.  
London, United Kingdom

### Flu vaccine shortage

The lives of many senior citizens and others at risk from the flu are jeopardized by the nationwide shortage of the flu vaccine. The vaccine is being bought up in large

quantities by corporate giants concerned about labor productivity.

Meanwhile, many nursing homes and clinics that attend to seniors are unable to get any. My mother, age 76, has been trying for weeks to find a clinic or doctor with a vaccine.

Meanwhile my employer is offering them free—to employees only.

Mindy Brudno  
Troy, New York

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## UK rulers debate European armed force

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON—The decision of the Labour government to commit troops, aircraft, and ships to a so-called European “rapid-reaction force,” under the auspices of the European Union (EU), has prompted a rough factional debate amongst ruling class politicians here.

Underlying the debate are sharp tactical differences among the ruling wealthy families on how to wage war in the future, given Britain’s status as a declining imperialist power whose military forces are stretched to the limit; how to compete effectively with their rivals and allies in Europe and with the United States; and how to respond to the growing resistance of working people and the inevitable instability and crisis of a decaying capitalist order.

The debate on the proposed new military force has intersected with longstanding differences over the degree of Britain’s involvement in the EU—an imperialist alliance that works to the detriment of working people—versus having closer ties with the United States.

The idea of establishing a European military force to engage in “crisis management” was first discussed two years ago during a meeting of the British and French governments. It was promoted as a means of beginning to rectify the European imperialist powers’ dependence on U.S. military muscle.

The initial plans were drawn up by the British Foreign Office at the behest of Prime Minister Anthony Blair, according to the *Daily Telegraph*. At the time, the British Foreign ministry stated, “Europe needs a stronger and more influential voice in international affairs, to match its economic weight. It needs to back this with credible military force, which in turn requires a stronger Common Foreign and Security policy backed by stronger military forces that are flexible and capable.”

An Anglo-French summit a year later agreed to the proposal for a new military force, which Blair emphasized would be “complementary” to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the U.S.-dominated military alliance that carried out the military assault against the workers and farmers of Yugoslavia in March 1999.

That brutal offensive from the air highlighted the vast gulf in military capability between the U.S. and the European imperialist powers. The December 1999 Helsinki EU summit endorsed the Anglo-French proposal.

On November 20 EU foreign and defense ministers met to make formal commitments to the new force, due to become operational in 2003. Its role is presented as that of “peacekeeping, separation of warring parties, evacuation of civilians from a war zone, or humanitarian,” in the words of one journalist.

Germany, France, and Britain, the three biggest EU members, will contribute around half of the troops. Non-EU countries have also been invited to contribute. The force numbering 60,000 will be drawn from a pool

of around 100,000 available troops. The UK commitment is 12,500 ground troops, 18 warships, and up to 72 combat aircraft.

### New force under broad-based attack

The proposed new force immediately came under attack from sections of the media, current and former political leaders, various former heads of the armed forces, and the right-wing press. On both sides of the debate some politicians have broken with their parties’ official stands.



British armored vehicle rolls through Banja Luka, Bosnia, as NATO occupation forces take over police stations in town in 1997. Britain’s wealthy rulers are divided on how to wage future wars—whether to maintain dependence on the U.S.-dominated military alliance or to press ahead on the EU “rapid reaction force.”

Conservative Party leader William Hague accused Prime Minister Anthony Blair of “caving in to the French.” He stated that the new force “sounds and looks like a European army” and declared that a future Conservative government would bring British forces in it back under NATO control.

Tory Defense spokesperson Iain Duncan Smith said, “What this government has created is the beginnings of a Euro-army, which will weaken and dilute NATO.” His colleague, Foreign Affairs spokesperson Francis Maude, stated, “We already have a European Defense Organization—it’s called NATO. It’s existed for more than 50 years. It’s been the principal means by which America remains engaged in our continent. There are real concerns here that what is proposed will undermine and defy NATO.”

In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, two former Labour ministers, Dennis Healy and David Owen, joined with two former Tory ministers to criticize the force, claiming that it would undermine NATO. “Creating competing military structures will without question challenge and weaken this alliance,” they wrote.

Former Conservative prime minister

Margaret Thatcher called the proposed force “a piece of monumental folly that puts our security at risk in order to satisfy political vanity.” Her remarks, delivered on the 10th anniversary of her resignation from office, were widely publicized. In a thinly veiled attack on Britain’s imperialist rivals in Europe, especially Germany, Thatcher said, “The English-speaking peoples should be at the heart of Britain’s alliances.”

The pro-Tory media has joined the fray. The *Daily Mail* called the plans a “blitz-

newspaper the *Observer* on November 26. Referring to weaknesses in the performance of the European powers during the 1999 bombing campaign that targeted workers and farmers in Yugoslavia, they wrote, “Not enough European armed forces are ready for the diverse, rapidly evolving challenges of the post-Cold War world.... This is work in progress. There is no room for complacency. European forces must become more mobile, deployable, and sustainable. They must improve their lift logistics and intelligence capacities.”

At a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels in early December, U.S. secretary of defense William Cohen warned that NATO could become a “relic of the past” if it is not connected to the European Union’s rapid reaction force. He said that too many questions about this force remain unanswered. According to a BBC report, British defense secretary Geoffrey Hoon described Cohen’s speech as “very frank and robust.”

### Divisions in Conservative Party

Reflecting sharp divisions in Conservative ranks, former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke expressed his firm support for the force, claiming it was the product of the policies of the former Conservative administration. Michael Heseltine and Douglas Hurd, both prominent Tory figures and former cabinet ministers, joined two Field Marshals who are members of the House of Lords in signing a letter that read in part, “European defence co-operation is not about creating a Euro-army in competition with Nato: it is an essential underpinning of the Atlantic alliance.” Christopher Patten, former Conservative chairman and ex-British governor of Hong Kong, also weighed in on the side of the Blair government.

Major challenges lie before the competing imperialist governments in order to actually establish the rapid reaction force with the technological capability projected for it. While there are no shortages of armed personnel—2 million people are under arms in the EU countries—steep increases in military spending will be needed to make the force viable and to close the gap with the United States.

Conflicts between European and U.S. capitalists lie ahead over the supply of military hardware and equipment. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that “it is not clear how the force will meet its operational target date at a time when most EU states are cutting their defence budgets to the bone. The Europeans lack military transport, especially heavy aircraft...and rely on Nato for intelligence and logistical support.”

### Rivalry among European powers

At the same time the rivalry and jockeying for position among the EU powers show no signs of abating. Serious disagreements remain over who is to assume command.

Meanwhile, there are sharp divisions between the governments in the run-up to the next EU summit meeting in Nice, France. German foreign minister Joschka Fischer came under sharp attack by both the French foreign minister and the Minister for Europe for his ideas on “European federation.” One British newspaper, *The Guardian*, gleefully described the Franco-German alliance as “swinging on its hinge.” At the same time, unnamed British diplomats and government members reportedly criticized the “inept” French.

The poor state of Britain’s armed forces has also come under the spotlight with growing calls for increased military spending. The *Times* reported November 30 that a 30 mph speed limit was being imposed on the entire fleet of 780 British Army “Warrior” armored vehicles, owing to a faulty drive shaft. This was the latest of what the *Times* describes as “a whole series of setbacks over the past two years” with military hardware. The Royal Navy’s entire fleet of 12 nuclear submarines was recently recalled after leaks were detected in the vessels’ reactor cooler systems.

for further reading from Pathfinder...

in New International no. 10

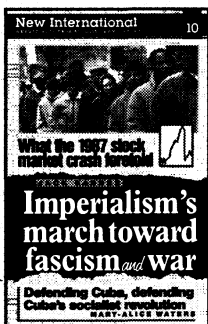
• **Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War**

by Jack Barnes

• **What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold**

• **Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba’s Socialist Revolution** by Mary-Alice Waters

• **The Curve of Capitalist Development** by Leon Trotsky \$14.00



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.

When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.