

THE MILITANT

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Socialists chart course to base activity in workers districts

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Airline workers step up their fight for contracts

Demand better pay, work conditions in actions across U.S.

BY BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO—Mechanics, flight attendants, and pilots at several major airlines have been intensifying their fight for contracts with improved pay and working conditions as the holiday season approaches.

The 15,000 mechanics, baggage handlers, and service agents at United Airlines have been without a contract since July. On November 20, United Airlines flight attendants held informational picket lines at 16 airports across the country, demanding better pay. They passed out leaflets drawing attention to the wages of newly hired flight attendants—as little as \$15,156 a year.

"We are forced to live 5-10 crew members to an apartment just to afford the rent," the protesting flight attendants explained in the leaflet. "Many of us are forced to work second and third jobs, just to survive."

Flight attendants at United's hub in Denver chanted, "Pay us or chaos" as they leafleted passengers. "Operation Chaos" refers to steps the flight attendants plan to take, including heightened enforcement of the existing contract, if a raise is not forthcoming.

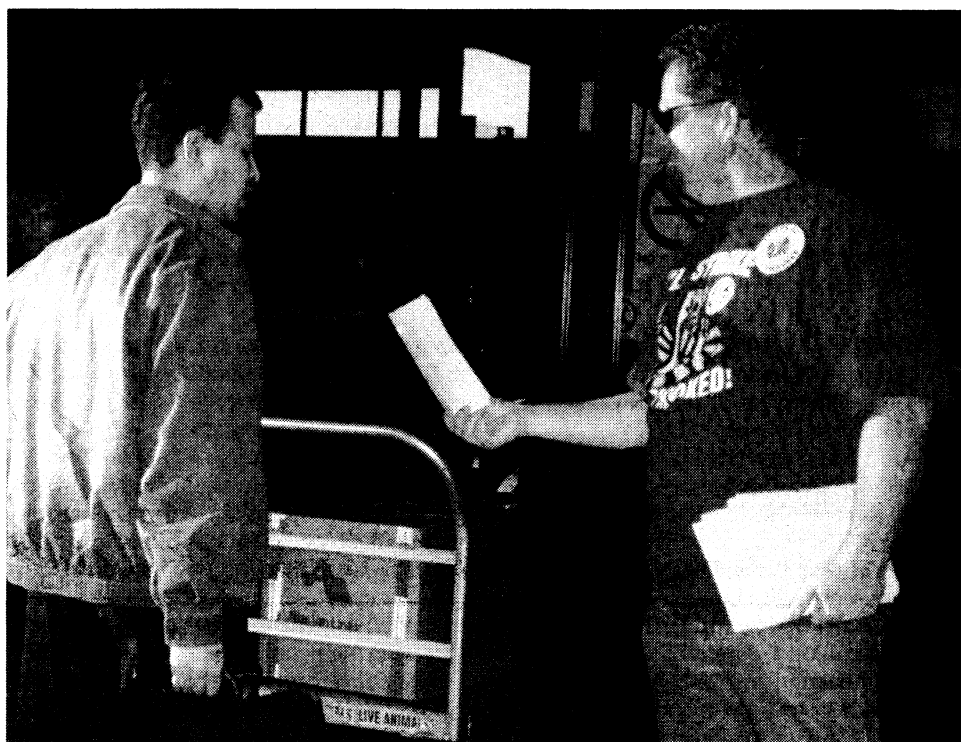
American Airlines flight attendants carried out coordinated actions at airports across the country November 18, the anniversary of a five-day strike by flight attendants in 1993 that shut down American Airlines. Better pay and retirement benefits are key demands being raised.

Hundreds of members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), representing mechanics at United Airlines, leafleted

passengers the day before Thanksgiving at the United terminal in San Francisco, as they did in other cities. "Pay raises with this company start at the top and go down. They have enough money to buy USAir but not enough to pay us!" commented one worker, Fernando Atienza.

After months of bargaining, with the company not coming close to union's demands, officials of the mechanics' division of IAM District 141 have asked federal mediators to release them from contract talks and declare a 30-day "cooling-off period," after

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Militant/Barbara Bowman

IAM member builds support for workers' demands at San Francisco airport, November 22.

New regime in Belgrade courts EU powers

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS AND GEORGE SKORIC

The new government of Yugoslavia, headed by the country's president Vojislav Kostunica, resumed diplomatic relations with its counterparts in the United States, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom November 17. These governments had cut off ties about 20 months ago, at the start of the brutal U.S.-NATO bombing.

To minimize public discussion of the issue, Yugoslav government officials in their statements tried to avoid discussion of the reasons that led to the breakup of ties, given the deep opposition to the U.S.-led assault that exists among working people and others in this country.

"This is a moment when I want to remind everyone how difficult it was to live in this country at a time of war," said Goran Svilanovic, Yugoslavia's foreign minister, at a ceremony restoring diplomatic relations with the four imperialist powers. "Some mistakes of the past can never be put right and lives that perished can never be recovered. But today we can start creating a future...in which we shall live in a better country at peace with these nations."

Others were more blunt. "At this mo-

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Cuba rejects 'antiterrorism' motion at summit

BY LUIS MADRID AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA—The closing session of the 10th Ibero-American Summit, held in Panama City November 17-19, turned from a unanimous and general condemnation of "child poverty" into a sharp political confrontation between Salvadoran president

Francisco Flores—backed by the government of Spain—and Cuban president Fidel Castro over who is responsible for "terrorism."

The Cuban leader rejected the attempt to single out the Basque pro-independence group ETA for condemnation as "terrorist" in a resolution adopted at the conclusion of the summit. He focused attention on Israel's

bloody repression of the Palestinian people and the U.S. government's terrorism, particularly its responsibility for the tens of thousands of deaths in El Salvador's civil conflict in the 1980s.

The opening of the summit, which ended with language rarely heard in diplomatic circles, was preceded by a few hours with the arrest of CIA-trained terrorist Luis Posada Carriles and several other rightists by Panamanian police.

The arrests took place shortly after Castro, who had just arrived in Panama City to attend the summit, held a press conference exposing the presence in Panama of individuals who had been involved in numerous operations to assassinate him. Three days later, the police announced they had found large amounts of explosives and other criminal evidence at the home of one of the arrested men.

Posada Carriles has a decades-long history of involvement in U.S.-organized and financed counterrevolutionary actions in the Caribbean and Central America, and has admitted responsibility for organizing numerous terrorist attacks against the Cuban revolution. He was one of the Cuban-American counterrevolutionaries involved in a 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados that killed all 73 people aboard.

Concerned that the individuals arrested might be released, the Cuban government has demanded they be brought to justice. "The government of the Republic of Cuba expects the government of Panama to adopt measures to help prevent [them] from escaping justice," stated Cuban foreign min-

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Pillowtex workers discuss bosses' 'restructuring'

BY DEAN HAZLEWOOD

CONCORD, North Carolina—Pillowtex, a major textile company where thousands of workers have won union recognition over the last 18 months, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy November 14. What the effects of this move will be is a major discussion among workers at the company. Some are discussing how to respond to anticipated attacks by the bosses as the company seeks to "restructure."

Nearly 9,000 workers at Pillowtex are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

Two days before the company's declaration, UNITE held meetings here to discuss just such a possibility. Similar meetings were held for Pillowtex workers in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia. The meetings were open to both union members and workers who have not joined the union. Two sessions were held so any worker could attend, regardless of their shift.

The Concord meetings had a combined attendance of about 300 workers from five plants in the area, including the sprawling Fieldcrest Cannon plant in nearby Kannapolis, and were widely talked about on the job over the next couple of days. Many workers coming out of the meeting seemed relieved by the approach projected by union representatives that the union would be playing an active role by working with the courts and the company through

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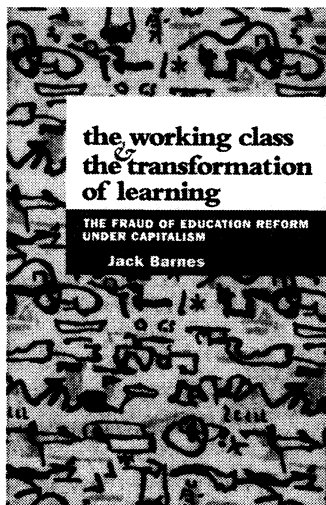
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Canada elections show divisions among rulers — page 14

Rural landless workers in Brazil fight for land reform

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—“The media and politicians talk about Brazil’s economy being prosperous. But that is not true,” said Soraia Soriano, a member of Brazil’s Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST). For the vast majority in Brazil, she said, “we live in a permanent crisis.”

Soriano was here representing the MST at a conference on the international struggle to end poverty. During her visit, she spoke at a November 19 Militant Labor Forum in the New York Garment District.

Soriano works in an MST-organized farm settlement in the state of Sao Paulo and is involved in political education. From a rural family, she worked as a schoolteacher before being laid off. Soriano joined the MST because she was attracted to the power of a movement of working people fighting for land reform and standing up to the wealthy rulers of Brazil.

The government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Soriano explained, “has carried out the neoliberal policies dictated by imperialist interests through the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. It has opened the Brazilian economy to foreign investors. Brazil has been a bonanza for them.”

Under the current administration, “39 state-owned companies have been sold off at ridiculous prices” to foreign and domestic capitalists. “The telecommunications industry was divided up between U.S. and European companies. The two remaining major state-owned companies they are targeting are the oil company, Petrobras, and the national bank. “The government is selling off Petrobras piecemeal to try to avoid debate or resistance,” she continued. “There has been a lot of resistance to this move. In 1995 the oil workers went on strike and occupied some of the refineries to oppose this privatization, and the government responded by militarizing the plants.”

Working people are also being squeezed by the foreign debt, which now stands at \$212 billion. “Between 1989 and 1997, Brazil paid \$216 billion—just in interest pay-

ments—to the international banks. So we have already paid more in interest than the entire debt,” Soriano commented. “The debt will continue to be paid and repaid, but it will not go away—it’s a form of dependence created by international capital.”

Conditions in the countryside are particularly critical. “In Brazil today, half the land is held by the richest 1 percent of the population. And 5 million families are without land,” Soriano reported. In response to protests, the Cardoso government has given lip service to demands for a land reform. “They claim that in the last four years, 400,000 have been given plots of land, but the actual figure is much lower. Meanwhile, 400,000 peasants have been driven off the land, so there is no progress.”

The MST has organized scores of land takeovers, especially on the vast expanses of idle lands owned by big absentee landlords. They take advantage of the fact that many landlords don’t have proof of ownership of much of their landholdings, so the landless farmers occupy unused land, settle and cultivate it, and press for legal recognition by the government.

In 1999 alone, more than 25,000 families occupied unused land. There are cur-



National congress of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers, held in Brazilian capital in August. Thousands of farmers discussed fight for land and against repression.

rently 71,000 families in MST-organized camps throughout the country fighting for legal recognition.

“We understand that the struggle for land is a political one. We have been organizing demonstrations and protests against the government’s policies, including takeovers of the offices of INCRA, the state land reform agency. That’s the only way we even get the government to the negotiating table.”

In response to the stepped-up struggles by farm workers and landless peasants, the wealthy landowners and the government have unleashed repression. Over the past decade, more than 1,000 people have been killed by cops and hired goons in the course of conflicts over land.

Last April, Soriano said, MST leader José

Rainha was acquitted of trumped-up murder charges in the death of a landlord. Rainha had been convicted and sentenced to 26 years in jail in a 1997 trial, but under public pressure a retrial was held that led to his acquittal.

Soriano pointed to the November 13-16 strike by 60,000 auto workers in Sao Paulo as a current example of resistance by working people to the assault on their livelihoods by the employers. The auto workers shut down major assembly plants—General Motors, Ford, Toyota, Mercedes Benz, Honda, Volkswagen, and Scania—and won a 10 percent wage increase.

Elena Tate, a member of the Young Socialists in New York, contributed to this article.

Campaign to free six framed-up MST militants

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

A campaign is under way to win the release of six members of the Movement of Rural Landless Workers (MST) of Brazil who have been imprisoned since November 1999 for their involvement in a demonstration for land reform and other demands.

On Nov. 10, 1999, demonstrations were held in every state of Brazil by the MST and other organizations, including the United Federation of Workers (CUT), one of the main trade union federations. The national day of action condemned the government’s foot-dragging on its own land reform commitments. It was also a protest against high

unemployment, lack of decent housing for millions, inadequate funding for education, high tolls on the nation’s privatized highways, and other critical social problems facing working people.

In the town of Boituva, in the state of Sao Paulo, the demonstration took place at a toll-gate on the Castelo Branco highway, one of the many roads that the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has sold to capitalist interests, which now charge tolls that working people cannot afford to pay.

The police ordered demonstrators to disperse. The protesters asserted their right to protest. In the ensuing conflict, some toll booths were damaged. More than 100 people were arrested and accused of vandalizing toll booths, most of whom were freed.

Six rural workers were tried and convicted on charges of theft, arson, and damaging public facilities. Five were sentenced to eight years and 10 months in prison, and one was sentenced to 11 years. In a vindictive gesture, the judge ruled that they would have to serve at least 90 percent of their sentences.

The six workers are Elvis Vieira Ferreira Lima, 21; Edimar Pereira dos Santos, 18; Benedito Ismael Alves Cardoso, 49; Valquimar Reis Fernandes, 30; Rosalino Bispo de Oliveira, 21; Odair Moraes da Rosa, 26. All of them are members of the Nova Canudos camp, one of many farm settlements organized by the MST on un-

used land belonging to wealthy landowners.

Several of the imprisoned activists were unemployed rural workers who joined the MST to get a piece of land to farm and to be part of the fighting social movement in the countryside that the MST has been leading in Brazil. They became members of the Nova Canudos camp and have been active in land reform actions since then.

The Committee for the Defense of Democracy, established to win justice for the six workers, has produced a pamphlet explaining the facts of the case. It described the trial as a politically motivated frame-up. The prosecution never provided evidence proving that the defendants actually took part in the actions they were accused of. In sentencing them, the judge made clear her political prejudice, stating that the “militants want a piece of land but are used as tools by the leadership of a movement that crosses the ideological limits to assume pre-revolutionary positions in order to carry out public disorder, challenging the country’s institutions.”

Supporters of democratic rights are urged to send protest messages demanding the immediate release of the “Boituva Six” to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Palácio do Planalto, CEP 70150-900, Brasilia, Brazil; fax (011) 55-61-441-2222; e-mail pr@planalto.gov.br.

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Quebec truckers end 17-day stoppage

BY AL CAPPE

MONTREAL—After tying up the port for 28 days and defying government back-to-work legislation for 17 of those days, truckers at the Port of Montreal voted November 19 to accept an agreement with the provincial government and end their strike.

Some 900 truckers went on strike October 22, battling 41 transport companies as well as the provincial and federal governments to win union recognition and a first contract. They are members of the Syndicat National du Transport Routier (SNTR—National Union of Truckers), which is affiliated to the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU).

The drivers haul containers to and from the port of Montreal and railway terminals. They include owner-operators, who are unable to cover their costs; truck drivers working for temporary labor agencies, who earn \$12 an hour when they have work; and company-employed drivers, working at low wages with few benefits.

On November 2 Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard enacted strike-breaking legislation. The truckers and their union refused to submit to the law and remained defiant in the face of more than \$2 million in fines levied by the government and \$16 million in lawsuits initiated by trucking bosses. As many as 200 strikers were fired. Some had their trucks seized.

An injunction barred strikers from blocking the movement of trucks. Three drivers were arrested November 11 on trumped-up criminal charges, such as possession of a weapon—a slingshot. They were released within 24 hours for lack of evidence.

According to the agreement to end the strike, the government, acting through a “special advisor,” will set up a mechanism for the rehiring of the fired strikers and a job placement committee for those not rehired. A government representative will look into some of the truckers’ demands.

The lawsuits and fines remain before the courts.

The agreement was accepted by 66 percent of the 250 strikers attending the November 19 meeting.

Earlier that day, 250 striking truckers and their supporters stopped traffic on a busy downtown street as they picketed a federal

election campaign rally for the Bloc Québécois, where Bouchard was scheduled to speak.

Supporters of the Bloc, which is led by Gilles Duceppe, had to stand outside in the cold listening to chants of “Boo, Boo, Bouchard” and “Duceppe, Bouchard, we form a bloc against repression.”

Duceppe has implicitly backed his Parti Québécois provincial ally by refusing to comment on the strike and the repressive legislation during the federal election.

“When [the company] Alcan lays people off because they have no orders, there is no special law to force them to keep running at a loss. So why am I forced to keep running when I’m losing money?” stated Réal Lacombe to the approval of other truckers at the strike headquarters the morning of November 18. The headquarters was set up across the street from one of the main port

entrances.

Speaking to the *Militant* the day before the settlement about the impact of their action, strikers laughed when asked about assertions by Bouchard and the port authority that things had been returning to normal. One striker pointed to an area of the port normally reserved for steel shipments but piled with containers. This reporter took up another striker’s suggestion and drove past the Canadian National Railway Terminal to see the containers piled four or five high instead of the normal safe limit of three. A November 16 press release by the CNTU quoted statements by agribusiness representatives in the Western province of Manitoba saying that they rerouted shipments to avoid Montreal. Arthur Sandborn, president of the Montreal Council of the CNTU, told the *Militant* November 19 that containers were backed up in Winnipeg, Halifax, and Toronto.

The impact of the strike created a small breach in the bosses’ ranks. The November 9 *La Presse* reported that three companies had signed back-to-work agreements with the union. However, the bosses’ organization, the Quebec Trucking Association, instructed its members not to negotiate with the CNTU.

The strikers maintained round-the-clock picketing at the port. Every weekday morning, scores of drivers gathered at the strike headquarters to maintain a presence at the gate. There were frequent demonstrations like the one at the Bloc Québécois rally.

On November 13, some 150 CNTU representatives joined strikers near the port entrance. Three days later, truckers demonstrated outside the offices of one of the trucking firms, Intra-Quebec.

Al Cappe is a meat packer in Montreal.

U.S. farmer describes UK fuel protest

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

CHICAGO—When Wisconsin dairy farmer Randy Jasper learned that farmers and truckers in the United Kingdom were organizing a protest to demand government relief from high fuel prices, he arranged to have his farm chores taken care of and to get a few days off from his off-farm job so that he could participate in the London rally.

Many farmers and independent owner-operators in Britain are being driven into bankruptcy because of rising fuel prices and other costs and a slump in prices for farm products.

“They are facing the same things that we are,” explained Jasper in a phone interview with the *Militant*. “U.S. farmers are told that dairy farmers in the United Kingdom and Europe are subsidized quite well and that these subsidies are crushing our markets. This definitely is not true. A dairy farmer there explained to me that they were



Randy Jasper speaks to rally of 1,500 in Hyde Park, London, on November 14.

getting paid less than their cost of production, just like dairy farmers here.”

After talking with several farmers at the rally of 1,500 farmers, truckers, and their

supporters on November 14, Jasper was asked to address the crowd gathered at Hyde Park in London. “I told the rally that I need to know what is happening in Europe and you need to know what is happening in the United States, because what we face is not a national problem, it’s a world problem. I said that there are a lot of small farmers and truckers in the United States standing with you.”

Jasper found that many farmers in the UK were “under the impression that the U.S. farmers are in fine shape. They were surprised to hear that they are in the same boat that we are.”

According to Jasper, the “TV and the media really played down the rally in London,” portraying it as a failure. The police were also hostile to the demonstrators. A total of 400 trucks, vans, and tractors converged on London from several parts of the country, according to the *Daily Telegraph*. Jasper added, “The police only allowed five trucks to reach the rally. People say the police were pretty rough on them. They threatened to arrest demonstrators and they filmed their vehicles” in an effort to intimidate the convoy drivers.

Jasper recounted one of the many wide ranging discussions that he had with some of the dairy, grain, sheep, and beef farmers at the rally. “A couple of guys said they didn’t think that farmers were doing well anywhere in the world. I said that I went to Cuba. They were surprised to hear that farmers there are doing well. They are well paid, but mostly it is that they are among the most respected people in the nation.” Jasper participated in a delegation of U.S. farmers and workers that traveled to Cuba last spring. The delegation was hosted by National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) of Cuba.

Jasper is looking forward to deepening ties between small farmers in the United States and the United Kingdom. “Many farmers invited me to come back and visit their farms. Three farmers are interested in coming to the United States to visit farmers here,” he said.

Jasper plans to speak around the Midwest about his experiences in the United Kingdom and Cuba, and on the crisis faced by farmers in the United States.

David Rosenfeld is a meat packer in Chicago and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Twin Cities marchers protest killing by cop

BY RAMONA BLACK

MINNEAPOLIS—“No justice no peace! Prosecute the police!” chanted some 250 people, most of them young, who marched November 18 through a south Minneapolis neighborhood where police shot and killed Alfred “Abuka” Sanders, a 29-

year-old mentally ill Black man.

The demonstration was the second in two weeks organized by Sanders’s family, friends, and others involved in protesting cop brutality. Activists distributed thousands of fliers, going door-to-door to build the action.

Laundry workers prepared to strike

BY JORGE LERTORA

OCEANSIDE, New York—“We are fighting for a decent wage, medical benefits, and our dignity” said Francisco Zapata, a worker at Oceanside Institutional Industries, a large industrial laundry in this Long Island town. Zapata is a shop steward for the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), which the company agreed to recognize after workers waged a three-day strike in October.

The 250 workers at Oceanside Institutional Industries are now fighting for their first contract.

Negotiations are under way for a contract between UNITE and 35 companies in the New York area, including Tartan Textile plants in Hempstead and Freeport, Long Island. The current contract at these companies expires at midnight on November 27.

At Oceanside, many workers are preparing to go out on strike together with the other plants if the employer doesn’t sign a contract by that date. So far the bosses have refused to do so.

José Moisés Alvarado, a worker at the plant who is also a UNITE shop steward, said that with the regional contract negotiations, “What the union is trying to do is standardize wages, benefits, and fair treatment.”

Before the strike, there was only a pro-

company outfit. They struck for real union representation because of the low wages and poor working conditions. Alvarado reported that “the company starts workers at \$5.15, and after nine years we only make \$6.70 an hour. They only pay overtime for holidays like Thanksgiving Day to workers who have been working at the laundry for a long time.” They are now fighting for \$1 an hour raise.

One young worker, who has worked at the plant for four years, said he works 30 hours of overtime a week to make \$300.

Workers currently receive no benefits, and are exposed to unsanitary conditions in the department where hospital sheets are washed. The majority of the workforce is Spanish-speaking, mostly from El Salvador. “Supervisors used to curse us in English, thinking we didn’t understand,” Alvarado said.

He said that recently two workers were arbitrarily fired. One of them was a member of the union organizing committee. “We fought back and got their jobs back.”

Alvarado said that even if they win the raise they are demanding by the November 27 deadline, he felt they should walk out in support of the workers at the other laundries fighting for a contract. During their strike, workers from a nearby Tartan Textile plant joined their picket lines.

THE MILITANT

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Cuba rejects pro-imperialist resolution on 'terrorism' at Ibero-American summit

Panama government obliged to arrest counterrevolutionary terrorists

Continued from front page

ister Felipe Pérez Roque here November 20. He was speaking at a nationally televised "Roundtable" program where he presented detailed information, gathered by Cuban intelligence, of how Posada Carriles and other counterrevolutionaries based in Miami and Central America had traveled to Panama to carry out an attack "conceived and financed by the Cuban American National Foundation."

The full text of Pérez Roque's statement was published in the Havana daily *Granma* under the headline "Cuba demands justice." Many working people here have expressed this deeply felt sentiment. The events in Panama have been a major topic of discussion in Havana and front-page news in Latin America and Spain as well as the Spanish-language press in the United States. They have been virtually blacked out in the major English-language media so far, however.

Cuba rejects anti-ETA statement

At the final session of the summit, the government leaders approved a specific resolution introduced by Salvadoran president Flores in support of Spanish imperialism's campaign to condemn "ETA terrorism," referring to Basque Homeland and Freedom, an organization that seeks Basque independence from the Spanish state and has claimed responsibility for assassinating a number of Spanish government officials and others.

The resolution, which received strong support from the governments of Portugal and Mexico especially, stated, "We express our firm condemnation of terrorism and reject the actions of the terrorist group ETA committed in Spain, while wishing to register our support to and solidarity with the people and government of Spain."

The vote was 20 in favor, with one abstention—Cuba. Commentators noted that this was a break from the "tradition" at Ibero-American summits of unanimous resolutions.

"We know the crimes committed in Spain," said Castro in explaining Cuba's refusal to vote for the resolution. "We condemn those crimes, like those committed anywhere else, like those committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians, the assassination of many of their leaders."

He noted that the resolution "does not mention state-sponsored terrorism, and Cuba has had more victims of U.S. state-sponsored terrorism than anyone."

The Cuban leader pointed to the hypocrisy of the Flores government in submitting the resolution, given that El Salvador is "where the leading terrorist [Posada Carriles] resides, and against whom nothing has been done, and who is now under arrest."

While President José María Aznar and King Juan Carlos of Spain attended the sum-

mit, they chose not to play a visible role in pushing the "antiterrorism" resolution, leaving that to the Salvadoran regime. In a "private visit" to Madrid about a week prior to the summit, Salvadoran president Flores held discussions with Spanish officials and opposition Socialist Party figures, with "ETA terrorism" being one of the main topics.

Josep Piqué, Spain's foreign minister, criticized Cuba for abstaining on the resolution. He warned that Cuba's stance would prevent the continuation of "a normal relationship."

In response to Castro's remarks explaining Cuba's vote, Flores took the floor accusing the Cuban government of responsibility for the deaths of tens of thousands of Salvadorans. "Both Russia and Cuba, like the Nicaraguan government, decided to intervene in the war in our country," he said, referring to the decade-long civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s. He singled out Castro personally for "cruel, bloody, and unacceptable responsibility for the war."

Flores became president of El Salvador in 1999 as the candidate of the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), one of the main bourgeois parties there. ARENA was founded in 1981 by Roberto D'Aubuisson, who was closely tied to the death squads that waged terror against working people during the war.

"It is absolutely intolerable, Mr. Castro," Flores continued, "that you—involved in the deaths of so many Salvadorans, you who trained so many people to kill Salvadorans—accuse me of being involved in the case of Luis Posada Carriles."

The Cuban leader replied to Flores, "I have not accused you. If I needed to accuse you, I would do so calmly even if you were more powerful than the chief of the Pentagon." Recalling the crushing of a 1932 popular revolt in El Salvador, where some 30,000 were massacred by the regime, Castro added that "in the 1930s there was no Cuban revolution" to blame. He also pointed to the 1981 massacre in El Mozote, where nearly 800 people, including more than 100 children, were murdered by a U.S.-trained elite unit of the Salvadoran army.

"But we shouldn't forget who sent billions of dollars in weapons to El Salvador," the Cuban president noted. The U.S. government gave the regime "the most sophisticated weapons, dozens of helicopters, and fighter jets that fired 5,000 rounds per minute."

Cuba supports revolutionary fighters

"Yes! We did support the revolutionary movement and have no regrets," the Cuban leader stated. He went on to explain how over the years Cuba had aided opponents of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, Angola's defense against invasions by the South African apartheid regime, and independence fighters in Cape Verde and

Guinea-Bissau. When the Sandinista-led workers and peasants fought and overthrew U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, "we helped them, but we were not the only ones."

"In that sense," Castro told Flores, "I accept your accusations." He concluded, "One day history will have to be written just as it happened."

Cuba's refusal to vote for the resolution condemning the Basque group—which as Castro said was aimed at "dividing Cuba

chestrated against the Cuban leader—many of them, especially in the first years of the revolution, organized directly by the U.S. government. "At each and every one of the Ibero-American summits" since the first one in 1991, Pérez Roque said, assassination attempts have been planned.

U.S.-trained terrorist

In an extensive July 12, 1998, interview with the *New York Times*, Posada boasted of how he was trained by the CIA to take part



Protest in October in Morocco against Tel Aviv's repression of Palestinian struggle. At Ibero-American Summit, Cuban president Fidel Castro focused attention on imperialist aggression, including "crimes committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians."

from the people of Spain"—is consistent with the long-standing positions defended by revolutionary Cuba in the United Nations and other bodies.

At a UN General Assembly debate in December 1986, for example, the Cuban delegation was the only one to voice opposition to a U.S.-backed resolution condemning terrorism that omitted any mention of imperialist aggression. A Havana radio news broadcast following the vote reported that Cuba opposed "all resolutions on terrorism that do not include U.S. terrorism against Nicaragua, attempts by the CIA to assassinate Cuban leaders, Israeli crimes in occupied territories, and South African acts against Angola and the so-called Frontline countries."

Arrest of right-wing terrorists

Shortly after his arrival in Panama November 17, to participate in the Ibero-American summit, the Cuban president denounced the presence of counterrevolutionary terrorists who were wanted for crimes against Cubans in other countries. In a meeting with Panamanian security forces held an hour and a half prior to Castro's press conference, Cuban officials gave them details on the addresses, phone numbers, descriptions, and aliases of a number of right-wing terrorists who were in place to take part in an attack on the Cuban president if the time was ripe and the situation allowed. "We asked them to act as swiftly as possible," Pérez Roque said.

In fact, given the public announcement that had already been scheduled, the Panamanian authorities had to either handcuff Posada Carriles or face public condemnation for allowing him to escape.

Less than an hour after the press conference, the Cuban foreign minister reported, Panamanian authorities arrested "the main individuals responsible for the attempted attack"—Posada Carriles, Gaspar Jiménez, Pedro Remón Rodríguez, and Guillermo Novo. Subsequently, César Matamoros, Roberto Carrillo, and Posada's chauffeur, José Hurtado, were also arrested. Five of these are Cuban-Americans; one is Honduran and another Panamanian.

The foiled assault was only one of countless assassination plots that have been or-

in the unsuccessful U.S.-organized invasion of Cuba by 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Afterward, he told the reporters, he was recruited by the CIA to carry out assassination attempts on Cuban leaders and other terrorist activities.

In the 1970s, Posada worked as chief of operations for the Venezuelan secret police, the *Times* reports.

Together with notorious counterrevolutionary Orlando Bosch, Posada was arrested and sentenced in Venezuela to 27 years for the 1976 midair bombing of a Cubana de Aviación airplane off the coast of Barbados. All 73 passengers and crew were killed, many of them teenage members of Cuba's fencing team.

Hundreds of thousands of angry Cubans rallied in Havana on Oct. 15, 1976, to condemn the barbaric act. Addressing the crowd, Fidel Castro held Washington accountable.

"Those responsible for these crimes," he said, "travel everywhere with impunity; they have unlimited financial resources; they use U.S. passports as naturalized citizens of that country or real or false papers from many other countries; and they use the most sophisticated methods of terror and crime."

"Who, if not the CIA, under the protection of the conditions of domination and impunity which the imperialists have established in this hemisphere, could do such things?"

After eight years in a Venezuelan jail, Posada, who enjoyed connections both in the CIA and the Venezuelan secret police, was allowed to escape in 1985. As he told the *Times* interviewers, he moved to El Salvador and was added to Washington's effort to supply arms to the counterrevolutionaries, or *contras*, in the war against the Nicaraguan revolution. Posada collaborated with Lt. Col. Oliver North, who ran the supply operation out of the White House basement in close coordination with CIA head William Casey; their headquarters was in El Salvador's Ilopango Air Force Base. The Nicaraguan workers and peasants eventually defeated the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary effort.

According to the *New York Times*, Posada boasted of having "organized a wave of

Continued on page 12



Granma/Jorge Oller

Relatives mourn victims of 1976 bombing of Cuban airliner by CIA-trained terrorists, in which all 73 passengers and crew died. Luis Posada Carriles, one of those convicted of the bombing, later escaped from a Venezuelan jail. He and other counterrevolutionaries were arrested during Ibero-American summit after Cuba exposed their presence in Panama. Police found they had large amounts of explosives.

Sales drive shows openings to expand 'Militant' readership

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Over the course of a 10-week international campaign, supporters of the socialist press went over their goal for *Perspectiva Mundial*, selling 396 subscriptions. On the *Militant*, while catching up substantially during the final week, they came up short, selling 915 subscriptions out of a goal of 1,000.

Campaigners also sold 1,845 copies of the pamphlet *The Transformation of Learning: the Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*. This fell short of the goal of 2,000, but surpassed the initial goal of 1,500, which was later raised in light of rapid sales in the first few weeks. This marks real progress in conquering the practice of proletarian pamphleteering.

Despite not achieving all the goals, the campaigning—and the response to it—over these 10 weeks was proof of the tangible opportunities for socialist workers and young socialists to systematically expand the sale of revolutionary literature among politically minded workers and farmers.

During the final three weeks of the drive, socialist workers stepped up their sales at factory gates and to co-workers on the job. They organized regular sales in working-class neighborhoods using street tables and going door-to-door as part of establishing a presence in workers districts in several areas. This is progress that now can be built on over the coming weeks, especially to follow through with working people and youth who are seeking out a revolutionary working-class organization to join and who can be won to the communist movement.

"We sold 22 subscriptions to the *Militant* and four to *Perspectiva Mundial* during the last week of the circulation campaign," wrote Ramona Black, a meat packer in St. Paul, Minnesota. This last push enabled supporters of the socialist press in the Twin Cities to make their local quotas for both publications.

Black said they sold six *Militant* subscriptions and two *PM* subs going door-to-door in working-class communities the previous weekend. "Two *Militant* subscriptions and two subscriptions to *PM* were also sold at a union meeting of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789," she added. "A few days later three more members of Local 789 bought *Militant* subscriptions, two of them grocery workers."

Róger Calero, who works at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse, where Local 789's union victory was certified by the National Labor Relations Board, said working with others in the plant to build the union there has led to opportunities to get the socialist press into the hands of more workers.

"A few days ago workers at a table in the lunchroom were passing around a copy of the *Militant* and discussing an article by another co-worker, Amy Roberts, reporting on their resistance to the company's attacks on the union," Calero remarked. "It had a big impact on people that someone who works at the plant and is active in the fight would write this. Two people subscribed on the spot."

Argiris Malapanis, who works at a meat processing plant in Miami, said, "The turning point for us came when we began to discuss my campaign for U.S. Senate and the presidential race with some co-workers in the final week of the campaign. We sold a *Militant* subscription and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* pamphlet that week. The week following the election, with everyone discussing the results, we sold a *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription and two pamphlets."

In Detroit, Chris Hoeppner reports that Socialist Workers vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe recently joined the regular weekly sales team at the entrance to the Thorn Apple Valley meatpacking plant where he works. Hoeppner also participated in the campaign event at the plant gate. He said that discussions continued in the plant over the course of the following days and three people decided to subscribe to the *Militant*. "I had not known some of the people before the event," said Hoeppner. "The regular plant gate sale and campaign-

ing is the biggest difference from the last subscription campaign when I sold one subscription."

In Chicago, Joel Britton, a meat packer who recently came off probation, met with campaigners of the *Militant* and *PM* at the plant gate where he works and introduced them to his co-workers. They sold nine copies of the *Militant*, two copies of *PM*, and one copy of the new Pathfinder pamphlet. The next day one co-worker bought a subscription to the *Militant* and another purchased a *PM* subscription.

'Militant' sub base expands in coalfields

The *Militant's* subscription base in the coalfields has expanded. "I just sold a sub to a retired miner from West Virginia and we sold three more on the job," wrote Frank Forrestal, a coal miner in Pennsylvania. "A few had seen it when other supporters of the *Militant* brought it to sell at the coal portal, and my campaign for Senate also helped a little bit. The biggest response was mainly from people we had worked with. They realized we were hard workers and that we were solid union people with political views. We are taken very seriously, especially by miners who are new to being in a union. The main thing now is the follow-up." Forrestal sold subscriptions to nine co-workers.

Socialist workers from Birmingham and Atlanta joined together in a sales team to Kannapolis, North Carolina, where Pillowtex, a major textile company, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy November 14. They sold 10 copies of the *Militant* and two copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* to workers coming out of a meeting organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, said Lauren Hart, who is a textile worker in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"On November 19 we sold 14 copies of the *Militant* at the company's plant in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. One woman gave us her phone number to talk more."

Jorge Lertora and Ruth Robinett went to a laundry plant in Oceanside, New York, where they sold all seven copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* they had. "As a result of the successful strike the workers organized more than three weeks ago, the company is faced with a November 27 contract signing deadline," said Lertora. "Several workers told us they would be walking out at that time along with workers at nearby Tartan Textile laundry plants in Freeport and Hempstead, Long Island."

Ball State students buy 4 subs, \$170 in revolutionary literature

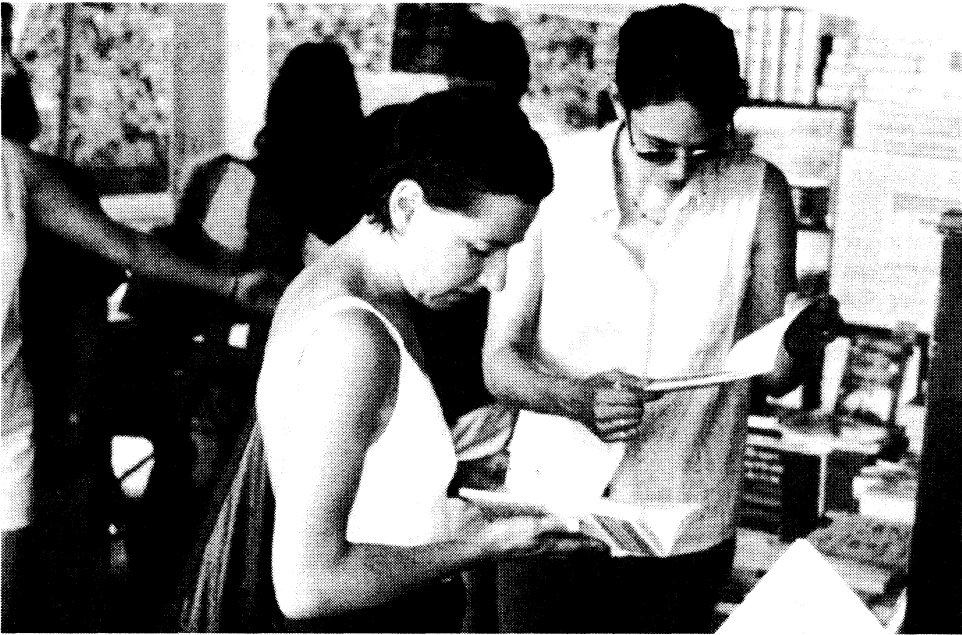
BY CAPPY KIDD

MUNCIE, Indiana—Last week at Ball State University's Teachers College (TC), about 25 students and faculty attended a presentation and discussion on the topic of Pathfinder's new pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*. The event was initiated by a student and a TC professor who recently read the pamphlet and wanted to promote it.

The meeting was built on 24 hours notice by students who posted the campus with leaflets, notified others by phone and e-mail, and spent time with the Pathfinder literature table set up earlier in the day in the Teachers College lobby.

A presentation was made by Claudia Hommel, a socialist from Chicago. The program lasted for more than two hours, and when the room was needed for another class, several students continued their discussions in the cafeteria.

Students bought four subscriptions to the *Militant*, six copies of the pamphlet, along with \$170 of other Pathfinder titles. Some of them asked for more information about the Young Socialists. Many students asked for a return visit, and via e-mail the sponsors have received several requests from those who missed the table and event to learn how to order the pamphlet and receive notices for future presentations.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Visitors to Pathfinder booth at Miami Book Fair. Further expansion of sales of revolutionary literature in coming weeks will build on just-completed circulation campaign.

Subscription campaign to win new readers: September 9–November 21									
Country	Militant			PM		Pamphlet			
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold		
Sweden	12	14	117%	5	7	15	14		
Australia	15	15	100%	3	2	25	26		
Canada									
Vancouver	30	29	97%	5	3	40	45		
Montreal	15	14	93%	5	4	35	41		
Toronto	25	21	84%	6	2	35	39		
Canada total	70	64	91%	16	9	110	125		
United Kingdom	30	27	90%	10	10	60	38		
United States									
Allentown	18	22	122%	3	3	35	32		
Chippewa Falls	15	17	113%	10	14	20	20		
Los Angeles	40	43	108%	20	23	80	81		
Atlanta*	25	26	104%	12	14	40	41		
Miami	30	31	103%	15	18	60	78		
Washington	30	31	103%	10	10	80	84		
San Francisco	35	36	103%	20	21	80	52		
Twin Cities	55	56	102%	25	33	110	42		
Des Moines	35	35	100%	20	22	50	55		
Detroit	20	20	100%	5	2	35	39		
Houston	50	50	100%	20	13	75	75		
N.Y. Garment Dist.	65	65	100%	35	35	150	178		
Pittsburgh	35	35	100%	2		50	41		
Tucson	5	5	100%	3	3	8	8		
Boston	25	23	92%	8	1	65	53		
Seattle	30	27	90%	10	10	75	76		
Cleveland	30	26	87%	6	4	50	46		
Chicago	45	38	84%	15	25	85	96		
Philadelphia	25	19	76%	5	3	50	39		
St.Louis	25	19	76%	9	4	45	32		
Upper Manhattan	67	46	69%	25	40	140	140		
Newark*	55	31	56%	30	27	110	118		
Birmingham	35	18	51%	2	1	50	30		
Fresno	10	5	50%	6	6	30	19		
Tampa	10	5	50%	5	1	15	7		
Charlotte	15	7	47%	5		50	30		
Brooklyn	60	27	45%	30	35	120	83		
Grand Junction	20	6	30%	1		20	13		
Other		4			1				
U.S. total	910	773	85%	357	368	1778	1608		
New Zealand									
Auckland	15	12	80%	1		20	19		
Christchurch	8	6	75%	1		10	5		
N.Z. total	23	18	78%	2		30	24		
Iceland	8	4	50%	1		12	10		
Int'l totals	1068	915	92%	394	396	2030	1845		
Goal/Should be	1000	1000	100%	350	350	2000	2000		
In the unions									
Australia									
MUA	2	2	100%		1	3	4		
New Zealand									
NDU	1	1	100%						
United States									
UMWA	18	20	111%			18	18		
UFCW	35	30	86%	35	19	50	44		
UNITE	30	20	67%	20	14	60	75		
U.S. total	83	70	84%	55	33	128	137		
Canada									
UFCW	12	5	42%	2	0	15	5		
raised goal*									

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

Titan Tire attacks USWA strike with lawsuit

BY JOE SWANSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—After nearly two and a half years on strike against Titan Tire here, the company is trying a new tack in its drive to break the union.

At a news conference held at the plant in southeast Des Moines in late September, Maurice Taylor, president and CEO of Titan Tire Corp., announced that the company has filed a civil lawsuit in federal court charging the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) with "racketeering." The lawsuit, which is based on the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), seeks "damages" of \$240 million, which could be tripled to \$720 million.

Taylor distributed a 130-plus page document that names more than 100 individual defendants, including at least 90 members of USWA Local 164 in Des Moines who have been on strike against Titan Tire since May 1, 1998. Others named are USWA international president George Becker, USWA vice-president Leon Lynch, seven USWA district directors, Local 164 president John Peno, Local 303L president Leo Bradley from Natchez, Mississippi, along with several other members of that local who have been on strike against Titan since September 15, 1998.

At the news conference, Taylor charged the USWA with making bomb threats, intimidation, threats of physical harm, trespassing, property damage, interference with commerce, and fraudulent workers compensation claims. Taylor indicated that the Titan Tire company had been working with the FBI for a number of months before filing the lawsuit.

"This is another in a long line of ludicrous assertions," stated a press release issued by the United Steelworkers of America.

According to John Peno, president of Local 164, Taylor would have made these charges long ago if there were any real evidence. Peno added, "I am confident that Local 164 has done nothing illegal in this labor dispute."

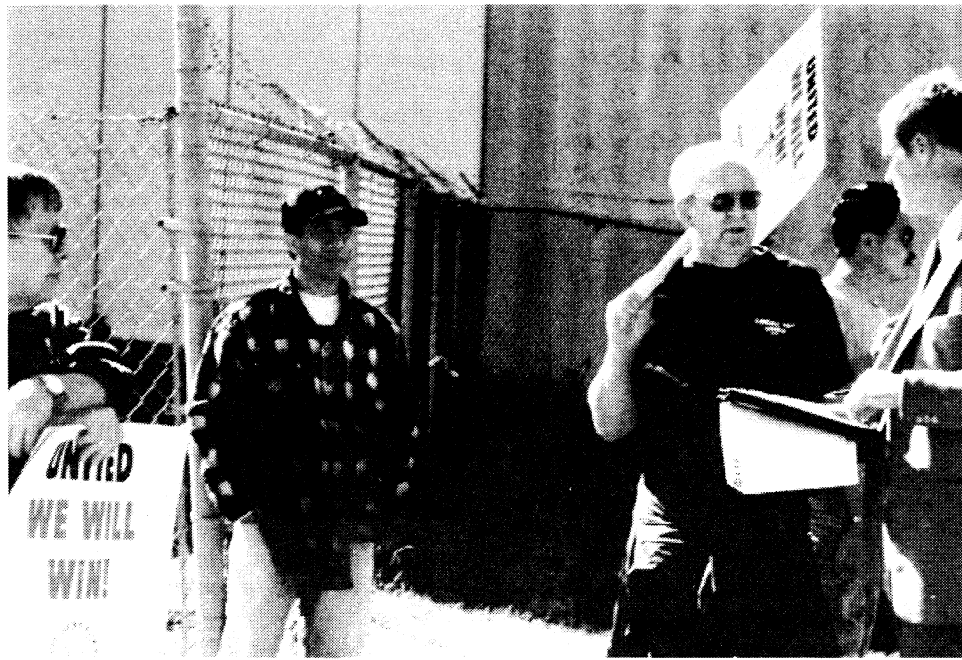
Within weeks after the strike began, the company organized to bring in replacement workers in an attempt to break the union. USWA officials and members have documented and reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that on the average one and sometimes two injuries occur a day in the plant, according to Tom Johnson, who is on staff for the USWA. Johnson said that the local keeps a log of all ambulance visits to the plant.

Striker Denny Wicker, who has worked at Titan for 31 years, said the scabs are the losers because they are working for Taylor. Wicker reported that one of the replacement workers who happens to be an immigrant recently got fired because he complained about an injury.

'A dangerous place to work'

"When we were in there with the union," said Wicker, "it was a dangerous place to work, but we had the union to fight Taylor and the company. The scabs have nothing to fight with."

"Taylor has nowhere to hide," stated striker Tom King, a veteran maintenance worker. King said that Taylor filed the lawsuit because "he feels cornered and has re-



Militant/Joe Swanson

Striking Steelworkers on picket line at Titan Tire plant in Des Moines

fused to sit down and negotiate with the union, almost since day one of the strike."

At the news conference announcing the suit, Taylor said that federal labor laws should be changed to include what he claimed would be a "Workers Bill of Rights." Among the antiunion provisions included in his plan is that every 30 days during a strike employees would be able to

vote on whether to continue the strike, accept the company's offer, or return to work while negotiations continue. In addition, strike votes would have to be administered by the National Labor Relations Board. If these rules are followed, Taylor promises, then no permanent replacement workers would be hired unless the strike continued for more than six months.

Meat packers lose union vote, continue fight

BY ROBERTO GUERRERO AND JOE SWANSON

OMAHA, Nebraska—In the first representation election for the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) here since 1990, maintenance workers voted 20-13 for the union, while production workers voted 238-150 against the union at ConAgra's Northern States Beef plant in South Omaha.

The November 17 vote means maintenance workers will be represented by UFCW Local 271, and now face a fight for a contract.

Union supporters have been signing up meatpacking workers in the plants here since early last spring. The UFCW along with Omaha Together One Community (OTOC), an organization of 38 religious congregations, are working jointly to organize the estimated 4,000 packinghouse workers in the Omaha area.

Workers and supporters of the drive gathered the night of the elections at the UFCW-OTOC offices in South Omaha to hear results of the voting. Many workers discussed the increasing company harassment and promises by the company leading up to the vote.

Eleuterio Valadez, a kill floor worker with 23 years at the plant, said that two days before the vote there was a general meeting with the vice president of the company. "He displayed a chart with information that showed a union plant with a UFCW contract compared to the current setup here and how much better the pay now is."

A worker with 10 years at the plant, who asked that his name not be used, said, "The company made promises such as a 25 cent pay raise and more benefits as they urged workers to vote no. Now that the union has lost the election they will likely speed up the production line."

Marta Islas said that prior to the vote, Quality Control workers who support management would go around telling workers to vote no and how the union is not worth anything for us." Islas is a loin trimmer with nine years in the plant.

"They treat us real bad," said Islas as to why she helped lead the fight for a union in the plant. "I see the injustices that those with or without papers face. They pay us low wages and steal hours from us that we worked. For three months in the spring we usually average 32 hours a week" which "makes it very difficult to pay for child care."

UFCW officials said the union could file an objection to the election results and seek a new vote, but that if charges are filed, another election likely could not be held for a year, the officials pointed out.

Donna McDonald, president of UFCW 271, pointed out that at ConAgra's Armour Swift Eckrich, workers filed a petition for a



Militant/Joe Swanson

Workers rally in Omaha to support union organizing drive at ConAgra

representation election a few days before with the NLRB. The former Cudahy plant employs close to 200 meat processing workers and is located a few blocks from the

ConAgra Northern Beef plant.

Roberto Guerrero is a meat packer and a member of UFCW Local 1149 in Perry, Iowa.

Protesters in Iowa condemn acquittal for racist killing

BY EDWIN FRUIT

DES MOINES, Iowa—Two night club bouncers who killed Charles Lovelady here in February were acquitted of an involuntary manslaughter charge in a jury trial ending on October 30. Lovelady, a 26-year-old Black man, had been asked to leave the Graffiti's night club for a dress code violation. In an altercation with the bouncers he was suffocated to death on February 17.

Some 70 people gathered at the courthouse November 5 to express their anger and indignation at the court's decision. Ako Abdul-Samad, a leader of the Citizens for Justice, called the verdict an outrage. Cory Williams, a friend of Lovelady, remarked that "this shows that the life of a Black man is not worth anything in Des Moines."

From the beginning the so-called justice system worked in a way that led to this outcome. No one was charged until a grand jury recommended April 14 that the two security cops face the involuntary manslaughter charge, classified as an "aggravated misdemeanor." Many in the community mobilized almost immediately after the killing to demand justice. A march of 250 was organized

in March and a vigil was held at the Polk County courthouse every Sunday evening up until the night before the trial.

Many people—both Black and white—thought the decision of the jury was unfair. This was reflected in discussions on radio talk shows and in the *Des Moines Register*, which printed letters, an editorial, and several guest columns on its editorial page in the days after the trial's conclusion. One meat packer explained that if it had been two Blacks murdering a white man, they would have been in jail the first night and then charged with first degree murder.

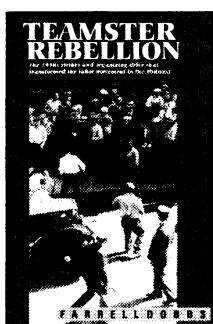
The case revealed the racist nature of the clubs here, whose dress codes excluded the wearing of designer labels popular among young Blacks. One member of the Citizens for Justice explained that he had witnessed security guards at another local night club denying admission to a young Latino who used his Mexican passport for identification. The cop told him, "It may be good enough to get you into this country, but it isn't good enough to get you into this club."

A civil lawsuit against the security guards and the club's owners has been filed.

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Workers at Dakota discuss next steps in fight for contract

BY RAMONA BLACK

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—More than 100 union members at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse here turned out for a November 17 union meeting two days after the National Labor Relations Board certified, over company objections, their representation election. Workers at the meatpacking plant voted 112-71 for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) last July.

Leaders of the fight for a union at Dakota Premium Foods said the union meeting, which was followed by a party, was the biggest ever, and marked a new stage in the struggle: the fight for a contract. Workers at the meeting began to build up the union's communications and women's committees, necessary steps in strengthening the union and increasing its fighting capacity.

Since the July union victory, the bosses had sought to deny, or at best delay, recognizing the union through challenging the outcome of the vote. But the union was able to refute each of these claims during National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hearings and maintain its support in face of the company's tactics. Last week an NLRB officer issued a detailed 64-page document dismissing each of the company's charges of unfair labor practices against United Food

and Commercial Workers Local 789 during the organizing drive and proposed certification of the union. The company has 14 days to appeal from the issuance of the ruling.

The large participation in the union meeting is one indication of the determination to form a union and the power of the organizing effort, which began with a sit-down strike to protest conditions in the plant, especially the increase in line speed, injuries, and lack of respect from the company.

"This is the only time that so many people have come together," said Jose Estrada, a kill floor worker and meat packer for 44 years. "Many came and found out what a workers meeting is like and that perhaps this is the way it's going to be in the future."

"Many are asking, 'When is the contract going to be presented to the company? Are we going to wait for a long time? Are we going to go out on strike?' Some are saying that we need to begin an emergency fund just in case," said Estrada, who is a member of the union's communications committee.

"Many people realized that we achieved a very important step when the [NLRB] decision was announced," said Matias Loya, a

New York teachers rally in fight over hours, pay



More than 10,000 members of the United Federation of Teachers rallied at City Hall in New York November 16 to oppose the city government's demands for concessions on wages and hours in contract negotiations. The old contract expired the previous day. The Board of Education and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani are campaigning for a "merit pay" system, in which teachers' raises would depend on students' performance in standardized tests. Teachers expressed concern that their working day will be extended from five to six periods. They explained that underfunding of schools results in overcrowded classrooms and shortages of basic supplies.

boning worker. "Some people said that we need to organize one or two more meetings on this."

Workers reported that Local 789 officials at the union meeting handed out copies of

the pay scales at Long Prairie Packing, another beef slaughterhouse in Minnesota owned by Dakota Premium Foods' parent company, Rosen's Diversified Inc. Workers at Long Prairie Packing are also members of Local 789 and have had a contract with the company for 12 years.

The company pays workers at Long Prairie Packing \$1 to \$2 more an hour for the same jobs at Dakota Premium Foods, according to Local 789 union representative Francisco Picado.

The union victory will help combat company-fostered divisions between workers in the kill and boning departments, said Amy Roberts, a boning worker who is also a member of the communications committee. It also presents an opportunity to organize more women workers into actively supporting the union, she said.

For example, workers report that the company usually buys lunch and cake for kill-floor workers about once a week, and has been known to run the boning line faster than the kill line. Kill floor workers also work more overtime, usually five to 10 hours a week, and many workers depend on the extra money.

"Their objective is to win points on the kill floor, because they are losing in the boning department," said Loya. "They are trying to make two groups, but what we have is one union."

One of the leaders of the fight for a union on the kill floor is Obdulia Flores, a worker at Dakota for four years. Flores said more women can be drawn into union activity. "Women need the union more," Flores said. "At any job, they always harass women, and when you have the union, you can defend yourself against harassment from anyone."

Most women at Dakota Premium Foods work in packaging, where many workers do not make more than \$8.68 an hour, compared to \$9 to \$11 plus an hour for knife jobs, which are worked mostly by men, said Roberts.

Company officials used workers' break time to inform them of the NLRB ruling on the day it was issued and held another round of meetings during break time two days later. At those meetings, company vice president Esteban Cortinas informed workers that the company plans to appeal the NLRB decision.

When two boning workers pointed out to Cortinas that the company was not implementing its promise that a group of people would keep track of the line speed, Cortinas reportedly encouraged individual workers who "felt dissatisfied" to come to the company to "negotiate problems that had solutions." Cortinas then ended the discussion.

Pathfinder well received at Miami book fair

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Supporters of Pathfinder sold more than \$1,000 in revolutionary literature at the Miami Book Fair this year—the most they have ever sold at this annual event. Altogether, participants bought 127 books.

At the top of the list, with 19 copies sold, was *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes. Thirteen copies of *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were sold. This pamphlet is always popular at the Pathfinder booth. Six copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Barnes—four in English and two in Spanish—were also purchased. Several people commented that they were attracted by the title, which captured what they see happening around them.

Books on Cuba attract interest

Che Guevara Talks to Young People proved another popular title. Six copies of that collection of speeches by the Cuban communist leader were among the 32 titles on the Cuban revolution sold this year at the fair.

Besides the new Pathfinder books, another 44 books in slightly worn condition were purchased at fire-sale prices, for a total of \$1,450 in sales.

A steady stream of visitors was drawn to the booth by posters featuring Fidel Castro, Marx, Malcolm X, and other revolutionary leaders whose writings and speeches are published by Pathfinder. A number of people who stopped by for political discussions



Visitor to the Pathfinder booth checks out *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, Pathfinder's most popular title at annual Miami book fair, November 17-24.

talked about the importance of unions. One gas station cashier said he was raising with others the need for a union to unite all convenience store cashiers. He drew on his experience as a participant in the revolution in Nicaragua.

Another worker, originally from the Dominican Republic, explained that he had been part of two unsuccessful organizing efforts in the last three years. He picked up a copy of *El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos*, the Spanish-language edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

A subscriber to *Perspectiva Mundial* who stopped by to renew his subscription said cab drivers like himself desperately need a union. He bought a trial subscription to the *Militant* to add to his *PM* sub. Four introductory subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* were sold at the fair.

Directly across the way from the Pathfinder booth was Publishers Exchange (PEX), which imports books from Cuba and distributes them in the United States. The importer's booth, the first it has had at the fair, was an unqualified success. Josefina Hernández of PEX reported that she was pleasantly surprised by the positive response she got from many book fair visitors.

A number of opponents of the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba helped staff the PEX booth, called "El Rincón Cubano" (The Cuban Corner), decorated with film posters from revolutionary Cuba.

Supporters of both Pathfinder and PEX reported no incidents of harassment from opponents of the Cuban revolution at either booth.

Airline workers step up contract fights

Continued from front page

which the union would be able to call a strike. In a blatant denial of the right to strike, the board has so far refused to agree to the release.

On November 17, a federal judge backed up United Airlines in its fight against the IAM by issuing a restraining order that directs mechanics at the airline to stop what the company charged is a campaign to cancel flights.

United Airlines says that since the beginning of November an average of 56 flights a day have been canceled and dozens more delayed for mechanical reasons. According to United, this is double the 20 or 25 flights a day canceled normally.

The airline bosses have also warned in a letter to the Association of Flight Attendants that the union will be sued if it carries through with Operation Chaos.

Northwest Airlines obtained a court restraining order November 20 that is similar to the one at United. The mechanics at

Northwest Airlines, members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association, have been without a contract for four years.

Northwest, too, claims the mechanics are causing the cancellation of more flights than normal by stalling on certain jobs and refusing to work overtime.

All labor negotiations in the airline industry are governed by the Railway Labor Act. Under this law, unions can't strike without permission from the National Mediation Board. In another attack on the right to strike, this board recessed talks between Northwest and the mechanics indefinitely, charging that AMFA was demanding too high a wage proposal.

Pilots at Delta Airlines, who have been in contract negotiations for more than a year, have begun to decline overtime work. Pilots at Continental are asking that their contract be reopened to allow for a pay increase.

American Airlines pilots recently rejected a one-year extension of their contract.

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Transforming branches by establishing a districts is at the center of building a revolution

SWP leaders discuss factionalism in bourgeois parties and rulers' anticipation

BY STEVE CLARK
AND GREG MCCARTAN

NEW YORK—Over the past two years the Socialist Workers Party has increased and significantly strengthened its organized activity among garment and textile workers, coal miners, and packinghouse workers, said SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in his political report to a meeting of the party's National Committee, held here November 2–5. This change can be seen in the plants and mines where party members work, in their unions, as part of social protests they participate in, at political events they attend, and in the districts where they carry out regular political work.

"At the same time," Barnes said, "we have begun to reconquer the proletarian norms and habits of work necessary to be more effective communist trade unionists, as members of unions throughout the labor movement."

Now, he said, "as we systematically continue along those lines, the party must turn toward transforming our branches."

The National Committee discussed and adopted a package of interconnected proposals to accomplish that goal. At its heart is carrying out a systematic and sustainable rhythm of activity by party branches in a workers district in cities where they are located.

Such branches, Barnes said, "by their very functioning—carrying out the ABCs of communist work, with regular and full literature tables on street corners and at plant gates—will attract to the activity of the communist movement workers and unionists, as well as militants of all ages protesting the injustices of imperialism. They will be attracted to the accurate written legacy of the revolutionary movement, a legacy that has been denied them."

"Along this path," Barnes said, "we can build an openly and uncompromisingly revolutionary party within the factory proletariat—just as the Young Socialists can build their organization among youth drawn to the struggles of the working class and its allies. At the same time, we can increase the size and effectiveness of the communist movement."

Social wage, political rights

Participants in the SWP leadership meeting also assessed the results of the offensive against working people under the Clinton-Gore administration and Republican majority in Congress.

Over the last decade in particular, said Barnes, the U.S. rulers "have deepened their

assault against the social wage working people won in mass labor struggles since the 1930s and extended through civil rights battles into the 1970s." In pressing this attack on social rights, he said, the employing class has at the same time bolstered local police forces, increased the arbitrary powers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, constricted the rights of the accused and convicted, and carried out numerous other measures to tighten the political space for working people to organize and resist.

"This domestic policy," Barnes said, "has been accompanied by a brutal, aggressive foreign policy—from Iraq to Yugoslavia to Cuba—that is an extension of the chauvinist antilabor course at home. Whatever the results of the elections at the beginning of next week," Barnes said, "the new administration and Congress will inherit this

for a fifth day at an international leadership gathering.

Factionalism in bourgeoisie

The months and years ahead in politics in the United States, Barnes noted at the conclusion of the meeting, will be marked by "further eruptions of sharp, factional conflicts within the ruling class, such as the events a little less than two years ago leading up to and through the impeachment trial of Clinton."

Barnes pointed to some of the forms through which this tendency in bourgeois politics has been expressed. These include attacks on the gains women have won in their fight for social and political equality, sometimes veiled behind the vulgar vilification of bourgeois women such as Democratic Party politician Hillary Rodham Clinton; anti-Black and anti-immigrant demagoguery in

quences of the world capitalist crisis.

"These phenomena," Barnes said, "register the underlying weakening of the imperialist powers during the decade they've variously portrayed as their 'victory in the Cold War,' the triumph of 'a new world order,' the 'death of Marxism,' a 'new era' of technology-driven permanent prosperity—and even 'the end of history.' This weakening is the product of intensifying conflicts among the imperialists, which the Gulf War of 1990–91 and a succession of wars in the Balkans have simultaneously exposed and exacerbated."

"The high point of illusions in the permanent stability and possibilities for a prosperous world under capitalism is now behind us," Barnes said. "The retreat of working people worldwide—from the imperialist centers, to the semicolonial world, to the workers states—has bottomed out. The counterrevolutionary obstacle of Stalinism within the workers movement has been qualitatively weakened."

"What's more, over the past few years the capitalist rulers have been confronted by a rise in resistance by a vanguard in the working class and labor movement, among exploited farmers, by immigrant workers and fighters for Black rights. They are seeing a limited but crystal-clear indication of the future resistance and radicalization they will face."

"The propertied classes can see their capacity to deal blows to the toilers with relative impunity coming to an end," he said. "The days when they could simply push back are numbered; they will have to try to beat back."

Brittleness of institutions

Under these pressures, Barnes said, "the U.S. rulers are increasingly vexed by the brittleness of their class institutions."

Within days of the National Committee meeting, the most striking demonstration of these trends since the Clinton impeachment burst on the U.S. political scene over the final tally in the presidential election, whose outcome was still undecided more than two weeks after the voting.

On the most basic level this situation is simply an extraordinarily close election, not a political crisis for the U.S. rulers, let alone a weakening of the power of U.S. imperialism and its executive branch. But the heat it is generating is a registration of the irresolvable divisions within bourgeois politics over how best to prepare for the social explosions and class battles more and more of the rulers fear will come.

As a result, the tactical divisions between and within the bourgeois parties are proliferating, and the ideological pitch of their disputes have become more shrill. Their toleration for poisonous rightism has grown.

The shift—from the surface a modest adjustment—to the right during "the Clinton years" is not the fruit of some plot or bipartisan program by the leading personnel in the two capitalist parties. To the contrary, it registers stages in the pragmatic resolution of their conflicts, in a situation where capitalist instability and the lash of interimperialist rivalry limit the rulers' options for broad social concessions.

No matter how strident and uncivil the tone between the two predominant bourgeois campaigns, neither a Bush nor a Gore administration will register a substantive break from the course followed by the Clinton White House and Republican majority in Congress. Both will take that "centrist" course as their point of departure.

At the same time, both the left wing within the Democratic party and right wing within the Republican (and Democratic) party continue to grow, biding their time until some sharp deepening of the social crisis signals new levels of opportunity for them. The factional divisions within bourgeois politics are continuing, above all in their reflection on the highly charged plane



Sales table in Manhattan's Garment District, where an SWP branch is based. The political axis of the work of party branches in workers districts has begun to be organized around a steady rhythm of street tables to expand the sales of revolutionary books, pamphlets, and newspapers to working people and youth. These efforts are complemented by weekly sales at plant gates in these areas and elsewhere.

course and take it as their starting point."

Members of the SWP National Committee, leaders of the party's trade union work, a delegation from the Young Socialists leadership, branch leaders from around the country, and guests from Communist Leagues in other countries took part in the four-day gathering. Discussions continued

many guises; the half-hidden tolerance of Jew-hatred; and a coarsening and breakdown in the civil tone of public discourse and debate among capitalist politicians."

The SWP leadership meeting assessed a number of the factors underlying this factionalism within the capitalist two-party system.

While making inroads against the social wage and other aspects of the gains won by working people and the oppressed, and following an almost decade-long retreat of the labor movement that marked most of the 1990s, the rulers have failed to break the unions or push back the most basic conquests of the struggles for Black rights and women's equality.

Contrary to their triumphalist crowing at the opening of the 1990s, they have discovered they must still confront a working class in the workers states in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that will not willingly embrace oppression and speedup. The imperialist rulers have not faced the battle necessary to attempt to reimpose stable capitalist social relations in those countries.

"Despite the hopes of world finance capital," Barnes said, "what finally snapped in these workers states was not the working class but the weakened remnants of the Stalinist caste—the transmission belt that for decades served to bring down imperialist economic, social, and political pressures on the toilers in these countries."

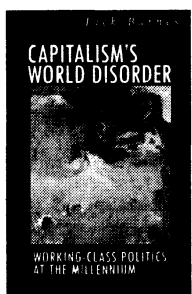
Nor have the imperialist rulers forced acceptance from peoples of the semicolonial countries of national oppression and the devastating social conse-

FROM PATHFINDER

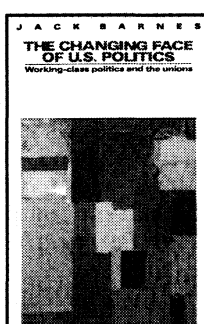
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base in workers

olutionary party

ation of class battles

of so-called "culture wars"—the expression of battles over the rulers' course to increase social inequality and undermine the toilers' unity.

As the capitalist social crisis deepens and the class struggle accelerates, the coarsening and even pornographication of bourgeois politics plays into the hands of the ultraright. Along the road to attempting to smash the labor movement on the picket lines and in the streets, incipient fascist forces will first take aim at the corruption of politicians across the spectrum of bourgeois politics, conservatives and liberals alike, as well as their prominent supporters in the media, Hollywood, and other cultural and social institutions of the ruling class.

The demagogic logic of imperialist democracy, and the deadly trap it sets for working people, will begin to become apparent.

Working-class resistance

Part of the heat lightning considered ominous by the U.S. rulers today is the rise in struggles over the past few years by a vanguard of workers and farmers across the United States. Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists are becoming more and more integrated in this resistance, a reality registered at the November party leadership meeting.

Alyson Kennedy reported on the national meeting a week earlier in Chicago of socialists who work in garment shops and textile mills, many of which are organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). A highlight of that meeting was discussion on the scope of organizing drives, strikes, and shop-floor resistance.

"From organizing drives by workers at the Pillowtex textile mills in North Carolina and Alabama, to laundry workers who went on strike to demand the company recognize UNITE in Oceanside, New York, the resistance in garment and textile industries is similar to that by workers in meatpacking, mining, and elsewhere," Kennedy said.

"And the more we're involved, the more we look and listen," she said, "the more we find."

Diana Newberry, a garment worker and UNITE member from Pittsburgh, described discussions on the job with a co-worker who has begun attending Militant Labor Forums and classes, and joining in sales of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

The SWP also has organized units, what it calls union fractions, of party members in the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union who work in meatpacking plants, in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) who are coal miners, and in the United Auto Workers (UAW).

The extent of the participation of socialist workers and young socialists in the resistance to the bosses' assault was also evident from the fact that several party leaders were not present for the National Committee meeting so they could join with other workers at Dakota Premium Foods and Long Prairie Packing in Minnesota in rebuffing antiunion moves by Rosen's Diversified Inc., a large meatpacking company.

In addition, over the weekend the Ft. Collins, Colorado, branch organizing committee moved its base of operations to Grand Junction, also in Colorado. The move was in response to hiring opportunities in coal mines. It will enable members of the organizing committee to extend their work among miners, within their union, and as part of the developing social movement to combat worsening conditions of life and labor in the mines and coal mining communities.

Union fraction work

Jack Willey, a National Committee member from Grand Junction, presented a report to the meeting on the party's trade union work. He reviewed the experiences

of the party's industrial union fractions and branches as part of the resistance by members of UNITE, the UMWA, and UFCW (see article in the November 20 *Militant*, "NY rally celebrates socialist campaign").

Running for public office as Socialist Workers candidates, Willey said, goes hand-in-hand with competent trade union work. By explaining revolutionary politics and selling communist literature, worker-bolsheviks help other workers break out of the framework of accepting as "eternal" capitalist politics and class collaboration promoted by the trade union officialdom.

Frank Forrestal, a coal miner from Pennsylvania, explained the openness of co-workers to his campaign for U.S. Senate and the broad social and political questions he addressed. He reported that socialist workers in that mine had already sold five subscriptions to the *Militant* to co-workers there (and they sold three more over the next two weeks).

Joe Swanson, a leader of the Des Moines branch of the party, pointed out that posing the need to make a revolution is essential for socialist workers involved in labor and farm struggles.

"In a recent discussion with several farmers who are fighting to defend their land," he said, "I pointed to the example of the Cuban revolution and why farmers have to make a revolution to defend their land and their right to farm. It helped put the discussion in the right framework and point to the need for an alliance between the working class and working farmers."

the meeting pointed to the opportunities to "deepen systematic, long-term work to find workers and farmers who are looking for solutions."

Workers districts

The political shifts discussed at the National Committee meeting, Barnes said, underline both the political opportunity and necessity for every party branch to accelerate steps to begin functioning rooted in a workers district.

This course, he said, is nothing new for the communist movement: rooting party

lutionary political activity, even in face of brutal tsarist repression."

The political axis of the work of SWP branches in workers districts has begun to be organized around a steady rhythm of street tables to expand the sales of revolutionary books, pamphlets, and newspapers and magazines to working people and youth. These efforts are complemented by weekly sales at plant gates in these areas and elsewhere.

Branches need to locate their meeting halls in workers districts, carry out a weekly Militant Labor Forum series, organize public classes on Marxism, set regular bookstore hours, and involve party supporters and political contacts in efforts to get Pathfinder literature onto the shelves of bookstores and other retail outlets. This systematic work provides a stable political base from which to deepen the party's involvement in the struggles of workers and farmers in and around the city and to recruit working people and youth to the communist movement.

Along these lines, the National Committee, as part of its package of decisions, established a six-month candidate-for-membership program for workers and farmers who want to join the party. As they become integrated in the activity of a party branch, and begin carrying out organized communist work in the trade unions, these new members will join with others in the branch in reading and discussing basic works on the strategy, theory, and history of Marxism.

"This program is intended above all for the party as a whole, not simply for candidate members," Barnes emphasized. The standards of disciplined political conduct necessary to recruit workers, and the party membership's political rearming *together with them*, are central to transforming the functioning of the party's local units.

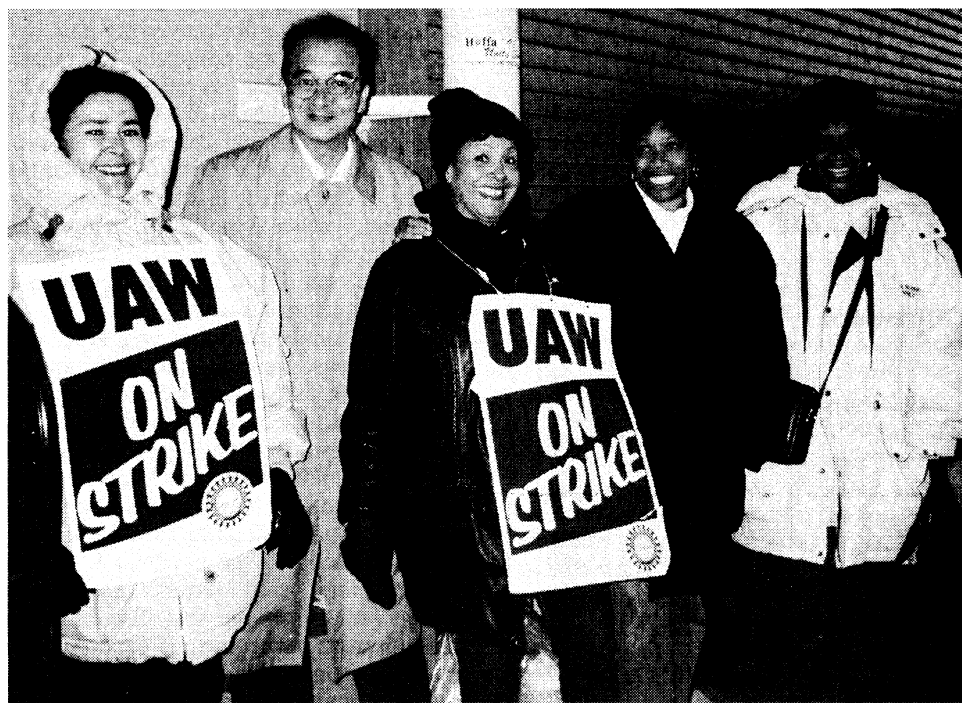
"A small political vanguard of the working class is converging toward our movement," Barnes said. "We are at the beginning of a period in which a layer of workers and farmers, as well as youth attracted toward their struggles, are open to the need to make a revolution in this country."

"This is new in the political lives of everybody in this room," Barnes said, "and it is becoming true on a worldwide scale. It is the beginning of a long struggle."

"Workers, farmers, and youth will be attracted to the *communist movement*—to the Socialist Workers Party, to the Young Socialists, to our supporters, to the books our movement produces and distributes.



Members of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Labor Day parade in Charlotte, North Carolina. SWP National Committee members discussed broad scope of resistance by workers in garment and textile industries. Rise in struggles by a vanguard of workers and farmers across the United States is part of the heat lightning of broader class battles to come. Despite making inroads against the social wage and other rights, the U.S. rulers have failed to break the unions or push back most basic conquests of struggles by the oppressed. Members of the Socialist Workers Party are becoming increasingly integrated into this resistance.



Militant/Don Mackle

Members of United Auto Workers on picket line during 1998 New York strike against Standard Motor Co. The growing integration of women into the workforce and the unions represents an advance in the fight for unity of working people. These gains are coming under attack by the capitalists and their political parties. Barnes explained that "attacks on the gains women have won in their fight for social and political equality, sometimes veiled behind the vulgar vilification of bourgeois women such as Hillary Clinton," are part of the coarsening of bourgeois politics.

John Becker, a meat packer from Fresno, California, described the openings the branch organizing committee there is finding to "work with farmers and the rural poor. We have found both Latino and Native American farmers who have filed suit against the federal government for discrimination, similar to the fight farmers who are Black have been waging for a number of years," he said.

Willey said the experiences described at

units in workers districts in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Baku, and elsewhere was a hallmark of the Bolshevik party during the years well prior to the victorious October 1917 revolution that brought a workers and peasants government to power in Russia.

"Through systematic work in the districts where they were located," Barnes said, "the Bolsheviks not only strengthened a workers cadre in the factories, but found the road to increasing space and protection for revo-

Right now among the biggest political attractions to worker and farmer militants and youth are the legacy of communism and the revolutionary movement represented by those books," Barnes said, "as well as the open revolutionary convictions of each worker-bolshevik they meet."

Socialist workers will recruit to the communist movement by being in the middle of ongoing struggles, presenting a clear, working-class program, and demonstrating in everything they do that they intend to build the kind of political instrument—a communist party—that can lead working people in a socialist revolution.

"The party must respond to the fact that there are workers who want to join," Barnes said. "Workers are hunting for the communist movement. An identifiable layer of the vanguard of the working class—one that is beginning to resist what cannot and will not be reformed away under capitalism—is asking for a party, looking for political clarification, looking for an organization. Only as part of the communist movement will workers and farmers find the scientific understanding to undergird their revolutionary activity and point it toward victory."

Selling revolutionary books

At the center of this perspective, the National Committee adopted a report by party leader Mary-Alice Waters on transforming the production and sales of books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press. Among other things, Waters projected a campaign to increase and maintain a steady placement of Pathfinder titles in bookstores and other outlets where working people buy books.

"We can bring workers and young people attracted to the movement into this expanded effort as part of recruiting them," she said. Waters also proposed a centralized international effort to work with the supporters of the communist movement to involve them in an organized way in this campaign.

Over the past several months, she pointed out, members and supporters of the communist movement in the United Kingdom and France organized a special effort to visit bookstores and other retail outlets. All told, some 1,600 books and pamphlets were ordered by stores in the two countries, an example Waters pointed to as one to emulate.

"We know the potential for Pathfinder sales is much greater than we have tapped. The communist movement must take full advantage of the political leverage of the work we've carried out over decades to produce and keep in print the more than 350 titles that contain the program and history of the modern working-class movement.

And we must continue to renew and enrich that list every year."

Prior to the National Committee meeting, the steering committee of the Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteers decided to take their next step by shouldering responsibility for producing not only reprints but formatting and proofreading new books and pamphlets as well. By assuming these tasks, the more than 200 supporters involved in

sible for the first time an efficient worldwide web-based apparatus for the communist movement that is being put in place for use both now and in the future," Waters said.

"We now have a way of producing and keeping in print a growing percentage of the Pathfinder catalog. No matter what the circumstances down the road," she said, "we can take a compact disc with a book on it to a printer anywhere in the world and

have been holding a regular Militant Labor Forum series and classes at their hall in the Garment District, as well. This work has given a living face to the revolutionary movement that has begun to attract some workers around it.

On a recent weekend, several leaders of the struggle by workers in Long Island for the right to work jobs and against racist, anti-immigrant attacks spoke at a forum in the Garment District. The next day two of them joined sales tables in Brooklyn and Manhattan, then participated in a class on the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes, along with three other workers new to the communist movement. Two workers came up to the class after meeting socialists on the street table below.

The Garment District branch is currently leading the party in sales of Pathfinder titles off street tables, on the job, and through its bookstore, showing the possibilities for generalizing and systematizing these experiences.

Amanda Ulman, a volunteer in Pathfinder's printshop, described the work of the Upper Manhattan branch in the Washington Heights workers district where they have established a hall and Pathfinder bookstore. "As we've begun to build up a systematic presence, a number of workers start to expect us to be there at a regular time once or twice each week," she said.

And Dave Prince described the regular sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder literature by the Brooklyn branch over the past few months in Sunset Park—an area where there are garment, meatpacking, and other factories; working-class housing; and a big shopping district. Out of this work, he said, the branch has decided to get a hall and base its activity in this workers district.

One example of the convergence of a layer of vanguard workers with the communist movement was described by Deborah Liatos, a meat packer from San Francisco. During a tour stop in the Bay Area, James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president, met with workers on strike at a big Safeway warehouse in Tracy. Several attended the public campaign meeting the following day along with 40 other people. A garment worker who recently met several party members has begun bringing other workers to the Pathfinder bookstore, including several newspaper carriers involved in a contract dispute in the city.

Jon Issacson from Sweden described a meeting of 50 people in Stockholm to hear Harris, which included immigrant workers from several countries as well as young people interested in socialism. Out of this activity, the Young Socialists "have several more people who are discussing joining the organization."

Party and Young Socialists members in St. Paul, Minnesota, have begun a class series on Marxist works such as the *Communist Manifesto* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* at the request of several co-workers who are meat packers and other workers socialists have met in the area, reported Tom Fiske.

Party members in St. Paul have also collaborated with a young worker at a local pallet factory who recently expressed interest in working with the branch to place Pathfinder books in stores that have a substantial Spanish-speaking clientele. A trip with him to the first local bookstore he suggested netted a sale of 24 books, including the Spanish translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes and a range of titles by Malcolm X, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro.

At a St. Paul meeting to raise funds for the \$110,000 Militant Fund, another person—a worker actively involved in the effort of the new union at Dakota Premium Foods to win a contract—not only made a donation to the fund but volunteered to help expand distribution of *Perspectiva Mundial* by joining sales teams at plant gates in the area.

Karen Ray, from Chippewa Falls, Minnesota, said the branch organizing committee in that city has had similar experiences, working to place several Pathfinder titles in a local *tienda* and starting a class series with a worker interested in joining the party.

From Balkans to Palestine

Among the participants in the SWP lead-



Storming of parliament building in Belgrade October 5. Political general strike and mass actions, in which workers played central part, forced collapse of Milosevic regime. Despite their triumphalism in early 1990s, U.S. rulers "have discovered they must still confront a working class in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that will not willingly embrace oppression and speedup."

this effort worldwide will make it possible for the Pathfinder staff to concentrate their time on expanding sales and promotion of these books, in addition to facilitating and expediting the work of the party leadership's editing commission in preparing new titles in English and Spanish.

"The reprint volunteers are accelerating the pace of book production, making pos-

get the book in print when we need it."

Financial discipline

The National Committee discussed a balance sheet of its efforts over the past two years to reassert the politically centralized functioning necessary to integrate the party more deeply into the rise of resistance among vanguard workers and farmers. In the process of doing so, the party discovered the legacy of the retreat of the working class and unions earlier in the 1990s, as more and more members of party branches continued their wholesale flight from the application of such proletarian norms.

The National Committee concluded that reversing this situation, and beginning to organize the party along a centralized political course such as that outlined at the meeting, would prove impossible unless each branch concretized its plans in a 12-month budget that it used as a political tool.

"Proletarian financial functioning requires looking to the political future of branch units," said Barnes, "not simply extrapolating from the past. The budget is the reflection in income and expenses of a political course that has been discussed, decided, and embarked on—one we are unconditionally committed to and act on."

Approached in this way, he said, propaganda activity that many branches have been treating as "break even" items at best, or losses at worst—sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, the weekly forum series, regional sales trips—can actually generate substantial income for the party.

Consistency is key

Socialists in the New York Garment District branch have been setting up tables every Thursday and Sunday to sell revolutionary literature to a cross-section of working people and youth in that area. In addition, they are organizing weekly sales in front of buildings in the district where there are garment shops employing a substantial number of the nearly 80,000 sewers and other clothing workers in the city.

Young Socialists and party members

From Pathfinder

Education for Socialists bulletins

Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation (3 PARTS)

Documents of the Socialist Workers Party

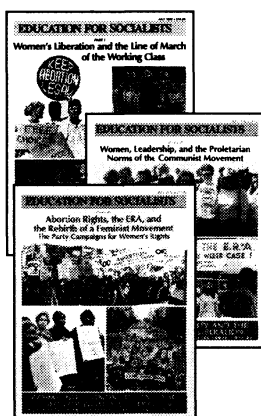
EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

How did the oppression of women begin? Who benefits? What social forces have the power to end the second-class status of women? This three-part series helps politically equip the generation of women and men joining battles in defense of women's rights today.

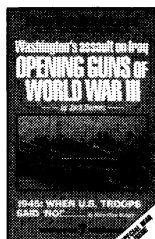
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ership meeting was Argiris Malapanis, a Miami garment worker and member of the party's National Committee who had returned several days before from Yugoslavia, where he had been part of an international reporting team for the *Militant*.

Malapanis pointed to the predominant weight of the working class in the political strike and mass rallies that brought down the Milosevic regime. Through that upsurge, Malapanis said, working people in Yugoslavia have won more space to wage union struggles, obtain and discuss revolutionary political material, and build political organizations.

"But a revolutionary workers political organization will not simply grow out of the unions, and their struggles," he added. That course can only be advanced through a combination of further class-struggle experience and collaboration with the cadres of communist organizations elsewhere in the world.

Malapanis described the wide-ranging discussions the reporting team had with workers and students in Serbia, getting communist literature in their hands. As a result of repeated reporting trips such as this in the Balkans since the early 1990s, a layer of workers and youth there have gained access—through Pathfinder literature in English, French, and Spanish—to the program and history of the revolutionary workers movement.

Participants in the SWP leadership meeting had also been involved in recent actions in defense of the Palestinian people, backing their struggle for self-determination. Paul Pederson, the organizer of the Brooklyn branch of the party, spoke on this struggle at the election campaign wrap-up rally November 5.

Assault on social wage

In the political report to the meeting, Jack Barnes pointed out that one reactionary landmark of both the Clinton administration and Republican-controlled Congress was the so-called Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

Out of this conflict between the Democratic White House and Republican Congress came—among other anti-working-class legislation that same year—the summer 1996 "welfare reform," largely based on the Personal Responsibility Act plank in the Contract with America. The legislation was adopted with the votes of 230 Republicans and 98 Democrats in the House of Representatives and 53 Republicans and 25 Democrats in the Senate. Clinton signed the bill and has sought to bask in its reactionary glory ever since.

As a result of that legislation, Barnes said, working people were the target of the first great constriction in the social safety net won in the 1930s and extended in the 1960s and early 1970s. There had been encroachments before in the 60-year-old federal Social Security system—a stair-step increase in the retirement age from 65 to 67; inadequate cost-of-living protection; and higher payroll taxes. But the 1996 act was the first time an entire category of working people—*single mothers and their children*—had been eliminated from the kind of social protection Social Security had guaranteed for children, women, workers injured or thrown out of a job, and others affected by the instabilities of a well-working capitalism.

Changes in family structure

Barnes pointed out that the dramatic increase in the number of households headed by women marks one of the greatest shifts in family structure in modern capitalist society. The number of single-parent households, the overwhelming majority of which are headed by women, has risen from 12.7 percent of all families in 1960 to 32 percent in 1998.

In capitalist society, Barnes said, the nuclear family among the toilers is modeled by "public opinion" on a sentimentalization of the bourgeois family. But it serves a quite different balance of functions.

While the family is not a producing unit among workers—as it is among farmers and layers of the petty bourgeoisie—since the



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Pathfinder supporters staff a sales table at World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba, held in Havana in November. Nearly \$2,000 in Pathfinder titles was sold to participants at the event. Increasing the circulation of these books through retail outlets and off street tables, said SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters, is a proletarian task of all the units of the communist movement. Waters also reported on the increasing responsibilities being taken on by the volunteers in the Pathfinder Reprint Project in producing reprints and new titles.

jobs. The social acceptance, both legally and de facto, of a woman's right to divorce her husband has grown.

For women in the middle class and better-off sections of the working class, these trends brought more economic independence and a greater degree of social equality. But especially for the economically worst-off sections of the working class, the changing structure of the family unit—more and more often a mother, children, and sometimes a grandmother or aunt ("the sisters")—has increased women's vulnerability to the combined workings of the capitalist system and the rulers' political course.

"And with the next major downturn in the capitalist business cycle," Barnes said, "the working class will be hit with the full cumulative effects of these social policies."

The elimination of Aid for Families with Dependent Children in 1996 is already having a differential *class* impact on the female population in the United States. While middle-class and bourgeois women establish more financial and economic independence and stability, it becomes harder and harder for working-class women to make ends meet. Their wages are low, they have few benefits, and their jobless levels are high.

There is a growing gap between the traditional women's rights organizations, dominated by better-off middle-class women who praise the Clinton administration for its record on abortion rights, and the reality of the impact on the vast majority of women of the bipartisan policies signed and administered by the White House.

The fight to defend and extend the social wage, Barnes said, can't be disconnected from the fight for the rights of women, Blacks, and immigrants. As a result of the normal workings of capitalism and the class bias of all bourgeois institutions, even gains such as affirmative action—granted by the rulers in face of mass

social struggles—cannot stem the tendency of class society to become sharply re-stratified and re-polarized.

"That is why the working-class vanguard must press for the labor movement to defend every single gain the working class has made," Barnes said.

"The labor movement must fight for a social wage to be guaranteed to the working class—the class that transforms nature to produce all wealth, yet has no unencumbered wealth of its own. This is why the revolutionary government in Cuba always gives priority to not simply increasing individual wages, but to expanding the social wage, including access to health care, education, unemployment and retirement benefits, elder-care facilities, child care, and other measures.

"Without this class-struggle approach," Barnes said, "there is no way to advance the unity and combat capacity of the working class and its toiling allies in the fields and on the seas."

Assault on rights

Barnes also pointed out that "millions of workers are already feeling the consequences of government restrictions on the use of what we consider rights and on political space in this country."

Along these lines, he pointed to assaults on Fourth Amendment rights under the 1994 Federal Crime Bill and on workers born abroad through the Illegal Immigration and Reform Responsibility Act adopted two years later.

As the SWP leadership was meeting, Clinton sent back to Congress a bill to criminalize the disclosure of classified documents, encouraging some modifications before he signs a new "secrecy act" he claims is essential to U.S. "national security."

A host of other bipartisan measures extended the use of state-sponsored executions, mandatory prison sentences, and "sex offender" registration laws. In 1996 Clinton

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Militant

June protest in Huntsville, Texas, against execution of Gary Graham. Barnes noted the "substantial reduction in the right of habeas corpus as applied to prisoners on death row, with no letup in police brutality, frame-ups, and the railroading of workers to prison through the court system," as well as the increased use of the death penalty. "The fundamental rule you are taught underlying capitalist justice is: you don't have to *do* something wrong—you just have to *be* something 'wrong.'"

of 1996—the legislation that eliminated Aid to Families with Dependent Children and limited welfare payments to any particular family to a total of five years.

Clinton had campaigned in the 1992 elections on the pledge to "end welfare as we know it." But it was only two years later—with the sweeping in of the Newt Gingrich-led "Republican Revolution" during the 1994 congressional elections—that "welfare reform" legislation was actually adopted by Congress and signed into law by the White House.

The two years following the 1994 elections demonstrated that the Republicans had pressed too far too fast to the right with their "Contract With America." They failed to get most of their legislative proposals either adopted or signed into law. At the same time, Clinton was heading toward his fourth year in office virtually without a single significant piece of domestic legislation to his name.

rise of industrial capitalism it has borne responsibility for the production and reproduction of labor power. It has served as a substitute for a social wage. The family takes care of the young, old, and sick; of basic education; of food, clothing, and shelter. It is a "haven in a heartless world" to turn to when a worker is disabled or unemployed.

In order to maintain this social structure by means short of force, it was necessary for the rulers to make divorce, if not taboo, at least discouraged in the eyes of bourgeois opinion and hard to obtain on the level of the state.

This all began to change with the drawing of large numbers of women into industry during World War II. Despite a sudden but temporary reversal of this trend in the immediate postwar years, both the numbers and percentage of women in the workforce soon resumed their climb, including by the 1970s into a broader range of industrial

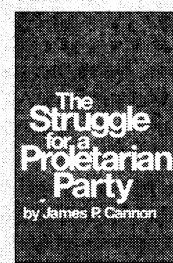
From Pathfinder

Building a revolutionary party

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

JAMES P. CANNON

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organiza-



tional principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II. \$19.95

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Transforming branches in workers districts

Continued from page 11

and Congress also expanded the ability of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and other cop agencies to circumvent warrants, to broaden use of wiretaps, and to arrest and jail people using "secret evidence." And the so-called Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act was adopted and signed into law that same year.

Over the past half decade, Barnes added, "there has been a substantial reduction in the right of habeas corpus as applied to prisoners on death row. At the same time, there has been no letup in police brutality, frame-ups, and the railroading of workers to prison through the court system.

And Clinton, Congress, and the courts have presided over a sharply accelerated use of the death penalty against working people—"both state-sanctioned and on the streets," Barnes said. "The fundamental rule you are taught underlying capitalist justice is: you don't have to *do* something wrong; you just have to *be* something 'wrong.'"

Finally, Barnes pointed to the 2001 agricultural appropriations bill recently adopted by Congress and signed by Clinton. The bill benefits wealthy agribusiness at the expense of working farmers. It also contains a rider reinforcing the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba, and writes into law what had previously been administrative regulations preventing travel by most U.S. residents to Cuba.

War in Mideast

In the weeks surrounding the SWP leadership meeting, the Israeli government continued its murderous assaults on Palestinians. And in what has become a weekly occurrence, largely unreported in the press, U.S. and British government air strikes pounded Iraqi villages November 1 and 11, wounding 10, bringing the total to 316 killed and 946 injured since the two imperialist powers launched "Operation Desert Fox" against the Iraqi people in December 1998.

In his political report to the meeting, Jack Barnes noted that the recent events in Palestine "mark the eighth war Palestinians have had to fight for their elementary national rights, counting those from the Palestinian uprising in 1936-39 against the British Mandate, through the intifada of the late 1980s and early 1990s against the expansionist colonial settler state of Israel."

There is no way that either Tel Aviv or Washington can "solve" the conflict short of recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, something that stands in irreconcilable contradiction to the existence of the state of Israel. "The driving force of this conflict is still summed up in the statement painted on a wall in Palestine two decades ago, and broadcast through photographs around the world—'We fight Israel because it occupies our land,'" Barnes said.

Barnes said a new factor in this long-term state of war is the existence of the Palestinian Authority. "It is neither a government nor a state," he said. "It is not even an embryo of a state. To the contrary, it has no true sovereignty over the patchwork of land it supposedly administers—and is held responsible by Tel Aviv to police."

Nonetheless, the Israeli government uses the very existence of the Palestinian Authority as a pretext for murderous assaults on the Palestinian people.

"From the point of view of Washington and Tel Aviv," he said, "the Palestinian Authority is only 'working' if it is serving as an effective mechanism of control over the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

It is the colonial-settler state of Israel—not "the Jews," nor the Israeli Jews—that is the instrument of the oppression of the Palestinian people, Barnes said. It is a capitalist state whose very origin is based upon the dispossession and national oppression of an entire people, the Palestinians. It is a state that serves as a bastion of imperialism in the region—and whose capitalist rulers advance their own class interests, those of Israeli finance capital. Their interests are not identical to, and come into conflict with, the interests of the U.S., British, French, and other imperialist ruling classes.

Communists, Barnes said, champion the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine and point out that Israel is at the same time a death trap for Jews. And they demand Tel Aviv's immediate withdrawal from all the territories it occupied during six days of

aggression in June 1967.

"We should not expect that the borders of a democratic, secular Palestine will necessarily be the same as those of Israel—either as it existed after 1948, nor the 'Greater Israel' established through the further conquests by Tel Aviv during its 1967 war against the Arab peoples. The majority of the population in Jordan is Palestinian," Barnes said, "as well as a substantial portion of the population in southern Lebanon.

"The communist movement," he said, "joins not only with the Palestinians but with the toilers of the oppressed nations of Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and throughout the Mideast in their struggle against imperialist domination, including by the Israeli state. At the same time, we work to build proletarian parties made up of working people organizing and fighting in the face of a capitalist state in each country.

"In the imperialist bastion of Israel itself," Barnes said, "the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people will be a powerful impetus to an anticapitalist revolution. The degree to which a communist leadership is built will have a direct bearing on the course of the struggle."

In that regard, the SWP leader noted the importance of the size and confidence of demonstrations in New York and other U.S. cities of thousands of Arabs and Palestinians, along with others, over the past few months.

"There are many working people and young people involved in these actions—Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim—who live and work in the United States," Barnes said. "They, like other immigrants arriving here in record numbers, are a growing part of the American working class, and an increasing percentage of the hereditary proletariat in this country."

Barnes noted that three weeks earlier, on two consecutive days, there was a pro-Israel demonstration in New York City of some 10,000 people, followed by a pro-Palestinian rally of equivalent size or larger. "This would have unthinkable even a few years ago," he said. "We still have not absorbed its implications.

"We should be on the lookout for workers and youth of Arab origin who are drawn more deeply toward the class struggle in this country," Barnes said, "and thus can be attracted to the communist movement."

Regional conferences

"The branches of the Socialist Workers

Party are incapable of recruiting vanguard workers and farmers to the communist movement unless our party units are transformed through having a hall and carrying out regular public propaganda activity in a workers district," Barnes emphasized in his closing summary at the November National Committee meeting.

"And this transformation cannot go forward in a sustainable way unless the party and Young Socialists take advantage of the openings that exist right now to recruit working people and youth to the communist movement."

With this reality in mind, the party's National Committee will reconvene in New York from Saturday, December 16, through Monday, December 18, to assess what has been demonstrated about the shifts in U.S. politics and the class struggle since their previous meeting, as well as some of the initial steps by branches in carrying out the course decided by the NC.

On Saturday evening, at a regional public meeting, Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP, will present a talk that will be discussed and voted on by the National Committee the following days.

Coming out of that meeting, the party's leadership is calling on branches in various parts of North America to organize regional educational conferences over the three-day New Year's and Martin Luther

King Day weekends to discuss these perspectives and to organize classes on the change in family structure, the Jewish question, and other topics that bring to bear the history and theory of communism on politics and the class struggle today. Central party leaders will participate in each of these gatherings.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists have the possibility of going through experiences with workers and working farmers in the years ahead—strikes, rising social protest movements in city and countryside, mass upheavals—where possibilities to change the current social order short of a socialist revolution will be tested and exhausted.

"What's important is not the amount of calendar time this will take—no one knows—but the set of experiences the workers movement will go through," Barnes said.

"These experiences will open workers to an organization that is truly revolutionary. as they go through these struggles together and learn the irreplaceable practical value of the written record of the struggles of revolutionary generations preceding us.

"They will draw conclusions about the value of being a worker-bolshevik and building a proletarian party to which everything is subordinated to a single aim—the socialist revolution."

Cuba rejects 'anti-terrorism' motion

Continued from page 4

bombings in Cuba last year [1997] at hotels, restaurants, and discotheques." He pointed out that he had received funds from the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). U.S. authorities, "made no effort to question him about the case," the article noted.

Shortly after the publication of the *Times* interview, under pressure from the CANF, Posada Carriles retracted his account. The *Times*, however, has stood by its story and the accuracy of the interview.

Protests demand extraditions

In Panama, police officials announced November 20 they had seized 50 pounds of plastic and other explosive materials. They reported that in the house of José Hurtado, one of those detained, they found a sketch of the National University auditorium, the site of Castro's last stop in

Panama.

"If there is any crime involved, we will prosecute them," Panamanian president Mireya Moscoso stated November 23.

Cuba has requested the extradition of the five Cuban-born individuals detained. According to Panamanian law, Cuba has 60 days to submit evidence backing its extradition request.

In Panama City, workers and students have held demonstrations to express solidarity with Cuba and demand the counter-revolutionaries be put on trial.

The Venezuelan government of President Hugo Chávez has said it is considering whether to request the extradition of Posada Carriles, who is wanted for his escape from prison there. The Cuban government has stated that it will collaborate with the authorities in Panama, Venezuela, and elsewhere in ensuring that those responsible pay for their crimes.

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Now they tell us—United Kingdom scientists are equipping Virgin airlines planes with special equipment to measure cosmic radiation.



Harry Ring

'Moral imperative'—Compelled by a moral need to help meet the critical shortage of low-cost

housing in South Boston, the Catholic hierarchy in the area has sold church property. Next spring ground will be broken for 50 condos of which 12 will be "affordables." The "market-rate" condos will, hopefully, fetch \$400,000 and the "affordables," up to \$211,000.

What else is new?—In England, a Railtrack crash killed four people and injured 35 others. Subsequent probes found that company executives knew 10 months earlier that the section of the track was defective. The company also listed 81 spots where engineers feared the

danger of derailment. And, finally, a *Times* of London headline declared, "Railtrack to escape fines for broken rails."

Gourmet's delight—In France, 150 tons of an epicurean spicy sausage was recalled after it was found to be contaminated with poisonous listeria.

Assistant what?—In an interview with Ivana Trump, ex-spouse of real estate shark Donald Trump, she was asked what she does when in a cab or similar situation, she finds she forgot to stop at the cash machine. Response: "Bank ma-

chine. Forget it. I wouldn't know how to use it. Actually, that happens to me quite often. I have a \$100 bill and the guy doesn't know what to do so.... he drops me off and I say, "When you have a route around here tomorrow, ring the bell and my assistant will give you the money."

Road to higher education—In our high school days we were totally alienated from what was offered, and attended as little as possible. School authorities couldn't care less. But now, in the United Kingdom, they have a sure way to draw students into the educational process and warm the hearts of par-

ents. If their kids play hooky too frequently, parents will face fines ranging as high as \$6,500. The item we read didn't say if families that can't pay will be jailed.

And then what?—In Evansville, Indiana, health authorities urged people living near the former Evansville Plating Works to undergo tests after area soil samples revealed lead levels 19 times federal safety limits. In a fit of generosity, they declared the tests will be free. What will be done for those afflicted by, or at risk of, lead poisoning? Again, the item we read didn't say.

Why there is no 'fair day's wages for a fair day's work'

Printed below is a piece from *The Wages System*, by Frederick Engels. The pamphlet is made up of a series of 12 articles that Engels wrote between May and August 1881 for *The Labour Standard*, a weekly trade union newspaper published in London. This article, entitled "A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work," was the first in the series, appearing in the May 7, 1881, issue. The pamphlet, published by Pathfinder Press, is available from Pathfinder Press for \$2.00. Sub-headings are by the *Militant*.

from the pages of The Wages System

BY FREDERICK ENGELS

This has now been the motto of the English working-class movement for the last fifty years. It did good service in the time of the rising Trades Unions after the repeal of the infamous Combination Laws in 1824¹; it did still better service in the time of the glorious Chartist movement, when the English workmen marched at the head of the European working class. But times are moving on, and a good many things which were desirable and necessary fifty, and even thirty years ago, are now antiquated and would be completely out of place. Does the old, time-honoured watchword too belong to them?

What are wages, how are they set?

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work? But what is a fair day's wages, and what is a fair day's work? How are they determined by the laws under which modern society exists and develops itself? For an answer to this we must not apply to the science of morals or of law and equity, nor to any sentimental feeling of humanity, justice, or even charity. What is morally fair, what is even fair in law, may be far from being socially fair. Social fairness or unfairness is decided by one science alone—the science which deals with the material facts of production and exchange, the science of political economy.

Now what does political economy call a fair day's wages and a fair day's work? Simply the rate of wages and the length and intensity of a day's work which are determined by competition of employer and employed in the open market. And what are they, when thus determined?

A fair day's wages, under normal conditions, is the sum required to procure to the labourer the means of existence necessary, according to the standard of life of his station and country, to keep himself in working order and to propagate his race. The actual rate of wages, with the fluctuations of trade, may be sometimes above, sometimes below this rate; but, under fair conditions, that rate ought to be the average of all oscillations.

A fair day's work is that length of working day and that intensity of actual work which expends one day's full working power of the workman without encroaching upon his capacity for the same amount of work for the next and following days.

The transaction, then, may be thus described—the workman gives to the Capitalist his full day's working power; that is, so

much of it as he can give without rendering impossible the continuous repetition of the transaction. In exchange he receives just as much, and no more, of the necessities of life as is required to keep up the repetition of the same bargain every day. The workman gives as much, the Capitalist gives as little, as the nature of the bargain will admit. This is a very peculiar sort of fairness.

But let us look a little deeper into the matter. As, according to political economists, wages and working days are fixed by competition, fairness seems to require that both sides should have the same fair start on equal terms. But that is not the case. The Capitalist, if he cannot agree with the Labourer, can afford to wait, and live upon his capital. The workman cannot. He has but wages to live upon, and must therefore take work when, where, and at what terms he can get it. The workman has no fair start. He is fearfully handicapped by hunger. Yet, according to the political economy of the Capitalist class, that is the very pink of fairness.

But this is a mere trifle. The application of mechanical power and machinery to new trades, and the extension and improvements of machinery in trades already subjected to it, keep turning out of work more and more "hands"; and they do so at a far quicker rate than that at which these superseded "hands" can be absorbed by, and find employment in, the manufactures of the country. These superseded "hands" form a real industrial army of reserve for the use of Capital. If trade is bad they may starve, beg, steal, or go to the workhouse; if trade is good they are ready at hand to expand production; and until the very last man, woman, or child of this army of reserve shall have found work—which happens in times of frantic over-production alone—until then will its competition keep down wages, and by its existence alone strengthen the power of Capital in its struggle with Labour. In the race with Capital, Labour is not only handicapped, it has to drag a cannonball riveted to its foot. Yet that is fair according to Capitalist political economy.

Labor, not capital, produces value

But let us inquire out of what fund does Capital pay these very fair wages? Out of capital, of course. But capital produces no value. Labour is, besides the earth, the only source of wealth; capital itself is nothing but the stored-up produce of labour. So that the wages of Labour are paid out of labour, and the working man is paid out of his own produce.

According to what we may call common fairness, the wages of the labourer ought to consist in the produce of his labour. But that would not be fair according to political economy. On the contrary, the produce of the workman's labour goes to the capitalist, and the workman gets out of it no more than the bare necessities of life. And thus the end of this uncommonly "fair" race of competition is that the produce of the labour of those who do work, gets unavoidably accumulated in the hands of those that do not work, and becomes in their hands the most powerful means to enslave the very men who produced it.

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work! A good deal might be said about the fair day's work too, the fairness of which is per-



Meatpacking plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina. "The workman gives to the capitalist his full day's working power," Engels wrote. "In exchange he receives just as much, and no more, of the necessities of life as is required to keep up the repetition of the same bargain every day. The workman gives as much, the Capitalist gives as little as the nature of the bargain will admit."

fectly on a par with that of the wages. But that we must leave for another occasion. From what has been stated it is pretty clear that the old watchword has lived its day, and will hardly hold water nowadays. The fairness of political economy, such as it truly lays down the laws which rule actual society, that fairness is all on one side—on that of Capital. Let, then, the old motto be buried for ever and replaced by another:

POSSESSION OF THE MEANS OF WORK—RAW MATERIAL, FACTORIES, MACHINERY—BY THE WORKING PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

¹The *Combination Laws* prohibited the formation and activities of every type of working-class organization. But the law on working-class associations adopted a year later again greatly curtailed the activities of the trade unions.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



December 5, 1975

NEW HAVEN, Conn.—Despite mass jailings and stiff fines under a union-busting injunction, the New Haven Federation of Teachers emerged victorious from a bitter two-week strike thanks to an impressive show of solidarity by the labor movement of this city.

Under the threat of a general strike in support of ninety imprisoned teachers, the board of education sharply reversed its previous position and offered substantial contract concessions. These were included in an agreement approved by a union vote of 431 to 90 on November 23.

The impressive victory in New Haven sets an example for teachers around the country, who are more and more often being hit with injunctions and jailings when they try to defend education and their standard of living.

The confrontation here had been building up for a year and a half, ever since negotiations for a new teachers' contract began. Claiming it had "no money," the board's final offer included only a \$200 rise in pay scale in a three-year contract.

Increments—wage increases given to teachers based on number of years' experience and advanced degrees—were included for only two years. In addition, there was no provision for reduction of the maximum class size, one of the teachers' main demands.

Fed up with this kind of treatment from the board, 1,000 of the system's 1,200 teachers and related employees voted overwhelm-

ingly November 9 to strike the following morning.



December 4, 1950

Three factors are now playing a central role in the acute and hourly aggravation of the international crisis, which was inherent from the beginning in Truman's "police action" in Korea and which has now brought this country and the whole world so perilously close to the outbreak of a major war in Asia, if not to another world war.

The first fact is the abrupt change in the military situation on the China-Korea front. Things have turned out in a way entirely unforeseen either in Washington or Tokyo.

Second is the blind alley into which the diplomats of Wall Street have maneuvered themselves. They had deliberately stalled all along in the expectation of dictating the terms of a possible settlement, with a "strong" military position on the China-Korea border as their trump card. This diplomatic "strategy" blew up in their faces with the military reverses. And they are now improvising from day to day, if not from one minute to the next.

The third major factor is the sinister role of General MacArthur who continues to press for a showdown in Asia and whose political and military strategy has been from the first directed toward this end. It is widely recognized that his removal from command would greatly alleviate at least the diplomatic situation. On the other hand, his remaining in command can easily precipitate an even graver state of affairs.

Polarization marks elections in Canada

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO, Ontario—Federal elections here have been marked by sharp conflicts between the capitalist parties, an increasingly coarse and vitriolic tone among bourgeois politicians, and political polarization.

Called last month by Liberal Party prime minister Jean Chrétien to defend his parliamentary majority for another term, polls indicate—as we go to press—that the Liberals have instead lost support, raising the possibility of a minority government coming out of the November 27 election. The debate has been focused between the Liberals, who dominate in Ontario and English-speaking Quebec, and the rightist Canadian Alliance party, which holds sway in the country's western provinces.

Since coming to power in 1993, the Liberals have spearheaded austerity measures that have undercut the social wage of working people. The party's parliamentary majority was eroded in the last federal election in 1997, partly as a result of these attacks. To try to bolster his election results, Chrétien has announced his intention to restore billions of dollars to the national health system and a package of tax cuts over the past few months.

Liberal Party leaders have posed themselves as a bulwark against the policies of the Canadian Alliance and its leader Stockwell Day, who proposes reintroducing capital punishment, holding a referendum on abortion, which is now legal in Canada, and taking a harder stance against illegal immigration.

The Bloc Quebecois, a pro-Quebec sovereignty party that campaigns only in Quebec, will most likely increase its proportion of members of parliament at the expense of the Liberals. "Quebecers have a unique chance to send everyone a message," said Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard at a BQ rally in Montreal November 19. "Mr. Chrétien claims to like clarity," he said, referring to the so-called clarity bill passed by the Chrétien government last year that gives the federal government the power to decide if the question and results of the

next sovereignty referendum in Quebec are legitimate.

"This election is the clarity election as far as he is concerned! Quebecers are not going to vote for someone who denies the existence of the Quebec people," said Bouchard. "This sovereign country, this Quebec that we want, we will have it my friends."

Two other parties, the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP), are vying in the race. The Progressive Conservatives, historically the main bourgeois alternative to the Liberals before the 1993 federal election, have increased their support in polls to 12 percent. The NDP, a social democratic labor party with a base in the unions, remains at close to 9 percent support. It has made defense of the national Medicare system central to its campaign.

Indications are the parliament will continue to be divided regionally and along national lines, without any capitalist party drawing significant support across Canada. The *Financial Times* noted, "voters will go to the polls next week faced with a choice between two leaders who have shown little appearance of inspiring the nation." This fragmentation and lack of cohesion of "the nation" worries Canada's ruling class, which, for now, has no alternative.

Coarse tone marks campaign

Throughout the campaign the Liberals have tried to portray the fight as a choice between "Canadian values" represented by the Liberals and "U.S.-style" values represented by the Canadian Alliance.

For example, the Liberals have accused the Alliance of a "hidden agenda" to replace the national Medicare system with a "two-tier" health system and with planning to cut Old Age Security, after the Alliance's deputy finance critic said that an Alliance government would phase out the program.

In fact a two-tier system is well underway in a number of provinces, including in Alberta where Day is from. This is the result of massive cuts in transfer payments to

the provinces by the Liberal government over the past decade, undermining health care and education. These cuts, and the assault by the Liberals on Employment Insurance, have produced a multi-billion dollar government surplus.

"We have to make sure that the values we have developed in Canada [and] the safety net which has given so much security to everyone is not destroyed in the process for some very—what I would call—right wing reasons," Chrétien hypocritically stated. He called a proposal by Day to give more power to the provinces a "proposition to destroy Canada," and said the Alliance is in ideological league with the "dark forces" of European fascism. Immigration minister Elinor Caplan said Alliance supporters are "Holocaust deniers, prominent bigots, and racists."

A Canadian Alliance candidate was forced to resign after referring to immigration from Asian countries as an "Asian invasion."

"Stockwell Day's fundamentalist religious views, and his belief in Creationism as opposed to the theory of evolution have come under attack, as well as his refusal to work on Sunday."

An editorial in the November 18 *Toronto Star* opined that "one of the dirtiest election campaigns in recent memory has hit a new low. Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day is publicly accusing Liberal leader Jean Chrétien of criminal behavior."

Day and Progressive Conservative Party leader Joseph Clark earlier had asked the police and the federal ethics counselor to investigate Chrétien after it was revealed that he had called the head of a federal loan agency in the mid-1990s to help a crony obtain a \$615,000 loan for a hotel in Chrétien's riding of Shawinigan in Quebec. Chrétien claimed he was only doing his job as a member of parliament for his constituents.

Resistance of workers and farmers

The ruling capitalist class in Canada has been faced with a series of strikes and ac-

tions by working people. One week prior to the call for the election, 80,000 women rallied across Canada in defense of women's rights and for an increase in the minimum wage. Several actions have been organized in the context of the elections.

In Brandon, Manitoba, Native people from the Sioux Valley First Nations confronted Stockwell Day with signs charging him with "inciting hatred" and calling him a "racist and bigot." The Alliance has proposed a drastic overhaul of the relationship between aboriginals and the federal government, including the selling of reserve lands to individual aboriginals and an end to the tax-free status of Natives on reserves.

In Manitoba, farmers organized a one-kilometer convoy of tractors, grain trucks, and pickups along part of the trans-Canada highway to draw attention to the growing crisis of Prairie farmers.

"We've got this federal election coming up and we've never heard much on [agriculture] policies," said organizer Murray Downing.

"It's getting ridiculous," farmer Don Darker, told the media. "It was tough when I started, but you worked a little harder. The harder you worked, the more you could make and feed yourself. But now it doesn't matter how hard you work. You just can't feed yourself!"

In Ontario owner-operator truckers who are members of the National Trucking Association have been fighting for a reduction in fuel prices. They will be holding a meeting the day before the election to decide whether or not to use convoys to block traffic on election day itself.

Truckers in Quebec, who were on strike fighting for a union despite a back-to-work law imposed on them by the Parti-Quebecois government, demonstrated outside the Montreal election rally for the Bloc Quebecois, addressed by Premier Bouchard.

Traditionally backing the NDP, many union officials are instead giving backhanded support to the Liberals in order to block any advance of the Canadian Alliance. For example, UFCW Local 175 and 633 president Wayne Hanley, writing in the November issue of the locals newsletter, does not mention the NDP. Instead the article is devoted to reporting on the corporate support for the Canadian Alliance.

Under Canada's undemocratic federal election laws, only parties that field at least 50 candidates can register as national parties with their names on the ballot. Other parties with this status are the Canadian Action Party, Natural Law Party, Green Party, Marijuana Party, Communist Party of Canada, and the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist). The Communist League, which is running three candidates in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal (see statement on this page) can only appear on the ballot as individuals without a political designation.

John Steele is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union

Working-class voice in Canadian elections

The following statement was released November 23 by Joanne Pritchard, Michel Dugré and Derrick O'Keefe, the Communist League candidates in the ridings of Rosemont—Petite-Patrie in Montreal, Parkdale—High Park in Toronto, and Vancouver-South Burnaby in Vancouver.

Pritchard is a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Dugré is a packinghouse worker. O'Keefe is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers and of the Young Socialists. The federal elections in Canada are November 27.

Through the Communist League campaign, we have presented a fighting, working-class voice in this election in opposition to the parties of big business to thousands of working people across Canada who

are resisting the deepening assaults against our working and living conditions, our democratic rights and union organizations, and the ever growing devastation caused by the capitalist system of exploitation.

Union members and other working people are setting an example of standing up to the employer and government attacks and of labor solidarity. This includes striking truckers at the port of Montreal who face government strike-breaking orders; miners on strike against Falconbridge in Sudbury, Ontario, who have won solidarity from fellow workers in Norway; striking meat packers fighting for a union contract at Superior Poultry and locked-out workers walking the picket line against deep concessions demanded by Fletcher's in Vancouver; and farmers defending their livelihood in Ontario.

Amidst these struggles the Communist League campaign has built solidarity with the Palestinian people fighting for their freedom; workers and farmers defending their revolution in Cuba; working people bringing down the brutal Milosevic dictatorship in Yugoslavia and opening new space to organize and defend their workers state; and meat packers, coal miners, and other workers in the United States who are part of the growing working-class resistance in that country.

We brought our communist campaign on picket lines, at plant gates and labor protests, door-to-door and on street corners in working-class neighborhoods, to rallies and all-candidates meetings, and in actions defending the rights of working people around the world.

Our campaign has received a serious response to the fact that in order to put an end to the growing injustice, brutality, and horrors of capitalism, those who produce the wealth of this country need to unite in a revolutionary struggle to establish their own government, a workers and farmers government. With such a weapon, we can begin to build a society based on human needs and not profits, and join the international struggle for socialism.

In Canada, such a revolutionary course goes hand-in-hand with a common fight by working people across the country against

the national oppression of Quebecois, Acadians, and Natives, and for Quebec independence.

The struggles of working people today show the possibilities that exist for solidarity, common action, and relying on our organized power. They help explain why working people and their mass organizations, the trade unions, should not give support to the bosses' parties, but rather should embark on the road of independent working-class political action.

More than anything else, the current election campaign registers the rightward shift in bourgeois politics in Canada. Despite sharp conflict, all contending parties have been part of the assault—from the actual privatization of growing parts of the public health care system across the country, to anti-working-class "law and order" measures, to new imperialist intervention abroad. Regardless of who wins, the new government will implement big parts of the Alliance's anti-working-class program. This is what Canada's capitalists badly need in order to defend their crisis-ridden profit system.

Voting for Jean Chrétien's Liberals in order to stop Stockwell Day's Canadian Alliance party is not a step toward a united fight against the bosses, their parties, and their government, any more than voting for the capitalist Bloc Quebecois can advance the fight for Quebec independence.

We urge a vote for Communist League candidates where possible, and elsewhere encourage workers, small farmers, and youth to express an elementary class vote against the bosses' parties by casting a vote for the New Democratic Party. Despite its pro-capitalist, pro-Canadian imperialist program, the NDP is a party linked to the unions.

We and our campaign supporters will continue collaboration with other fighting workers after the election. We will bring the revolutionary truth as widely as possible by circulating the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books among those fighters, who need a clear, scientific understanding of the world in order to change it.

Join us in this effort. Join the Communist League and the Young Socialists.

CORRECTION

Three errors were introduced in the reprint of excerpts from the new Pathfinder pamphlet *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, by Mary-Alice Waters, published in the November 27 issue.

1. A sentence referring to the book *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations* should have read, "It was published in English and Spanish in October 1990 as Washington was driving toward the brutal, massive assault on Iraq that began in January 1991."

2. The sentence on the publication of *The Second Declaration of Havana* should have stated, "Tomorrow, in fact—February 4—we will be marking the 36th anniversary of that call to action to the toilers of the Americas."

3. A sentence a few paragraphs later should have read, "Some 200 Pathfinder supporters from almost a dozen countries around the world are preparing every single title currently in print by Pathfinder in digital form."

for further reading from Pathfinder...

in New International no. 10
• **Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War**

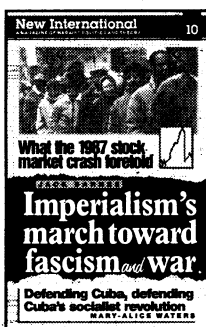
by Jack Barnes

• **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
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New Yugoslav regime courts U.S., EU powers

Continued from front page
ment,” stated Yugoslavia’s new prime minister Zoran Zizic, “analysis of what had happened in the past is not necessary, especially not of the concrete events that led to the breakup of diplomatic relations with these countries.”

Earlier in November, Belgrade was readmitted as a full member into the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Yugoslav government officials say all these steps are necessary to integrate Yugoslavia further into the world capitalist market system—a process they, and spokespeople for the imperialist powers, acknowledge will not be easy or straightforward.

In a statement issued from Hanoi, during an official visit to Vietnam, U.S. president William Clinton praised “the remarkable changes” in Yugoslavia since the toppling of the regime of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. He also said the country’s transition, especially of its economy, is “far from over.” Washington lifted its oil and air travel embargo on Serbia in October, pledged to drop other sanctions, and promised \$45 million in food aid. At the same time, the U.S. government has insisted Belgrade turn over Milosevic to the imperialist tribunal in The Hague to be tried for “war crimes,” a demand that Kostunica has opposed so far.

Kostunica has continued to steer his diplomatic efforts towards the European Union and has maintained somewhat of a distance from Washington, causing friction within the new government and the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS). The new Yugoslav president said recently he hopes Yugoslavia will become a full member of the European Union.

Two recent conferences in Yugoslavia spotlight the course being pursued by the government. One was a meeting of the Pact for the Stability of Southeastern Europe, which Yugoslavia just joined. Another was a gathering of 60 businessmen from North America—including representatives of Chase Manhattan bank and other institutions of finance capital, company managers from Yugoslavia, and leaders of the so-called G-17, a group of “economic experts” advising Kostunica.

Representatives of the World Bank and William Montgomery, in charge of Yugo-

slav affairs in the U.S. embassy in Budapest, took part in this second conference to discuss opportunities for foreign investment in Yugoslavia. A number of conference guests, according to media accounts, stated particular interest in Serbia’s agriculture and food industry. Addressing participants from Yugoslavia, Montgomery said, “The challenge for you now is to create a good climate for business here. We and you have some serious work in front of us on that matter, because if the economic situation here does not improve, the political situation will remain shaky.”

Serbia’s minister for economic relations with other countries was not very optimistic on the short-term prospects of success along these lines. “This is a representative gathering of 60 American corporations,” he said. “However, the fact remains we still have political, economic, and judicial insecurity here.”

One example of the problems finance capital encounters is the protests by U.S. businessman Milan Panic over “losing control” of the Galenika pharmaceutical plant. Panic was briefly Yugoslavia’s prime minister during the Milosevic regime. In Belgrade November 10 he demanded reversal of a “government takeover” of the Galenika plant and return of its control to ICN Pharmaceuticals, a U.S.-based company that Panic owns. ICN supposedly bought a majority stake in Galenika, previously state-owned, under a 1990 agreement with the Milosevic regime. But a Yugoslav court ruled in February 1999 that ICN’s stake was worth only 35 percent instead of the 75 percent Panic claims.

New strikes and actions

Meanwhile, working people continue to press for extending the political space they have won through a wave of strikes and other actions in early October that were decisive in forcing Milosevic to resign. Many workers have launched new strikes or other job actions to replace managers who were Milosevic cronies and to fight for better wages and working conditions.

According to media reports, nine members of the executive board of Nezavisnost (Independence) and four other workers were

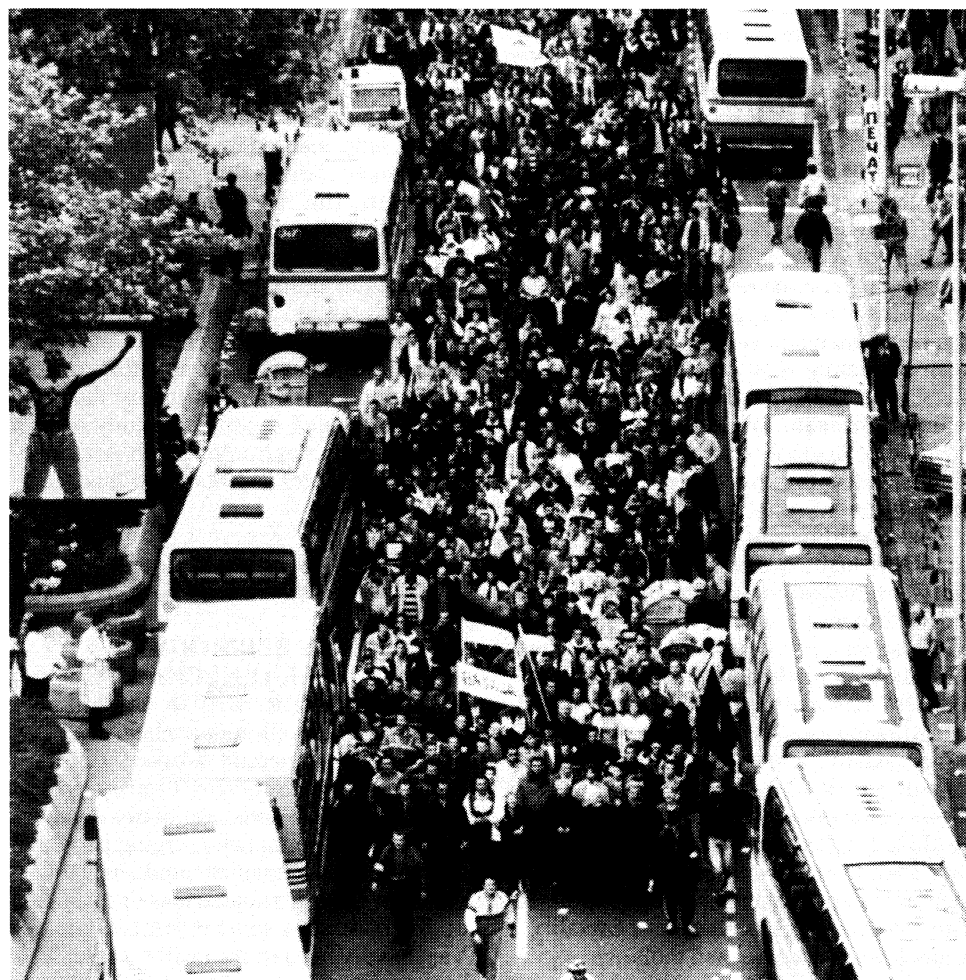
on a hunger strike inside the Magnohrom plant in Kraljevo, central Serbia, in mid-November. Nezavisnost is the main union federation that was not directly tied to the Milosevic regime. Its members at Magnohrom demand a referendum by employees through which workers will have a say on who will replace the old manager, who resigned under pressure from the union.

The national postal service workers union also approved a walkout of its 28,000 members, demanding higher wages and immediate payment of back wages. To achieve this, workers demand internal reorganization of the postal service, with two union representatives serving on each manage-

ment board. Union officials set a deadline of November 20. If the union demands are not met by then, they said they will call a national march of postal workers in Belgrade.

Elementary and high schools were empty the week of November 13-17 due to a teachers strike for a doubling of salaries. Pilots of the Yugoslav Air Company have announced preparations for a strike, as have workers in major Belgrade hotels around similar demands.

George Skoric is a student in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Argiris Malapanis is a meat packer in Miami.



October 5 popular revolt in Belgrade spelled the end of the Milosevic regime

Textile workers discuss Pillowtex ‘restructuring’

Continued from front page

the expected bankruptcy proceedings. A handful were not convinced. Pat Mitchell, who works at Plant no. 16, raised with a group of co-workers her opinion that the company would not deliver wages and pensions, with or without the bankruptcy court. “How could anyone have any faith in this company? I do not know,” she said. “We are workers. We should have the right to know about our livelihoods.”

Over the past year-and-a-half workers at several Pillowtex plants won elections to be represented by UNITE, starting with the June 1999 historic victory at the Fieldcrest Cannon plants in this region after a 25-year fight and several votes. Pillowtex bought Fieldcrest Cannon in 1997. Elloyd Deal, a veteran of the organizing drives who is now retired, said the union victories are important because “after being employed 37 years at Fieldcrest-Cannon I retired on a pension of \$65 per month. That is why we need a

union.”

In the wake of the victory in Kannapolis, Pillowtex workers in Scottsboro, Alabama, and Rocky Mount, North Carolina, were able to rapidly win union votes in May and June of this year.

Kathy Venable, a union member in Scottsboro, said the “main reason why people voted for the union was fairness and respect. We’ve been done wrong so much and we couldn’t do anything about it. But with the union now we’ll be able to.”

One of the Rocky Mount workers, interviewed in the UNITE magazine on the union victory there, said, “People weren’t treated fairly. If your supervisor likes you, you get a raise. If they don’t, you don’t.... The \$5.95 an hour was an issue” he said, referring to the company’s base pay there.

Recently there have been a number of closures of textile plants in this area, including a Pillowtex sheet manufacturing plant in Salisbury, North Carolina. Many of the

workers who attended the Concord meeting described how they are on short time and have had to get a second job to make ends meet. “I work 12 hours in the mill and then go to my other job,” said Laura Simpson, who has worked in Plant No. 4 in Kannapolis. “I’ve been in the mill my whole adult life. Now if a loom goes down the company does not buy the parts to repair it.” The company has announced it will close its Rocky Mount plant in June 2001.

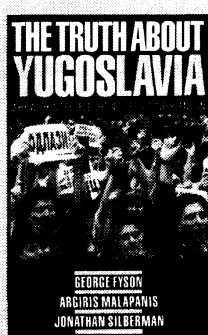
At the same time, the bosses are pushing for increased productivity. At one of the meetings here workers in one of the weave rooms in the Kannapolis plant said they are currently circulating a petition against arbitrary disciplinary action against workers for not meeting productivity quotas.

Dean Hazlewood is a member of UNITE Local 1501 at Pillowtex in Kannapolis, North Carolina. Arlene Rubinstein from Atlanta contributed to this article.

from Pathfinder

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George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman



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LETTERS

Clarify view on election

Several co-workers at the meatpacking plant where I work have asked me about what is going on in the United States with the presidential election results. Some of the questions go in the direction of ridiculing the “Americans” for outdated election procedures. I have explained, as the *Militant* does, that both Gore and Bush will continue the attacks on workers and farmers begun by the Clinton administration.

The article in the November 27 issue is helpful along those lines. However, I do not fully understand the headline “Factionalism in ruling circles around the elections is about future class confrontations” and the paragraphs that go with it that state that the heat is being gen-

erated by unresolvable “ideological divisions” in the ruling class rather than differences over “immediate practical policies.”

What are these ideological divisions? And why would they generate so much factional heat if there are no immediate stakes for wings of the ruling class? Isn’t there a more concrete and simpler explanation like a fight over the privileges and patronage that go with the presidency? Isn’t the rug being lifted on the real character of bourgeois politics in the context of increasing class polarization?

*John Steele
Toronto, Ontario*

U.S., Puerto Rico elections

In the wake of the recent elections in the United States, there have

been allegations of improprieties by both major big-business parties. The most serious involve bribing voters and excluding voters from polls based on the color of their skin, the area they live in, or the language they speak.

These allegations are none too shocking, but obviously we wouldn’t be hearing about them in the corporate press if this election hadn’t been so close and so marked by factionalism.

But even if ALL of the allegations are true, this election is cleaner, freer, and fairer than any election ever held in Puerto Rico. In presidential elections here, which are a smokescreen for bourgeois rule, it doesn’t really matter who wins, and allegations of fraud and abuse reflect negatively on this ve-

neer of democracy, so elections generally are relatively clean.

In Puerto Rico, however, plebiscites are held to justify the U.S. government’s occupation. There, it is not enough for the bourgeois media, the government schools, the financiers who control the stock market, the corrupt union officials, and the bosses to use their influence to pressure workers into casting anti-independence votes. In addition there are “dirty tricks” such as moving polling places without notice (more than in the U.S.), as well as physical intimidation by soldiers (some of whom don’t speak a word of Spanish) and thugs. What’s more, the pro-independence community is muzzled by the threat of political imprisonment or killing. To top it all off, of course, is wide-

spread mishandling of ballots during the counting process.

The Republicans and the Democrats both say they want a fair, legitimate count of the votes in this year’s election.

So how about a free election for Puerto Rico, in accordance with established procedures on decolonization?

*Loren Meyer
Helena, Montana*

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.

Videotaped assault by S. African cops on immigrants sparks outrage

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—A video depicting in graphic detail an hour-long torture session of three black workers by six white cops from a police dog unit in Johannesburg has sparked outrage in South Africa.

The video shows the cops setting four attack dogs on the three men. The dogs repeatedly maul the men's arms, legs, and genitals as the cops, laughing and cheering, urge the animals on, calling their victims "kaffir," a virulent racist epithet, and landing their own blows. Appeals for mercy are met with more assaults. A cop tells the camera: "This is a training exercise."

The video, made in 1998, has apparently been circulating as police officer "entertainment" since that time. But someone recently made it available to the SABC television program "Special Assignment," which broadcast lengthy excerpts of the material on November 7.

While millions of workers here know from personal experience that police brutality is rampant, the graphic nature of the video provoked a widespread outcry from both blacks and whites and became the topic of discussion on the job nationwide.

SABC reported that 15,000 people called in following the screening to protest the police assault, and the letters columns of newspapers filled up with angry denunciations of the police. The *Citizen* newspaper headlined its front-page story "Live Bait" over a photo of a dog tearing into one of the men as a cop kicked him in the stomach. The *Sowetan* simply said "Racist Brutality." Many letter writers related their own experience with the cops.

Just prior to the broadcast, the show's producers showed the video to government and police officials, who ordered the arrest of the six cops, aged between 27 and 32. They are being charged with attempted murder and held pending a ruling on their bail application, set for November 22.

In an interview with SABC, one of the assaulted workers, Gilbert Ntimane, who was born in Mozambique and now works as a quarry laborer in South Africa, described how he and his brother, Alexander, were picked up in a Johannesburg suburb in January 1998 while looking for work.

"The police asked us for ID or a passport, but we didn't have any. They asked us for 300 rands (about \$40) but we didn't have it," Ntimane said they were forced into a minibus with a third man, Sylvester Khosa, and driven to an open field where the assault took place. Afterwards, they were taken to a hospital for superficial treatment before being locked up in jail, then deported to Mozambique.

Such stories are common among workers from other parts of the African continent who come here in search of work. In fact, many newspapers and news broadcasts persist in reporting that the three men as-

saulted by the cops were "illegal immigrants," as if their lack of papers justifies, just a little bit, the treatment they received.

Many black South Africans are stopped by police who say they are looking for "illegals"—especially if they are seen as dark-skinned—and brutalized by both black and white cops.

"We have insisted that the South African government should take drastic measures to deal with this sort of situation," said Mozambican labor minister Mario Sevens. "The South African government is receptive to our requests, but it seems that in some areas it is not in control."

According to the Independent Complaints Directorate, a quasi-government agency set up to monitor complaints against the cops, 681 people died in police custody or as a result of police action in South Africa between April 1999 and March of this year.

Vancouver food workers battle for contracts

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO
AND DERRICK O'KEEFE

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Striking and locked-out members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1518 at Superior Poultry and at Fletcher's Fine Foods are jointly conducting a leafleting campaign urging people to boycott these companies' products. UFCW members have distributed tens of thousands of flyers at supermarkets in the Greater Vancouver area and the nearby Fraser Valley region.

The two-sided leaflet explains the main issues in dispute: at Superior Poultry a strike for a first contract to establish decent wages and working conditions; and at Fletcher's a fight to stop the company's attempt to impose a 40 percent wage cut, as well as other major concessions.

The 225 UFCW members at Superior Poultry have been on strike since July 23, and are digging in for a long battle. The unionists have just completed construction of a new picket shelter, complete with a solid metal roof and wall.

The new fortifications highlight the workers' resistance to a company bent on breaking the union.

The entirely immigrant workforce voted overwhelmingly to join the UFCW in 1999. But Superior Poultry management—part of the Pollon Group, British Columbia's largest producer of poultry—refused to negotiate a first contract. On June 11, the unionists voted by a 98.5 percent margin to strike.

The British Columbia Supreme Court granted the company's request for an injunction October 10 prohibiting strikers from picketing within 10 feet of the main entrance gate into the plant. Furthermore, the injunction prohibits strikers from "following or

While changes have been made to the command structure since South Africa's first nonracial, democratic elections in 1994, the police force essentially remains the same entity that was set up to defend the racist apartheid state and the property relations built upon it. Most cops are black, though specialized units such as the one that assaulted the three men are mostly or all white.

"We are doing our utmost to rid the SA Police Service of these backward elements. I have made it abundantly clear that there is no place for racism and brutality," said Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete of the African National Congress. "These rogues are exceptions." He said the duties of dog units would be cut back and that their members would undergo psychological screening.

South African president Thabo Mbeki stated, "I think that, I hope anyway, that what [the video] did was show all South Africans

that when we raise the issue of persisting racism in this country, we are not playing politics. It is a matter of great importance and we have to address it. You can't leave it as a constitutional principle. To create a nonracist South Africa we must in detail deal with the matter." A cabinet statement said, "We wish to call on all the people in our country to report these incidents and assure them that these actions will be dealt with using the full might of the law."

A constant refrain in the press and among opposition parties is that the police are "underpaid" and face a "stressful" environment where crime is "rampant." The notion that the country is besieged by criminals finds expression in the pronouncements of government officials.

"We will tackle these scum the way a bulldog tackles a bone," Tshwete was reported to have told a gathering of cops last year.



Militant/John Steele

UFCW 1518 members at Fletcher's Fine Foods picket line, October 28.

chasing any motor vehicle picking up or transporting the plants' employees." Workers explained that the court's ruling also banned one of the strikers from the picket line. They added that the court rejected the company's demand for a limit of five people on the picket line at a time. The injunction resulted from company allegations of an incident involving the vans used to transport scabs into the plant.

Since the strike began, company security guards have been videotaping all vehicles in and out of the plant. Around 40 workers did not join the strike and continue to work.

Many workers question the fairness of the court's ruling. "They had no proof and they are just trying to weaken the strike, but they can't," said Givan, a UFCW picket captain. "They're charging us, because they want to break us," said Balvir Dhillion, a picket captain on another shift.

Wage parity at issue

Strikers explain that they are fighting for wage parity with unionized poultry plants in the region and for seniority rights and benefits. Workers at Superior Poultry start at the province's minimum wage of Can\$7.15 per hour (US\$4.60) and receive small raises at the company's discretion. Few make as much as \$10 an hour.

At Fletcher's, the company remains determined to cut the base rate from \$16.50 to \$10 an hour. "Could you support your family on \$10 an hour," reads a union banner facing Fraser Street—a route used by many

factory workers on their way to their jobs. Unionists on the picket line at Fletcher's are debating a proposal from UFCW officials that a certain number of the current workforce take a buyout allowing the company to bring in workers at \$10 an hour. Some workers are eager to leave Fletcher's and think the buyout is a good idea. Others understand that a permanent two-tier system would greatly weaken the union and oppose the company's proposal. But so far Fletcher's management has maintained its demand for across-the-board wage cuts.

"I don't like the buyout proposal. It's another way of getting the very low wages the company wants, of caving in," said Ian McLean, a Local 1518 shop steward at Fletcher's. "I don't want to see labor rates going down in the economy while prices keep going up," he continued. "What Fletcher's is demanding would be going back to what I was getting 20 years ago at today's prices."

Meanwhile, UFCW members at Fletcher's are discussing how to step up activity in their fight against concessions, including starting a Canada-wide boycott of Fletcher's products and seeking active support from the B.C. Federation of Labour at its upcoming convention in Vancouver, November 28 to December 1.

Beverly Bernardo is a locked-out member of UFCW Local 1518 at Fletcher's Fine Foods. Derrick O'Keefe is a member of the UFCW and the Young Socialists.

11 killed in Pretoria factory fire

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—Ten workers and one supervisor working the night shift at the ESS Chemicals factory in Lenasia, south of Johannesburg, were burned to death in the early morning hours of November 18.

The owner of the factory, Solly Lachporia, had locked the doors of the floor polish plant, sealing the graves of the 10 women workers and one male supervisor.

Press reports said gas bottles in the plant exploded and began burning a barrel of chemicals illegally stored on the shop floor.

Margaret Washington, who took the night off due to an injury, confirmed that

the boss regularly locked workers in to prevent "theft."

In a statement, the African National Congress said it regretted that there were employers who "lock their workers away as if they are vicious dogs which pose a threat to passers-by."

A Congress of South African Trade Unions statement said: "This tragic event serves as a warning against attempts to weaken the protection the labor laws now give to workers."

"It underlines the need, rather, to strengthen those laws and ensure they are rigorously implemented. In particular, as the law requires, every factory must establish a workers' health and safety committee."