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WHEN: Saturday, September 21
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Labor leaders get arrested

Siege declared in Bolivia

Associated Press
LA PAZ, Bolivia — The government declared a state of siege Thursday and arrested labor leaders who refused to end a 16-day-old general strike against a wage freeze intended to fight inflation of 14,000 percent. President Victor Paz Estenssoro's conservative government told tens of thousands of strikers they would be fired unless they returned to work, but many stayed home.

Riot police raided the Congress building, five union halls, a radio station, San Andres University and the state mining company offices in La Paz during the night, according to union activists who escaped.

The Interior Ministry said 150 labor activists, including the 18 executive committee members of the Bolivian Workers Central, the leftist national labor federation, were sent into internal exile.

Soldiers raided a textile factory in La Paz and fired on striking workers who had beaten up four policemen, witnesses said. They said two strikers were wounded by the police gunfire. The strike leaders had begun a hunger strike Tuesday against the government austerity program and were camped on blankets in union halls or workplaces.

Reporters later saw Juan Lechin, 72, the labor federation's founder and executive secretary, put into a car by policemen at the Interior Ministry and driven away.

A privately owned television station broadcast an interview later

with Edgardo Vasquez, who identified himself as clandestine leader of the labor federation and urged workers to continue the strike.

Paz Estenssoro declared a 90-day state of siege throughout the country, empowering police to hold people without charge for 48 hours or move them to internal exile in remote areas.

Paz Estenssoro's decree said the siege was required "to save Bolivia from the scourge of hyperinflation that has endangered its very existence."

"A political minority entrenched in union leadership posts, while promoting an illegal strike, is trying to subvert the authority of the state," it said.

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World Bank: Developing nations get hurt by protectionist sentiment

Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The economic plight of many developing countries eased somewhat last year, but a growing tide of protectionist sentiment threatens to reverse the small gains, the World Bank said Thursday.

"By the dismal standards of the early 1980s, 1984 was a good year for developing countries," said the bank. The World Bank said the threat

of protectionist measures in the United States and other industrial countries was a "major concern" since developing countries critically need export sales to pay off their debt burdens and promote further economic growth.

The bank's annual report said economic growth in developing countries averaged 3.8 percent last year, up substantially from the 2.1 percent growth rates in both 1982 and 1983. Many African nations, hit by drought and famine, suffered

further declines in economic activity last year while Latin American nations, seeking to cope with severe debt problems, enjoyed a major turnaround.

Growth in Latin American countries averaged 2.8 percent last year following two years of decline, although the report noted that this advance barely kept ahead of the increase in population.

"The United States has provided the main stimulus to the global recovery," the bank said.

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