

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

N.Y. mayor denies Black youth a permit to march in Harlem

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## 34,000 workers walk out at US West

BY BECKY ELLIS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Thirty-five thousand members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) went on strike at midnight August 15 against US West, which provides phone service to 25 million customers in 14 western states from Washington to Iowa. The last strike for these union locals was in 1983, when the company was still part of AT&T. The main issues in the strike are mandatory overtime and a so-called pay-per-performance plan. Strikers are determined to fight these proposals after facing tremendous speedup and mandatory overtime during the past two years.

Thousands of workers have been forced to work 60 hours or more a week over the past couple of years. The company's proposal is to have unlimited forced overtime this year and a limit next year of 65 hours per week. The company wants to slash premium pay for overtime after eight hours so that workers could be forced to work 12 or 14 hours a day at straight time. It also proposes to remove double-time for work over 49 hours in the week.

In the past five years, US West has reduced the number of union jobs by 12.5 percent while the number of phone lines serviced has risen by 20 percent. This "downsizing" has caused widely reported

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## Socialist Workers candidates file to get on N.Y. ballot

BY DON MACKLE

ALBANY, New York — Socialist Workers candidates and their supporters filed petitions with the New York State Board of Elections August 18 containing the signatures of 23,677 New York state residents supporting the right of the Socialist Workers 1998 candidates to appear on the ballot in the November elections. New York is among the 15 states, as well as the District of Columbia, where Socialist Workers candidates are running in the elections. (See coverage on other campaigns on page 3.)

"Those who worked to get us on the ballot did so because we are campaigning to win support for the growing resistance by working people to the unrelenting assaults on our standard of living and stepped-up attacks on our democratic rights by the capitalist class and their government," said Al Duncan, the Socialist Workers Campaign candidate for governor of New York, at a press conference prior to filing the petitions. The signatures filed represented more than one and a half times the 15,000 signatures required by undemocratic state election laws.

The petitions have been submitted to secure ballot status for Duncan, a rail worker at Conrail and member of the United Trans-

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# Protest U.S. bombings of Sudan, Afghanistan!

## Washington is world's number one terrorist

Visible public protests — picket lines, demonstrations, speakouts — are needed now to condemn Washington's brutal, imperial acts of war against Sudan and Afghanistan and demand the bombings stop right away. Class-conscious workers need to explain that it's the U.S. government that's the number-one terrorist in the world.

The U.S. bombing of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, and of Afghanistan was not an

## EDITORIAL

act of "self-defense" as U.S. officials claim. It was a calculated act of imperial aggression. The Sudanese interior minister, Abdul Rahim protested, "This is an attack on our land, our sovereignty."

If they get away with it, the U.S. rulers will launch further attacks on sovereign nations. They will attempt more kidnappings and arbitrary arrests of individuals around the world. They will seek to widen police spying, harassment, and the flouting of the

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U.S. war planes — like those above, which were en route to violate Iraqi air space in January of this year — were used for brutal, imperial assault by Washington on an industrial area in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, and at a site in Afghanistan, shown on map at right, on August 20.



## U.S. planes bomb industrial area in Sudan, Afghanistan

BY NAOMI CRAINE AND MEGAN ARNEY

President William Clinton ordered U.S. warplanes to launch simultaneous assaults August 20 on an industrial area in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and in an area of Afghanistan near the Pakistani border. U.S. officials said the air strikes were in retaliation for the August 7 bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. U.S. defense secretary William Cohen also asserted that Washington had "compelling evidence" that further attacks were planned against U.S. government targets, and that the bombardment was aimed at disrupting those plans.

Speaking to the press soon after the assaults on Afghanistan and Sudan began, Cohen and Gen. Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, refused to say what kind of weaponry was used, whether there was any resistance, and what casualties there might be as a result. They claimed that the targets were "terrorist facilities" belonging to Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian who is reportedly living in Afghanistan.

The target in Khartoum was a factory in an industrial zone, though Cohen acknowledged it is surrounded by "other areas" of the city of 1 million people. Cohen alleged that the plant "could be producing precur-

sor chemicals, which can be used to produce VX" nerve gas.

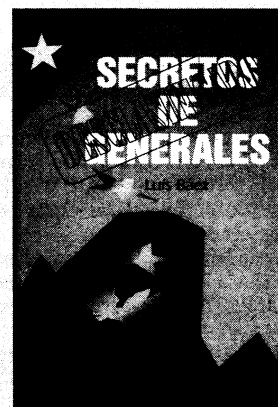
Interviewed by CNN just an hour after the air strikes began, Sudanese interior minister Abdul Rahim declared, "It's a factory for medical drugs. It has nothing to do with chemical weapons. We have no chemical weapons plants in our country." Calling the assault "an attack on our land and our sovereignty," Rahim said. Sudanese officials were "still assessing the damage. There were three or four attacks by two U.S. aircraft. We don't know if it's still going on."

U.S. officials claim the six sites struck in Afghanistan were part of a "terrorist train-

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## Secretos de generales (SECRETS OF GENERALS)



By Luis Báez

In this collection of 41 interviews, top officers of Cuba's armed forces tell how they joined the revolutionary movement to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the 1950s. They discuss their experiences around the world spanning several decades as they fought alongside national liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This "is not a textbook on the past but living history," explains Revolutionary Armed Forces Minister Raúl Castro in the preface, a "treasure of moral values and accumulated combat experience."

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## Maintenance workers strike Conrail

BY AMY HUSK

NEW YORK — At 6:00 a.m. August 14, members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) struck the Consolidated Rail Corp. (Conrail). The system-wide strike was called by top BMWE officials after Conrail broke an agreement with the union and contracted with a nonunion outfit to construct track in Marysville, Ohio. The BMWE represents about 3,400 track maintenance workers throughout Conrail. They are responsible for laying and maintaining tracks, railroad bridges, and buildings.

Most of the 16,000 other union workers refused to cross the BMWE picket lines, including thousands of conductors, brakemen, and yardmasters who are members of the United Transportation Union (UTU); engineers who are in the Brotherhood of

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UN committee backs Puerto Rico's independence — pages 8-9

### Russia: economic crisis deepens

Moscow let the pegs holding up its frail economy fall August 17, and sent the ruble plummeting 34 percent. Less than a month after the International Monetary Fund approved a \$22.6 billion loan package to the Russian government, capitalist investors are openly discussing the likelihood that Moscow will default. That government is now planning to impose a 90-day moratorium on foreign debt payments. One of the purposes of the "bailout" was to pay some of the back wages owed to workers at state enterprises across the country. This back pay totals about 27 percent of Russia's Gross Domestic Product. Miners have just ended roadblocks and strikes throughout Russia, after forcing the government to pay 50 percent of the wages owed them.

The IMF loan was supposedly contingent on the government imposing major austerity measures, but it's not clear President Boris Yeltsin will be able to implement them. Russia's stock market plunged in the second week of August. Trading was briefly suspended August 13, and the U.S. credit rating agencies Moody's and Standard & Poor's downgraded Russia's credit rating to below "junk" status. With the latest dive, Russia's stock market has lost 75 percent of its value since the beginning of the year.

### NATO launches military exercises against Kosova

Some 75 war planes and helicopters, as well as 1,700 troops from 14 countries, began NATO-led military exercises in Albania August 17, aimed at demonstrating Washington's willingness to launch air strikes inside Kosova. The military maneuvers, organized and led primarily by U.S. forces, are to continue until August 22.

The Serbian regime has stepped up their war on the Albanians in Kosova, who make up 90 percent of the population, aiming to crush their struggle for independence. Washington and other imperialist governments are using the Serbian regime's massive assaults as a pretext for military intervention in the Yugoslav and Albanian workers states. "NATO has a wide range of contingencies and options ranging from peace support to combat operations," said U.S. Adm. Joseph



Protest in Washington, D.C., August 8 demanding Hawaiian independence.

Lopez, NATO commander of the Allied Forces-South.

More than 500 people have reportedly died and nearly 230,000 have been displaced in Kosova over the last five months.

### Mexican peso, stocks tumble

As Mexico's stock market dropped for the ninth day August 12, the country's currency, the peso, skidded to a record low, closing at 9.23 to the U.S. dollar. "The only thing you can say is we're very vulnerable," said Sergio Garcia, head of analysis at Value brokerage firm in Mexico City. The deepening economic crisis in Russia has exacerbated the jitters among capitalist investors. "When it's not Russia, it's Indonesia. When it's not Indonesia, it's Japan. And when everything is going right, the Dow Jones (industrial average) falls."

### Floods devastate China

Thousands of people have died and hundreds of millions of dollars in crops and land are threatened in China's worst flooding since 1931. Torrential rains have soaked central and southern China, forcing the evacuation of 13.8 million people from their

homes and farms so far. Millions of acres of farmland may need to be intentionally flooded to prevent major cities from being washed out. The floods affected more than 240 million people, or nearly one-fifth of the country's population. In the oil field of Daqing, which produces 50 million tons of crude oil annually — more than one-third of China's total output — 3,000 oil workers and tens of thousands of others placed over 2 million sand bags to try to block the water.

### Venezuela: Natives block capitalist expansion in rain forest

Since the beginning of August some 400 Pemon tribespeople near the Inatata rain forest have been blocking traffic on the only highway linking Venezuela and Brazil, effectively halting the construction of a 485-mile power line for mining companies. The powerline construction, which will also destroy the rain forest there, would supply electricity to the gold mining companies who want to exploit the mineral-rich area. In response to the Pemon protest, the government sent in the National Guard with two tanks August 12, who destroyed 20 tents that the Pemons were sleeping in. The Pemon held strong and by the end of the day a deal was struck that all vehicles could pass through the highway, except those involved with the electricity line.

### Afghanistan: Taliban advances

In a month-long offensive the reactionary Taliban in Afghanistan, which had controlled three-quarters of the country, has moved to conquer the rest of that Far East nation. In mid-August, Taliban forces captured 14 cities and towns from an alliance of bourgeois opposition forces in the north. Afghanistan borders Pakistan, Iran, and the southern flank of the former Soviet states of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Only the governments of Saudi Arabia, the

United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan recognize the Taliban regime. The Taliban is based on remnants of the feudal powers that ruled Afghanistan until 1973. It took power in 1996, following a four-year civil war among rightist forces that had been backed by Washington for two decades in their war against a Moscow-backed government.

### Workers at U.S. military base in Turkey strike for wages

Some 1,400 workers from Turkey have been on strike since July 23 at the U.S. Incirlik Air Base. The work stoppage has closed the commissary, gas station, dining halls, and other facilities at the air base, which houses 5,300 military personnel and their families, the Associated Press reported. Services at bases in Ankara and Izmir have also been disrupted. Strikers are demanding that wages be raised every three months in line with inflation, which stands at approximately 70 percent a year. They also demand improved benefits and compensation for earlier pay cuts. Strikers have rejected the latest offer by the U.S. government, proposed in early August. Incirlik is the base hub for U.S. and British spy flights over the "no-fly zone" in northern Iraq.

### 200 in Washington, D.C., demand Hawaiian independence

Marking the 100th anniversary of the U.S. government's annexation of their islands some 200 people demonstrated in Washington, D.C. August 8, demanding independence for Hawaii. The march comes five years after U.S. president William Clinton was forced to sign a Senate resolution acknowledging the U.S. government's involvement in the 1893 overthrow of the independent Hawaiian government. Protesters pointed out that the resolution does not settle claims against the United States, and pledged to intensify pressure on Washington to return land once owned by native Hawaiians. They added that there is growing support for sovereignty among Hawaiians. Butch Kekahu, organizer of the march, said the Hawaiian people "have already gotten an apology, so now we want to move on to...independence."

### Hitching post for prisoners is 'unconstitutionally cruel'

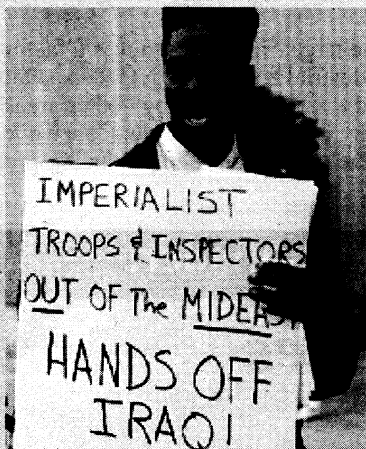
A Federal judge ruled August 12 that Alabama's practice of shackling prisoners to a hitching post was unconstitutionally cruel, and suspended the punishment pending a review. The judge, however, did not ban the practice completely and ordered the Alabama Corrections Department to look into whether they could use them "constitutionally." Inmates have challenged the hitching posts as part of a broader lawsuit against the state's 1995 revival of chain gangs. That issue was supposedly settled when the state said it would stop using shackles on inmates who work outside.

— MEGAN ARNEY

## THE MILITANT

### U.S. hands off Iraq!

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## The Militant

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# Socialist Workers get on the ballot

Continued from front page

portation Union (UTU); Ruth Robinett, a member of the UTU at Amtrak, for lieutenant governor; and Rose Ana Berbeo, an airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists, for U.S. Senate. In addition the campaign is running garment worker Wendy Lyons for state attorney general and Ryan Kelly, a leader of the Young Socialists, for comptroller.

Duncan pointed to the campaign's support to recent strikes and protest actions by workers at General Motors, Bell Atlantic, Conrail, and Harlem Hospital, as well as construction workers, New York City taxi drivers, "and countless others who decided to fight to press their demands for jobs and better wages and working conditions. These workers point the way forward for all working people" said Duncan, pledging to continue building solidarity with these fights.

"We are calling on all those who support civil liberties and democratic rights to join us in demanding that the New York City government immediately grant the Million Youth March organizers a permit to peacefully assemble, march, and rally in Harlem on September 5," Duncan added.

Duncan thanked the many volunteers who turned out over the last 12 days to help carry through the petition drive successfully. The campaign issued an appeal August 5 when only 8,600 signatures had been collected. In response, more than 75 campaign supporters turned out the following Sunday to hit the streets across the state collecting signatures. By the day's end more than 4,000 signatures were collected.

For the entire next week students on school break, workers on temporary layoff, volunteers giving up their day off work, and other volunteers went out petitioning full-time. Many others went out at night as they got off work. On average they collected over 800 signatures a day.

Petitioning teams went to Buffalo, Syracuse, Long Island, and all of New York City's five boroughs. They petitioned outside Bell Atlantic worksites among members of the Communication Workers of America as they prepared for their strike. A number of petitioning teams across the city ran into CWA workers who eagerly signed and informed the campaign of upcoming protest actions by the union.



BY GREG McCARTAN

BOSTON — Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers candidate for U. S. Congress in the 8th Congressional District, was certified by the Secretary of State's office here August 14 for the November general election bal-

lot. Morell filed 4,578 signatures on nominating papers urging that she be awarded a ballot spot. The Secretary of State concurred with Local Boards of Election in the district who certified 2,121 of the signatures as valid. This puts the socialist candidate over the requirement of 2,000 registered voters signatures to be on the ballot.

Morell also presented petitions with some 775 additional names of workers and youth who are not registered to vote in the 8th CD but who want to see the Socialist Workers nominee on the ballot. Ted Leonard, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, is the party's candidate for governor.

After submitting the signatures, Morell joined picket lines of fellow rail workers at Conrail's Beacon Park yard who struck for one day in protest of a company plan to outsource work to a nonunion outfit.

Morell is a longtime activist in the fight for women's rights and participated in recent demonstrations in support of ending U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico, calling for independence for the island nation.

In a statement issued when turning in the signatures needed to place her name on the ballot, Morell said, "This victory for democratic rights assures that there will be a working-class political alternative put forward in answer to the growing economic and social crisis whose true character and dimension become clearer each day. From the worldwide ramifications of recession in Japan to the renewed U.S. war moves in the Balkans and against Iraq, there is no stability within the framework of the capitalist system.

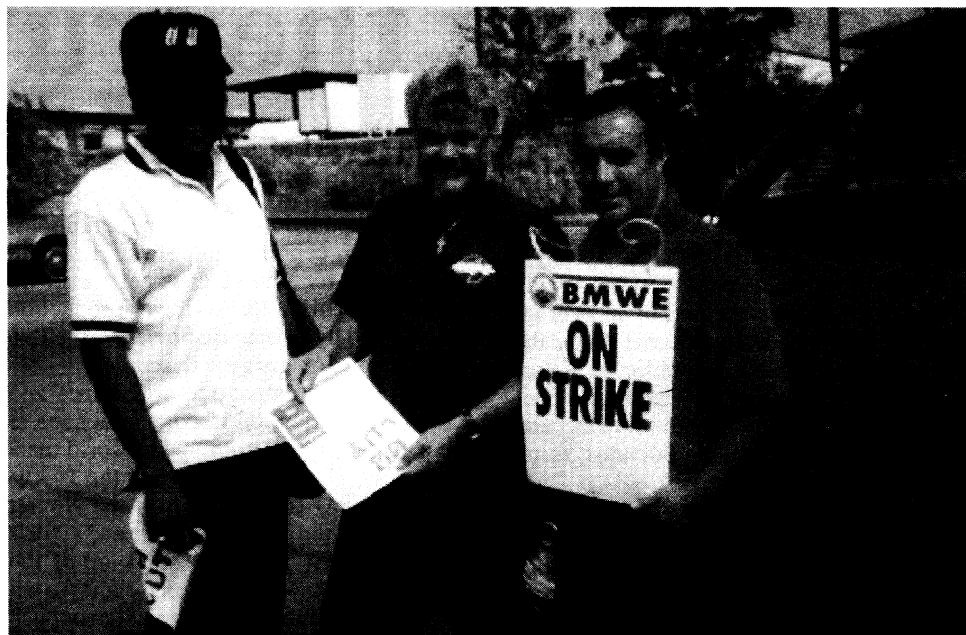
"Working people and youth who want a meaningful future should not look in the direction of my numerous Democratic Party opponents or any other capitalist politician. Instead we should look to ourselves — to our unions and our collective strength as a class.... We should be about building an independent working-class party, based on a fighting trade union movement, that can fight for a government of workers and farmers, the majority. That would be truly a democratic society."

The 8th Congressional District comprises many working-class communities in Boston and surrounding cities, as well as a large section of the Black community. There are 10 liberal Democrats vying for the seat vacated by Joseph Kennedy, Jr.



BY DAVE WELTERS

At a press conference in Harrisburg July 29 the Pennsylvania Socialist Workers Campaign announced its slate for the 1998 elections. Cecelia Moriarity, a steelworker and



Militant/Amy Husk

Al Duncan, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York, far left, campaigns among co-workers on strike at Conrail.

former coal miner, heads up the slate as the candidate for governor. The slate also includes Jason Coughlin, a member of the United Auto Workers, for Lt. Governor and John Staggs, a member of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers, for U.S. Senate. Coughlin, 27, is also a member of the Young Socialists.

Socialist Workers candidates Dorothy Kolis, a steelworker from Pittsburgh, and Nancy Cole, an airline worker from Philadelphia, will be on the ballot for Congress. Kolis who is running in the 14th Congressional District submitted almost 3,500 sig-

natures towards the 2,400 required. Cole, who is running in the 1st CD submitted over 1,600 toward the 1,000 required.



The Socialist Workers campaign in Washington, D.C., is appealing to supporters to help in the final days of petitioning to get Sam Manuel for mayor and Mary Martin for delegate to the House of Representatives on the ballot. The petitioning effort goes through Sunday, August 23. Anyone who would like to volunteer can contact the campaign office at (202) 387-2185.

## 280 readers renew 'Militant' subs

Supporters of the socialist press have just finished a six-week campaign to expand the long-term readership of the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* by systematically asking subscribers to renew. Supporters went slightly over the international goal of selling 275 renewal subscriptions to the *Militant*. Fifty-two *Perspectiva Mundial* subscribers also signed up for another six months or more, 60 percent of the goal socialists had adopted.

More than a quarter of the subscriptions were sold by socialists in the industrial trade unions to their co-workers.

Socialist workers who are members of the United Auto Workers have sold 17 renewals of the *Militant* nationally. Eleven of those were sold on the job by a worker at the Ford truck plant in Edison, New Jersey.

Two other co-workers renewed their subscriptions for *Perspectiva Mundial*. Four auto workers who renewed their subs did so as supporters of the 1998 Socialist Workers Campaign in New Jersey collected signatures outside the plant to put the candidates on the ballot. Four others became long-time readers of the socialist press after discussing the racist leafletting of a Black community in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and the Socialist Workers Campaign protest statement.

Susan Anmuth  
Newark, New Jersey

TALLADEGA, Alabama — Socialist Workers 1998 Campaign supporters and Young Socialists brought a small contingent of unionists and young people from Birmingham to participate in the anti-cop brutality demonstration here August 15, including co-workers from three plants.

Supporters of the *Militant* sold 23 copies of the socialist news-weekly, one introductory subscription, and distributed several hundred leaflets for the August 21 Militant Labor Forum at the Birmingham Pathfinder bookstore entitled, "Stop Racist Attacks! Stop Police Brutality!" Several demonstrators helped to distribute forum leaflets.

Jamila Williams  
Birmingham, Alabama

SYDNEY, Australia — The results of our renewal campaign are 7 *Militant* renewals and 1 *Perspectiva Mundial* renewal. One *Militant* renewal was for a year to a coal miner who works at a Hunter Valley colliery. We met the coal miner on the picket lines during the fight by the Maritime Union of Australia to keep their union on the docks here.

Additionally, two young workers who are brothers have extended their *Militant* subscription for six months.

Ron Poulsen  
Sydney, Australia

### RENEWAL DRIVE JULY 8 – AUGUST 18

	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
<b>Australia</b>	3	7	233%	1	1
<b>Iceland</b>	3	5	167%		
<b>Canada</b>					
Toronto	9	17	189%	1	2
Vancouver	12	14	117%	1	1
Montreal	4	3	75%	3	2
<b>Canada Total</b>	25	34	136%	5	5
<b>United States</b>					
Philadelphia	8	10	125%	1	0
Los Angeles	20	24	120%	8	8
Miami	10	12	120%	5	5
Atlanta	7	8	114%	3	3
Boston	14	16	114%	3	1
Birmingham, AL	10	11	110%	2	0
Washington, D.C.*	15	16	107%	3	2
Des Moines	8	8	100%	4	4
Newark, NJ	20	20	100%	8	5
Cleveland	8	7	88%	2	0
New York	30	26	87%	15	9
Detroit	10	8	80%	2	0
Houston	8	6	75%	2	1
Chicago	14	10	71%	6	2
San Francisco	17	12	71%	7	2
Pittsburgh	10	7	70%	1	0
Twin Cities, MN	13	6	46%	2	0
Seattle	13	4	31%	3	2
<b>U.S. Total</b>	235	211	90%	77	44
<b>Sweden</b>	4	3	75%	1	1
<b>United Kingdom</b>					
London	10	5	50%	2	1
Manchester	3	0	0%	0	0
<b>UK Total</b>	13	5	38%	2	1
<b>New Zealand</b>					
Christchurch	6	2	33%		
Auckland	6	2	33%		
<b>N.Z. Total</b>	12	4	33%	0	0
<b>Other</b>		12			
<b>International totals</b>	295	281	102%	86	52
<b>Goal/Should be at</b>	275	275	100%	85	85
*Raised goal					

## Volunteers still needed



Militant/Megan Arney

Since August 8, volunteers have entered nearly half of the subscription list for the *Militant* and the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* into a new, more professional computer program. More help is needed to finish the project by the end of August. To help, contact the *Militant* at the address on page 2.

# Learning the truth about Korea

## How working people in north Korea confront food shortages, U.S. sanctions

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND SAMANTHA KERN

PYONGYANG, Korea — Between July 18 and July 25 we were part of an international fact-finding delegation that visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It was initiated by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and hosted by the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League.

The purpose was to get the facts about the Korean people's struggle to reunify their country and the ongoing campaign by Washington and Tokyo to deny Korea the right to national sovereignty. The delegation's goal

### REPORTERS' NOTEBOOK

was to find out and spread the truth about Korea around the world, broadening support for the demand to get the Yankee troops out and for peaceful unification of the country.

Korea's division was instigated by Washington as it emerged victorious over its imperialist rival in Tokyo at the end of World War II. It has been maintained by force through the presence of some 40,000 U.S. troops equipped with nuclear weapons in south Korea and the seventh fleet of the U.S. Navy constantly near Korea's coast. It remains the most important, explosive, unresolved national division in the world today.

The delegation also had a chance to find out firsthand how the people and government in the DPRK have confronted food shortages and other hardships. These are due mostly to a string of natural disasters in the last four years, the effects of worsening depression conditions in the surrounding capitalist countries, and relentless economic and other sanctions by Washington.

The 13-member delegation adopted as its banner "Tear down the wall!" A major part of the trip was visiting the so-called Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which cuts across the middle of the country along the 38th parallel, and the 150-mile-long concrete wall that divides the Korean peninsula from sea to sea. This heavily fortified structure was built by the south Korean regime, with the aid of its U.S. protectors, on the south side of the DMZ. As a number of Koreans put it, "The wall is an inhuman physical barrier to reunification."

The visit was organized by WFDY as part of activities during the period from June 25 to July 27, designated by the youth federation as the month of international solidarity with Korea. June 25 marks the anniversary of the opening of the 1950-53 Korean War, and July 27 is the date of the signing of an armistice agreement between the DPRK and Washington. U.S. troops first invaded Korea under the cover of the blue flag of the United Nations barely three weeks after Korean patriots won independence from Japan on Aug. 15, 1945, and proclaimed a People's Republic in Seoul that called for land reform, nationalization of the country's patrimony, and broad democratic rights.

In an article published in the August 24 *Militant*, titled "Tear down the wall dividing Korea," we reported extensively on the aspects of the trip related to Korea's colonial subjugation by Japanese imperialism between 1910 and 1945, the anticolonial movement, the overturn of capitalism in the northern part of the country, the Korean War, and the tenacious resistance by the Korean people to U.S. imperialism for the last half century. This compilation of reporters' notes describes several other observations from the visit.

The DPRK has been affected by the capitalist depression conditions spreading in southeast Asia, especially the crisis in Japan. U.S. companies are using this crisis to buy up, at bargain prices, companies and parts of the national patrimony of semicolonial countries in the region.

Since 1994, a series of floods and coastal tidal waves have destroyed much of the country's agricultural production and caused severe food shortages. On top of that, an energy shortage has adversely affected in-

dustrial production and living conditions. Last winter, central heating was cut off in Pyongyang for several days per week, we were told. This is due to lower production of coal and hydroelectric power — the two main sources of energy in the country — because of flood damage to coal mines and dams. In addition, oil imports now have to be paid for in hard currency at world market prices. Until the opening of the 1990s, most oil was imported from the Soviet Union, often through barter trade and at preferential prices. After the break-up of the USSR, such trade relations came to an abrupt end, diminishing available supplies of fuel for transportation and other needs. Most of the oil today is imported from China. But even Beijing has reportedly slowed down some oil shipments on credit because of Pyongyang's difficulties in meet-



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

ing payment schedules.

Washington's economic sanctions, which make getting loans from foreign banks very difficult, and the U.S. government's campaign to isolate the DPRK and brand it as a "terrorist" and "totalitarian" state, add to the economic squeeze.

Many basic necessities — including cooking oil, soap, and canned foods — are in short supply and are imported in limited quantities, mainly from China and Japan. These are available at hotel and other stores that sell only in hard currency or in the "convertible" won, a version of the DPRK's currency that can be exchanged for foreign currency but is valid only inside the country. This situation has increased social inequalities, in a country where the gap is small between the lowest wages for workers and the monthly pay of professionals and others with higher income. Doctors and engineers receive about twice the average monthly wage for workers of 250 won. Free education through the university level and health care as a right for all provide a social wage for the entire population that has also diminished inequalities.

Today only narrow social layers, such as company administrators and managers, have access to hard currency and to goods available at the foreign currency stores. Those who get remittances from relatives abroad also have an easier time.

On the way to the DMZ and during visits to the Myonhyang mountain resort area and to a farm on the outskirts of Pyongyang, we had a chance to see parts of the countryside and talk to a number of people, including a few farmers, about the food situation.

The areas we saw northwest and south of Pyongyang have not been affected much by the floods of the last years. The rice, corn, and soybean fields were in good shape, overwhelmingly free of weeds and with healthy-looking crops. Everyone told us the most damage from the natural disasters, including huge tidal waves last year, is on the western coast and in the northern part of the country. In those areas, flood waters dumped sand and stones from riverbanks on agricultural land. This will take years to clean up, given shortages of fuel and spare parts for machinery. Near the coastal areas, the tidal waves flooded rice paddies and wheat fields with salt water, destroying crops.

According to the figures we were able to



Militant/Samantha Kern

Cho Il Sun, manager of cooperative farm on outskirts of Pyongyang, shows visitors rice paddies July 23 (above). "This year we expect a rise in production," Cho said, over the 3 million tons of grains produced in 1997, which was half the level at the beginning of the 1990s. Food shortages, caused mainly by a string of natural disasters, have eased this year. Using organic fertilizers and herbicides produced on the cooperative, farmers are trying to boost productivity, said Ryong Chun U, who works there. He is shown on left with his wife, Kim Pok Suk, inside their apartment.

collect, last year's grain production was between 2.5 and 3 million tons — down from about 6 million tons per year in the early 1990s. At that time the DPRK also imported another 3-4 million tons of grains from the Soviet Union at favorable prices.

"This year we expect a substantial improvement in production," said Cho Il Sun, manager of the Chil Gol cooperative farm in a Pyongyang suburb, during an interview there July 23. This was a common view among many Koreans, but no one was willing to make concrete projections until the rainy season of July-August was over. That's when most floods have occurred. The weather has remained fairly mild so far.

Most people told us the food shortages have eased, but remain severe. However, the claims in the big-business press in the United States and other imperialist countries that the DPRK faces famine and starvation conditions are not true. Observations from our visit and accounts, not only by Koreans but others who have visited much of the country, confirmed that. "The U.S. claims of starvation have nothing to do with reality," said Nirsia Castro Guevara, political consul at the Cuban embassy in Pyongyang, who has traveled throughout the countryside. "They are part of the propaganda by the U.S. government to use food as a weapon to isolate and pressure the DPRK into submission. There are hardships, but not a famine."

The diet of many people has been reduced to the minimum of the traditional staples of rice and soup with greens — which is what most people we saw collect in the fields, not regular grass as the capitalist media claim. Shipments of rice and other grains mostly from China, much in the form of humanitarian aid, have supplemented the lack from domestic production.

Two leaders of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League told us that soybeans, soy milk, and certain varieties of grass are being widely used as food substitutes in coping with the shortages. Soy products are a traditional part of the diet. At the farm we visited, for example, we were offered "ice cake" — that is ice cream made from soy milk — that has been produced for decades. The use of grass is fairly new.

To make up for the lack of milk and meat, the government has encouraged people to raise goats, herds of which can now be seen everywhere in the countryside as well as in parks and elsewhere in Pyongyang and other cities. Goats can feed on wild grass, unlike cattle, which need animal fodder and are

mostly used as draft animals today.

In addition, the number of families raising chickens, rabbits, and pigs in city apartment balconies, terraces, and yards has expanded tremendously, we were told. Authorities have stopped enforcing laws against raising pigs inside city dwellings. On the outskirts of Pyongyang we saw one apartment where a family of four was raising a hog in a little second-floor balcony, for example. Raising of animals in and around apartments in the cities is not new. Nearly half of the DPRK's population of 24 million is rural, and much of the immigration to the cities has been in the last few decades, so many workers have recent ties to the land and are accustomed to habits of peasant life. The food shortages, however, have propelled such practices.

Land cultivation has also slightly increased, mainly on the bottom of hills and mountains. Cultivation of virtually every possible parcel of fertile land, including gardens between city apartment buildings and riverbanks, has always been government policy, though, as north Korea is very mountainous.

Two of the main measures the government has implemented to boost food production are allowing deregulated prices at farmers markets and reorganizing cooperative farms to give individual farm families incentives to produce more. All of the country's agriculture is organized in cooperative or state farms. The land is nationalized and cannot be bought or sold on the market. In the last three years much of the land on cooperative farms has been apportioned to individual families, or groups of families, and their income is tied to the level of production. No figures were available on the extent of this reorganization, but we were told that is rapidly becoming widespread throughout the countryside. After fulfilling the agreed-upon quota with the state, farmers can sell produce at farmers markets where prices are determined by supply and demand, though the government imposes a cap on prices.

Shortages of food had created social tensions and the beginnings of a black market, we were told. These measures have alleviated some of these tensions and decreased hoarding of food.

Raising productivity is part of the effort to end the shortages. Ryong Chun U, who along with his wife Kim Pok Suk has grown rice and vegetables at the Chil Gol collective farm for 20 years, said, "Our goal is to increase productivity from about six tons of rice per chongbo last year to eight this year, which was the 1993 level" (1 chongbo = 2.4 acres). Using manure and other organic fertilizers and weed killers developed at the farm is part of this effort. "The natural disasters also affected industry and we've

Continued on next page



# Auto workers, cops face off in south Korea

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The Korean Metal Workers' Union in south Korea warned on August 13 it would call a full-scale strike if south Korean police staged a raid on workers of the Hyundai Motor Co. who have been striking for several weeks in the southern city of Ulsan. Up to 5,000 workers and their families have set up tents and have been occupying five Hyundai auto assembly plants in Ulsan since July 20 to protest layoffs.

Tens of thousands of union members have staged rallies outside the factories to support the workers who have taken them over. About 2,600 cops have ringed the plants and on August 13 thousands of additional riot police assembled around them, threatening a raid to oust the workers. Police forces had

grown to 15,000 cops five days later, with water cannon and tear gas.

An earlier attempt by company managers to restart production in one of these five factories that produces the popular Atoz compact car was aborted quickly, as workers "threatened to kill" the managers, according to a company spokesman.

Officials of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, representing 600,000 workers at Hyundai and other heavy industries, stated August 18 they would "immediately launch continued nationwide demonstrations in a comprehensive anti-government



Thousands of unionists rally outside Hyundai plant in Ulsan, south Korea, as cops threaten to raid.

struggle" if Seoul ordered a police assault.

Unionists at Hyundai went on strike in late May after the company announced it would lay off 4,800 workers, 18 percent of its workforce, because of a 50 percent drop in domestic car sales.

Workers are demanding the company reduce the workweek and retain all employees instead. Hyundai negotiators broke off talks August 12 as the union held steadfast

by this demand.

The confrontation is indicative of the sharpening class polarization in south Korea, as depression conditions there have worsened steadily since the steep devaluation of the country's currency last December. Unemployment, now at 7 percent, rose at an average of 2,000 people per day in the first half of the year. It has recently accelerated to nearly 8,000 people laid off per day.

## Reporters' notebook from visit to north Korea

Continued from previous page

lacked chemical fertilizers and pesticides."

Ryong said the farm uses 41 tractors and 16 trucks — which are owned by state machine pools that loan them indefinitely to the cooperatives — and grows rice, corn, soybeans, vegetables, and a variety of fruits. But much of the labor is manual. About 1,500 people live on the farm, in small but comfortable apartments in three-story buildings, and cultivate its 415 chongbos (nearly 1,000 acres). Two-thirds of them are farmers. We were told that this was a typical farm in terms of land and labor force.

Manual labor is also extensively used in construction. We saw thousands of Korean People's Army soldiers building highways by transporting rocks from river banks and dirt with carriers fastened to their backs.

It's impossible to spend time in north Korea and not be struck by how much has been built from scratch in less than half a century. Highways, irrigation in the rural areas, dams, and a modern subway system with two lines in Pyongyang are a few examples. This is impressive considering the country's previous underdevelopment under Japanese rule and the massive bombing of northern Korea by U.S. forces during the 1950-53 war. The bombardment left the capital and most cities flattened, destroyed five of the country's 20 dams, and leveled most industry and infrastructure in the countryside, including village huts. The majority of housing in Pyongyang and other cities and villages was built in the first decade after 1953.

The most impressive achievement of Korea's farmers since 1953 is the construction of a vast system of irrigation canals, ditches, ponds, and reservoirs. This has made possible the production of rice and other crops in areas that were previously

uncultivable. It also resulted in a significant increase in output per acre on lands that were already under cultivation.

Much of this system was undoubtedly dug by hand, and from our observation there's no question that it is maintained by manual labor. We saw a number of farmers in the fields with shovels repairing ditches and digging out canals clogged with mud.

We were repeatedly told that transplanting rice seedlings, traditionally the most arduous agricultural job, is now virtually all mechanized. Since this process takes place in late April and May, we were not able to see the rice planting machines used or to verify the level of mechanization.

In addition to the vast irrigation network, the government has taken steps to increase the water available for agriculture and to reclaim land for production. One such project is the West Sea Barrage. Built along the mouth of Taedong River, which drains into the West Sea, it stores billions of cubic yards of water to irrigate about 250,000 acres of reclaimed soil. The barrage maintains the river level higher than the sea level and prevents the tides from bringing salt water up the stream. This is no small question for a country where arable land is scarce.

The barrage also supplies drinking water to several major towns and villages. A railway, motorway, and sidewalks on top of it make travel in the region qualitatively easier. The barrage is a huge structure, consisting of three locks and 36 sluices. The locks open to enable large ships to sail up the river. Construction of the barrage was started in 1981 and was completed in five years by the Korean People's Army.

The West Sea barrage is a concrete illustration of the desire of the people of the DPRK for peaceful reunification of Korea. It's hard to imagine dedicating the human and material resources that it took to build

this extremely vulnerable structure, and other large public works, only to start another war — a claim often promoted by the U.S. government — which would result in their destruction. No antiaircraft weapons or other defensive military equipment is installed on the barrage. There's plenty of evidence, though, that the drive toward confrontation and war comes from Washington and its client regime in south Korea.

The only country in the world today that the U.S. government is formally at war with is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Washington and Seoul refused to sign a peace treaty coming out of the war the imperialists launched in 1950. There's only a cease-fire and a dividing line that's constantly used by U.S. imperialism to instigate provocations.

The most recent are joint military exercises between U.S. and south Korean troops that began August 17, coined RIMPAC. About 13,000 U.S. soldiers, some of them based outside Korea, and 57,000 south Korean troops are involved in the two-week-long war games, the first this year. The exercises include simulations of war conditions, including chemical weapons attacks.

The same day the war games began, the *New York Times* and other big-business dailies gave front-page coverage to U.S. government allegations that its spy agencies have "discovered" an underground site in north Korea where Pyongyang is supposedly building a nuclear bomb plant.

The report may lead to scuttling a 1994 agreement under which the Clinton administration is to provide \$35 million worth of heavy fuel oil to north Korea. Under this accord, Tokyo and Seoul are supposed to shoulder the main financial responsibility for building two nuclear reactors for electricity production in the DPRK, in exchange

for the government there allowing international inspections of its nuclear complex at Yongbyon.

"North Korea is a dangerous, unpredictable country," declared an editorial in the August 17 *New York Times*, stating the DPRK "seems to have been caught preparing to betray its 1994 commitment to trade in its nuclear weapons ambitions for \$6 billion in international assistance." Neither the south Korean nor the Japanese nor the U.S. governments have fulfilled their part of the agreement. And the only accusation leveled against the DPRK now is that the alleged large underground structure may be used in the future for nuclear weapons production.

All Koreans we spoke to or interviewed during the trip said that the so-called sunshine policy toward the DPRK of south Korean president Kim Dae Jung, who was elected in February, is merely a democratic facade and there is no evidence it will lead to normalization of relations with the north. When Kim Dae Jung visited the United States in June, he called on Washington to ease sanctions on north Korea and announced later he would release political prisoners without requiring they sign letters in which they renounce their political beliefs.

"These measures were announced by the new government in Seoul to simply mask the old policy of dependence on Washington," said Ju Ho Chol of the international relations department of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League. "This is important at a time of labor unrest in south Korea, as the capitalist 'miracle' has collapsed, and as it is clearer than ever that support for reunification without foreign interference is a majority sentiment in the south."

Ju and many others cited the continued repression of Hanchongryon, a student federation in the south that supports normalization of relations with the DPRK, and workers fighting against austerity measures in the south; the announcement in July by Kim Dae Jung that U.S. troops should remain in south Korea even after unification; and Seoul's refusal to allow students to leave the south Korean capital and join compatriots from the north for a common rally at Panmunjom to celebrate independence day on August 15 and demand reunification.

"Many of the prisoners who have been released simply go to a larger prison," Ju said. "A number of them continue to face a form of house arrest and other restrictions." He was also dubious that the political prisoners Kim Dae Jung said he would release would be let go unconditionally.

Indeed, when 103 "prisoners of conscience" were released in south Korea on August 15 it became clear that they had to first sign a pledge to abide by south Korean laws, including the notorious National Security Law, which deems any contacts with the north to be treason. Sixty-nine-year-old Woo Yong Gak, who has led a movement in jail for 40 years against signing such loyalty oaths, and at least 20 other political prisoners are still incarcerated. The big-business press had speculated in June that Woo would be among those released.

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FROM THE WOBLIESTO THE FIGHT AGAINST THE KOREAN WAR AND McCARTHYISM

James P. Cannon

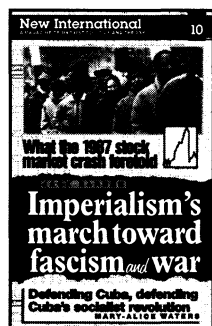
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— Cannon to U.S. president Harry Truman, 1950.

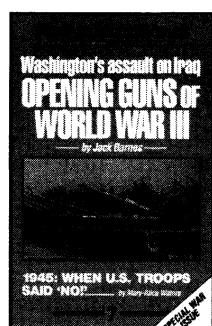
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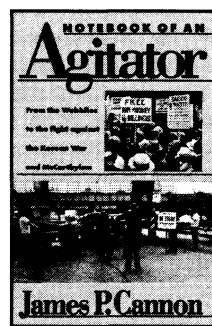


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# Rail workers shut down Conrail

Continued from front page

Locomotive Engineers or the UTU; and train dispatchers. This solidarity quickly shut down the operations of the nation's fifth-largest freight railroad, until the picket lines were forced down by court order that same afternoon.

## Court uses Railway Act against strikers

Like all rail unions, the BMWÉ is constrained by the National Railway Labor Act. Passed by Congress in 1926, and since extended to cover the airlines industry, this antilabor law is a labyrinth of red tape that trammels union power, especially the use of strikes. In this walkout, Conrail's attorneys were in court within hours, and U.S. district judge John Giles issued an order demanding the rail workers return to the job.

Nonetheless, the nine-and-a-half hour strike gave a picture of the power of rail labor and a glimpse of the discussion and spirit of resistance among workers in the rail industry today, where workers are feeling the results of years of substantial crew cuts and other reductions in the work force.

In an attempt to keep the trains moving despite the strike, Conrail forced many of the crews that had started work the night before to keep working. But as these crews reached the maximum 12 hours that they could work as mandated by law, the railroad began to grind to a halt. At the Oak Island yard in Newark, New Jersey, supervisors came out to the gate around 9:30 a.m. and told workers that the yard was shutting down and everyone should go home.

"It's about time someone had the guts to stand up to Conrail!" shouted one UTU member at Oak Island when he arrived. Another asked, "Where are our signs? Shouldn't we have signs to show our support?"

At the Conway Yard outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, one of the largest yards in the country, only a few locomotives were moving at what is normally a busy time of day. Rail conductors, engineers, and car inspectors who came to work not knowing of the strike gathered for hours in a parking lot across the street from the entrance, discussing the issues in the strike and demonstrating their solidarity. One recently hired brakeman, who used to work as a coal miner, said he hadn't seen anything like this since the 1970s. He joined the pickets for a few hours after being called to work early that morning.

In the Cleveland area, every yard was shut down except the one that services the GM plant in Parma, where no picket line was set up. Third-shift crews were held over for their full twelve hours, but most did not work after the strike began.

BMWÉ member Dave Reid from Avon, Indiana, said, "Nobody's crossing our picket lines, just management. There's trains sitting in the yard that aren't going out."

## The railroad grinds to a halt

At Boston's Beacon Park yard, the eastern terminus of Conrail, Steve Falzone, a member of BMWÉ Local 228 who works

20 miles west of Boston in Framingham, came to picket. Falzone constructed a makeshift sign that read, "BMWÉ on strike" out of a piece of a cardboard box, and stuck it prominently on his truck. At one point a UTU official drove up, patrolling to make sure that gate was covered and that no UTU members went in to work.

In Baltimore, fewer than 15 BMWÉ members were available to cover the three gates at the Bayview yard. Their presence shut down most operations. These pickets were buoyed when they learned the combined crafts had shut down the large Enola yard near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the main terminus for Baltimore and Washington trains.

On the lines in Baltimore there was discussion about the need to send the company a message through the strike, even if it was likely — some thought inevitable — that it would be ended quickly through a court injunction. Several workers pointed to the need to send a message to CSX and Norfolk Southern (NS), the two railroads that are in the process of taking over Conrail. Workers discussed whether NS and CSX would be upset that they were getting "disgruntled" workers, and some thought it was good to let them know that workers were "disgruntled."

At the Conrail intermodal facility (a yard where cargo is transferred between trucks and trains) at South Kearney, New Jersey, BMWÉ strikers were greeted with constant blaring horns from truck drivers expressing their support for the union.

## Solidarity from UPS drivers

"I think unionism is on the rise again," declared striker Jeff Briley, "There's a lot more support from other unions. Unions are not just saying 'Take care of me and to hell with everyone else.' There's more solidarity. The unions are realizing the need to fight against divide and conquer."

Briley's point was emphasized by the fact that drivers for United Parcel Service refused to drive into the struck facility, forcing UPS to call out supervisors to drive the trucks in.



Militant/Stu Singer

BMWÉ strikers picket Conrail Bayview Yard in Baltimore, Maryland, August 14.

Members of the Teamsters union at UPS won a victory last August after a 15-day nationwide strike that brought UPS operations to a virtual standstill. One UPS driver explained to BMWÉ strikers that they needed to put more pickets at the gate where the drivers were going in, so they would be more visible to the Teamsters. "After going through nine strikes, there's no way I'm going to cross a picket line," he said.

UPS supervisors frantically scurried around, trying to get between drivers and the strikers before they could talk to each other. A few drivers defiantly stood and talked with the Conrail workers in spite of the bosses, while they waited for supervisors to drive their trucks out.

BMWÉ striker Robert Dixon pointed out that his son works for UPS and is still working part-time, despite last year's strike settlement that promised to create more full-time positions at UPS. "We'll strike again if we have to," to enforce the agreement, responded one of the UPS workers.

Some BMWÉ members complained that they did not know about the strike until the night before or the morning of the strike. Many workers approved of the tactic of keeping the work stoppage a secret from the company. Others thought that it could have been better prepared.

Al Dinkelo, a BMWÉ member who works

at the Elizabeth port yard in New Jersey, said, "The strike was very unorganized. If you're going to do something like that, you have to have a master plan." Dinkelo had driven to the North Bergen, New Jersey, to picket after hearing that there was no picket line there. He pointed out that the Teamsters local that organizes UPS drivers who drive into the yard was not notified about the strike, and train crews at North Bergen went into work because they didn't know.

This is the second strike this year by members of the BMWÉ. In May, about 2,500 BMWÉ members struck the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad for about five and half hours before they were forced back to work. The strike shut down BNSF operations in nine states when members of other unions refused to cross the picket lines. BMWÉ members at BNSF were striking to prevent the company from changing the seniority districts and the way in which workers gain seniority in a new position. These changes would have led to track maintenance workers having to travel longer distances away from home to work.

Amy Husk is a member of the UTU at Conrail's Oak Island yard. UTU members Emily Fitzsimmons in Pittsburgh, Sarah Ullman in Boston, and Stu Singer in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

# Micmac Natives fight for land rights in Quebec

BY BOB CANTRICK AND JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL, Quebec — On August 17, Micmac people in the community of Listuguj took down barricades, the first of which went up in mid-July when they blocked access to the GDS saw mill. On August 6 they set up barricades along Highway 132, cutting off traffic. Listuguj is a community of Native people on the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Quebec. The Micmacs on the barricades, who were demanding the right to cut wood on crown land, won cutting rights to 30,000 cubic meters of wood per year from the Quebec government. As part of an agreement, no charges will be laid against those who defended the barricades.

The Micmacs had been demanding 160,000 cubic meters. Gary Metallic, a hereditary

Chief and leader of the protest, said, "I stand by the principle that we are the owners of this land. This is short term and the negotiations will continue. For the sake of not bringing confrontation or bloodshed, this was the best way to go."

Jobs and access to natural resources are among the underlying issues in this fight. Unemployment among Natives on the reserve is 70 percent. Many residents must seek employment outside the reserve, where they encounter discrimination. Susan Isaac-Metallic, who works at the Listuguj Arts and Cultural Center and has been on the barricades, described her effort to find work across the Restigouche river in the town of Campbellton. When a prospective employer saw her name and where she lives, he threw her application in the garbage.

The owner of the GDS sawmill, Guildo Deschênes, openly told the Montreal daily *La Presse*, "We don't hire Micmacs because that would create tensions."

Micmacs began protest actions on July 16 when the provincial Quebec government of premier Lucien Bouchard ordered sawmills in the area to stop accepting wood cut by Micmac loggers, claiming such timber was being harvested "illegally." On August 6, when the Micmacs blocked Highway 132, the struggle became daily front-page news in Quebec and the lead story on news broadcasts. The major news media refer to the protesters as "dissidents" with little support.

But Metallic pointed out that since this struggle began, those supporting the fight have held democratic decision-making meetings almost every night. On August 9, a parade through the reserve supporting the demands of those on the barricades drew 127 cars and as many as 300 people, according to several activists who spoke to *Militant* correspondents the next morning. Listuguj has about 2,800 residents.

The media also made much of the fact that sawmill workers were being inconvenienced by the closing of their workplace. There was one demonstration August 7 in the nearby town of Pointe-à-la-Croix against the barricades. Lyta Isaac, the director of the Arts and Cultural Center at Listuguj told these reporters, "They were stopping traffic and swearing at people who appeared Native." On August 12, the Quebec government agreed to compensate sawmill workers and area businesses for their losses.

The fight of the Micmacs has begun to attract support elsewhere. About 75 people rallied August 16 in downtown Montreal in front of the Hydro Quebec office building, where Bouchard has an office, to demand that the provincial government meet the Micmacs' demands and that no SQ [provincial police] or army be sent against them.

Joe Young is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 7625.

# Refugees discuss how to fight racist attacks

BY DANIEL AHL AND ANITA ÖSTLING

GIMO, Sweden — A gang of skinheads attacked a refugee camp July 24 in this community of 2,500 people about 50 miles northeast of Stockholm. They stabbed Redep Kajtazi, who came here 18 months ago from Kosovo, in the arm and the side, puncturing his right lung.

"After midnight we heard noise," said Naser Kajtazi, the wounded man's son. "My father and I went out, and then we saw a crowd of maybe 30 skinheads rushing toward us. We began to run back into the house, but they caught up with my father and stabbed him."

"We don't know them, we have never done anything to them. Why would they do this?" Naser Kajtazi continued "I left Kosovo to get away from the war. And now this.... It would be better for us to have a residence permit. Then we could move away from here."

"I'm from Serbia, but I'm a Muslim and these are my brothers and sisters," says

Cemal Demirovic, a friend of the Kajtazi family. He spent six and a half years in Sweden before he got his legal papers and was able to move out of the camp.

Another man from Kosovo said that he has just gotten his permit to stay after seven and a half years. Now he wants to move to Stockholm. "But they won't let me. They will send me somewhere else. I'm sure."

Some 350 refugees live in the camp, where they are required to stay until the get legal papers.

Koorosh Khosravi is from Iran and has spent four years in the camp. He now has his papers and works as an operator at a local factory. Khosravi heads up the Refugee Council, a voluntary organization that aids the refugees. He told the *Militant* he has previously warned the authorities about the danger of racist aggression in Gimo. "They claim it's a case of fighting youth gangs. But it's their job provide safety for us.... The authorities defend these people indirectly. Windows were smashed on Monday. The skinheads had had a party the weekend be-

fore. Their party this weekend served as the starting point for attacking the camp."

After the assault on the Gimo camp, the Refugee Council and the residents immediately demanded that the cops patrol the area at night to ward off further attack. Then Khosravi publicly raised a discussion about the refugees forming self-defense units. "Since then, the police have been here with two cars at night. So we've let discussion rest for a while."

The idea of self-defense has sparked a debate among the refugees in the camp. Some are afraid that it might be provocative, and hope that Khosravi's threat will put sufficient pressure on the cops to keep guarding the camp at night. Others favor the idea of staying alert and being prepared if necessary. Signs in the windows read: "Stop Racism" and "Defend The Right To Asylum."

Daniel Ahl is a member of the Young Socialists and Anita Östling is a member of the Transport Workers Union in Stockholm, Sweden.



# N.Y. mayor denies permit for Million Youth March

## Organizers vow to hold it in Harlem

BY AL DUNCAN

NEW YORK — The city administration here is carrying out an attack on democratic rights. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has denied a permit to organizers of the Million Youth March to assemble September 5 at their planned site — Malcolm X Boulevard in Harlem, from 118th to 147th streets.

March organizers have announced they will proceed with their plans and will seek a federal court ruling overturning Giuliani's order. An August 17 press conference held inside Rev. Alfred Sharpton's National Action Network Harlem headquarters. Sharpton, who ran for mayor in the Democratic primary last year, was flanked by State Sen. David Paterson, a Harlem Democrat; Police Sgt. Eric Adams, who heads the 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement; and attorneys for the organizing group.

"We're going to court because the city has forced us to go to court," said Roger Wareham, a lawyer for the coordinators, at the news conference. "The real issue is very simply a constitutional issue: Does the First Amendment apply to Harlem and to African-American and Latino youth?"

Malik Shabazz, another lawyer for the youth march, said, "It has never been the intent of the organizers to have anything other than a peaceful march, that it would stand on the same foundation as the Million Man March and the Million Woman March." Those events — which attracted hundreds of thousands, reflecting anger among working people who are Black over falling living standards, racist discrimination, and attacks on affirmative action — took place in Washington, D.C., in 1995 and in Philadelphia last year respectively. Shabazz declined to say how many people are expected for the New York action.

While Sharpton demanded Giuliani grant a permit for the Harlem site, Paterson called for talks between city officials and march organizers "to sound the alarm in advance... that there is a risk of confrontation." Paterson said he doesn't think the march should take place without a permit. Many other politicians who are Black have taken their distance from the organizers' resolve to hold the march in Harlem, while a number have called on its leaders to call it off or to agree

to Giuliani's proposals to hold it at Randalls Island or at Van Cortland Park in the Bronx and to consider another date, September 19.

"I am writing him a letter to ask him to call it off," said Charles Rangel, a Democratic congressman from Harlem, on August 12, referring to national convener of the march Khalid Abdul Muhammad. "I think it's a very bad idea that someone like him would be taking advantage of the frustrations of our teenagers to have a march without any agenda and without any goals. It's clear to me that Khalid Muhammad wants to have a confrontation." Dennis Walcott of the New York Urban League and other groups representing the interests of middle-class Blacks have a similar stance.

Muhammad is the founder of the New Black Muslim Movement and the New Black Panther Party. He is a former aid to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, the main sponsor of the Million Man March. Muhammad was dismissed as a spokesman for the organization in 1994 after a speech the previous year during which he called Jews "bloodsuckers."

In addition to Sharpton, the march has the endorsement of Malikah Shabazz, the youngest daughter of Malcolm X; and the December 12 Movement, one of the leaders of which, Erica Ford, chairs the host organizing committee. Louis Farrakhan has supported the action, but has reportedly not endorsed it, according to the August 20-26 *Amsterdam News*. Various rap musicians and other artists have offered their support.

Demands put forth by the organizers include supporting "our God and the Ancestors," releasing all political prisoners, drawing students and youth to dedicate themselves to community service and nation building, more Black business and economic development, full and complete reparations for the descendants of slaves, jobs for Black youth, Black studies and African-centered learning, an end to gang conflict and violence, security units to patrol and control Black communities, and opposition to racist policies and police brutality.

A similar event taking place in Atlanta over Labor Day weekend has much broader support among Black politicians and civil rights organizations. Endorsers of the Mil-

## NWA flight attendants demand contract



Militant/John Sarge

Chanting "We've been patient, we've been polite. Now we're ready to fight, fight, fight!" 250 Northwest Airlines flight attendants and supporters picketed outside the airline terminal at Detroit's Metro Airport August 7. The pickets were joined by auto workers, locked-out Detroit newspaper workers, and other unionists. The flight attendants, members of Teamsters Local 2000, held pickets and rallies at 10 airports around the country demanding the company end its 23-month delay in a contract offer.

lion Youth Movement activities there include the NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Nation of Islam, National Council of Negro Women, and Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson. The National Black Police Association is also an endorser. Under the theme "Preparing Youth for the New Millennium," the activities include a town hall meeting on September 4, forums and a Hip Hop Poetry Party next day, a gospel concert, and a mass rally on Auburn Ave. September 7.

Debate has raged in the media in New York over the Million Man March. In order to justify his permit denial, Giuliani has called the action a "hate march" because of "race-baiting and anti-Semitic" comments by its organizers. Other bourgeois politicians have taken their distance from banning the march in Harlem. Former New York mayor Edward Koch has condemned Khalid Muhammad as a "racist, anti-Semite, Catholic basher, and gay basher." At the same time, Koch has stated the city has no right to block the march.

The action by Giuliani, which he justifies on the grounds that police cannot guarantee public safety for a large march at the proposed site, follows other attacks by his administration on civil liberties and democratic rights this year. These included the use of massive numbers of police to prevent a protest by taxi drivers and launching a cop attack on a 40,000-strong rally of construc-

tion workers. The August 18 New York *Newsday* predicted that federal courts are likely to rule against Giuliani's permit denial. "In May, a federal judge said the city violated the First Amendment rights of taxi drivers by refusing to permit more than 20 of them to assemble for a demonstration," the paper reported.

"We call on the labor movement and all defenders of democratic rights to join us in demanding that the New York city administration immediately grant the Million Youth March organizers a permit to peacefully assemble, rally, and march in Harlem September 5," said Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate Rose Ana Berbeo in a statement August 18. "Anti-Semitic statements by Khalid Muhammad, which divide working people, are not the issue. At a time when defensive actions by the working class are on the rise and racist discrimination and police repression are reproduced daily by the dog-eat-dog capitalist system, the need to defend democratic rights is paramount."

At a meeting of 200 at Harlem's National Black Theater August 18, march organizers called for a vigil beginning August 28 and culminating September 5 at the State Office Building in Harlem to press their demand for a permit from the city.

Al Duncan is a member of the United Transportation Union and the Socialist Workers candidate for Governor of New York.

# Arrest of Black youth for murder sparks protests

BY SARAH KATZ AND ALYSON KENNEDY

CHICAGO — At an August 16 press conference at the Beth-El All Nations church in Englewood, a Black working-class community on the south side of Chicago, community residents and church leaders protested the unjust and racist treatment of two Black youth. These children, ages seven and eight, were arrested and charged with the murder of an 11-year-old girl, Ryan Harris, on August 9.

Rev. Gregory Daniels, spokesperson at the press conference and president of Voters United for Truth and Change, said, "These boys are being treated like adult criminals. They haven't been proven guilty." The media has made these boys into "the poster boys of mini-murderers," he added.

Harris, who is also Black, was found dead on July 28 in weeds in a vacant lot in the Englewood area. She had been hit in the head with a blunt object, fracturing her skull, and died of asphyxiation. She had leaves and grass stuffed in her nose and her underpants shoved in her mouth.

The girl's body was seminude and initial reports claimed that she had been sexually violated with a foreign object. The boys were not charged with sexual abuse.

After the girl's body was discovered, every detective available from the Wentworth police station blanketed the Englewood area, going house to house questioning residents. After questioning the accused boys two times, the cops arrested them and took them to the Wentworth Area Headquarters.

Police claim the children were brought in because they had information that only authorities and the perpetrators would have known about the case. At the police station the seven- and eight-year-old were interrogated by five police officers without a parent or legal counsel in the room.

In the initial massive house-to-house questioning, at least four eyewitnesses gave information they saw Harris with an older man just before she disappeared. This same information was given by one of the accused boys the first time detectives questioned him. Police say they have followed that lead, but got nowhere. The August 17 Chicago *Sun Times* reported that "police are not looking for other suspects."

Nevertheless, the 16-year-old uncle of the eight-year-old was picked up by police who "put him in the car, rode him around for almost two hours... interrogating him about the murder," the teenager's mother said. Attorney Lewis Myers, lawyer for the eight-year-old, spoke out against this intimidation of his client's family by police August 17. "There were no charges, no warrant," against the boy's uncle, he said.

The case "smacks of the Rolando Cruz syndrome," the attorney added, referring to the case of a Chicago man who spent 13 years on death row, framed up for murder.

Judge Gerald Winicki ruled August 10 that there was enough evidence to hold the boys in custody. The Chicago Tribune's Tuesday headline roared, "Police say suspects not too small to kill." But in the newspaper the next day it was stated that "there

is little, if any, physical evidence linking the boys to the crime. In describing how they came to charge the two Chicago boys, police made no mention of any physical evidence or eyewitnesses."

This case has made national news and has been on the front page of the major Chicago papers for over a week. The youth are being portrayed in the media as guilty. This came through in an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* August 12, which stated that the boys are "salvageable souls with the potential for long productive lives ahead of them. Sadly, that is not always true, even for youthful offenders, but it is the duty of the juvenile court to presume that to be the case until proven otherwise."

The case has also sparked a flurry of opinion columns on "child crime."

The Rev. Paul Jakes Jr., pastor of Old St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church and one of the leaders in the fight against the police beating of Jeremiah Meard, a Black youth, told the *Chicago Defender*, "Racism is alive and well in Chicago. They have flipped with the Constitution. A person is supposed to be innocent until [proven] guilty, but some media have portrayed them as guilty before their day in court."

Hearings continued for four days over what to do with the boys. Under Illinois law, children under 10 can not be placed in a locked facility. During the hearings the boys were kept at the Hartgrove Hospital psychiatric facility.

The mother of the 7-year-old, labeled the "aggressor" by police, said she was told af-

ter her son was charged that she "had to sign him over to the hospital or they would give him to [the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services] and I wouldn't see him until the trial. I didn't want them to take him away like that. I said, 'Where's the papers?'"

After the second day's court session, the mother was able to spend a few minutes with her son under the watchful eye of the court bailiff. She was not allowed to touch him, however, even to give him a hug.

A final decision was made on August 13, when, after testimony from two child psychology experts that the seven and eight year old are not a danger to themselves or others, Judge Winicki sent them home. They are restricted to the house, however, and are required to wear custom-made electronic monitoring devices on their ankles that trigger a computer at the police station if the children stray more than 150 feet from a sensor device. Juvenile probation officers conduct unannounced visits to their homes.

Rev. Gregory Daniels, at the press conference demanded that "the home monitoring system be removed, the charges be dropped, and an official public apology from the police department and Mayor Richard M. Daley."

Sarah Katz is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 61 and Socialist Workers candidate for Lt. Governor of Illinois. Alyson Kennedy is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 7-507 and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate.

# SWP: Puerto Rican independence is a necessity for workers in the United States

The following statement was presented August 11 by Olga Rodríguez on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. She was among more than 30 representatives of organizations who testified at the committee's two-day hearings on Puerto Rico. Rodríguez, a ramp worker at Northwest Airlines in New York and member of the International Association of Machinists, was the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of New York in the 1997 elections. Subheadings have been added by the *Militant*.

Distinguished Chairman and Honored Committee Members:

Others have testified here to abundant facts demonstrating that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony, and describing the brutal consequences of this colonial subjugation for the Puerto Rican people.

As several Puerto Rican patriots have eloquently explained today, independence from U.S. rule is a necessity for the people of Puerto Rico if they are to freely determine their own course. I would like to add that Puerto Rico's independence is also a necessity to advance the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States.

## Colonialism divides us

Working people in the United States not only have absolutely no interest in the continued colonial domination of Puerto Rico, its elimination would substantially strengthen our ability to unite ourselves in defense of our common interests. A century ago the rising imperialist interests within the United States orchestrated the conquest of the Puerto Rican people. Ever since then, that act by the U.S. rulers — and its consequences — have only weakened and divided

us. Jim Crow racist segregation was imposed in the South as part of the same political dynamic in those years, dealing historic blows to workers and farmers in the United States, blows whose consequences they feel to this day.

Only the handful of superrich, property-owning families whose interests are represented by the U.S. government benefit from this colonial rule. They exploit the labor and resources of that nation, and use Puerto Rico's subjugation as an example to intimidate those fighting for freedom and human dignity throughout the world. Independence will deal a blow to our common enemy — the world's last empire, whose tentacles extend around the globe.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, I would like to speak here today to the damaging effects that U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico has on working people in this country, who like our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, live not by exploiting others, but by our own sweat and blood.

Ever since U.S. troops invaded and occupied Puerto Rico 100 years ago, the U.S. government has sought to hide its true relation to that Caribbean nation. They call Puerto Rico a "commonwealth" rather than a colony. They periodically organize fraudulent plebiscites, in order to sow confusion not only among the people of Puerto Rico, but also among working people and oppressed nationalities in the United States. They hope to prevent us from understanding that Washington is an imperial power whose armed forces remain stationed in Puerto Rico, and that Puerto Rico is the largest remaining colony in the world.

## Puerto Ricans in the U.S.

Given the conditions U.S. domination has created in Puerto Rico — where the aver-



Militant/Elizabeth Stone

"Colonial rule provides Washington with a bottomless well of rationalizations to erode the democratic rights of working people in the United States." Above, June protest condemns frame-up of Puerto Rican independence activist José Solís in Chicago.

age income is less than half that of Mississippi, the poorest state in the union — four of every ten Puerto Ricans have been forced to emigrate to the United States in search of work and a wage they and their families can live on. Puerto Ricans are an important component of the working class in this country.

Today a new generation of Puerto Ricans is making its voice heard in the United States. On July 25, I had the honor of marching with some of them at a demonstration here in New York that, along with marches in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, demanded an end to U.S. colonial rule. Tens of thousands marched for those same demands in Guánica, Puerto Rico, that same day.

The U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico reinforces racism, national chauvinism, anti-immigrant prejudice, and other divisions among working people in the United States that undermine the labor movement and serve the interests of the employers. Colonialism feeds every reactionary force in U.S. society — from those who promote "English-only" measures and want to end bilingual and bicultural education, to those who attack affirmative action and other hard-fought gains of working people. As someone involved in the Chicano struggle for many years, I can testify to that reality.

## Police spying, victimization

Colonial rule of Puerto Rico provides the U.S. government with a bottomless well of

rationalizations to erode the democratic rights of working people in the United States. The massive FBI spying and harassment of Puerto Rican independence advocates, unionists, and other fighters for Puerto Rican rights, has been well-documented over the past quarter century. The cops and courts have intimidated, imprisoned, and in some cases organized the outright murder of Puerto Rican political activists — giving a green light to the operations of political police agencies against labor and other social protest movements in the United States.

Grand juries, including two currently convened in Chicago, are used as courts of inquisition to frame up pro-independence activists and to try to smear the Puerto Rican independence movement as terrorists in the eyes of public opinion. These grand juries set an example for similar star-chamber actions against other opponents of U.S. government policies.

Mr. Chairman:

Others have eloquently testified to the injustice of the draconian sentences imposed on the fifteen Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails — and the hypocrisy of the U.S. rulers who pretend to speak for human rights and political freedoms in other lands. These courageous and unbroken fighters, among the longest-held political prisoners in the world, are in jail for one crime and one crime only: their determination to end the colonial subjugation of their homeland.

Continued on Page 10

## Havana: 'Puerto Rico has right to self-determination'

The following speech was given by Rafael Dausá, Cuban Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization August 11. Dausá was motivating a resolution sponsored by the Cuban government supporting Puerto Rico's right to independence and self-determination. Translation into English is by the *Militant*.

Mr. Chairman:

On January 5, 1892, Cuba's National

Hero José Martí made public the statutes of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, the party that would lead the struggle for independence during the closing years of the 19th century. Allow me to briefly quote Article 1 of this document. "The Cuban Revolutionary Party is constituted in order to gain, with the combined efforts of all men of good will, the total independence of Cuba and to encourage and assist that of Puerto Rico."

I think these words of José Martí would alone be enough to characterize Cuba's historical position with regard to Puerto Rican independence.

More than a few Puerto Ricans shed their blood for the independence of Cuba. The peoples of Puerto Rico and Cuba have been brothers in their fight for independence, first against Spanish colonialism and later against the United States, which was determined to maintain the colonial yoke.

For Cubans, it remains an unavoidable obligation to continue on the path charted by our forefathers, until our Puerto Rican brothers achieve full independence.

Because of its culture, its history, its traditions, and especially because of the express will of its people, Puerto Rico is a Latin-American and Caribbean country, with its own national identity, which the Puerto Rican people have known how to maintain despite the colonizing process they have been subjected to.

Mr. Chairman:

This year the discussion on the question of Puerto Rico takes on a character even more special if we remember that July 25 marked 100 years since the U.S. military intervention in Puerto Rico, an intervention that not only did away with its independence process, but radically altered the history and

fate of our sister nation.

For 26 years this committee has been considering the colonial status of Puerto Rico. We have always reaffirmed Puerto Rico's inalienable right to self-determination and independence, under Resolution 1514 (XV), of December 14, 1960. In addition, if we were to look further back in history, we should remember that one of the first requests received by this Special Committee on Decolonization when it was formed in 1963 was from the Puerto Rican independence movement asking that this item be included on the agenda and that petitioners from that nation be heard.

This demand has also been echoed and supported by the international community. The Non-aligned Movement, has consistently supported this right of the Puerto Rican people. At the recently held Ministerial Meeting of Cartagena, the Nonaligned once again reaffirmed their commitment to independence and self-determination for Puerto Rico.

Year after year, a large number of Puerto Rican patriots come to this committee to remind us of their dreams and hopes. Their statements are not only an unequalled source of information for this committee, but above all an eyewitness account of the commitment and responsibility that the Committee on Decolonization owes to the Puerto Rican people.

This commitment and responsibility has been expressed through the 16 resolutions on the status of Puerto Rico adopted by this committee.

Mr. Chairman:

The colonial power — the United States — resorts to all kinds of maneuvers to confuse international public opinion and

distort the economic, political, and social reality of Puerto Rico. Nevertheless, there is but one reality: Puerto Rico continues to be deprived of its legitimate right to self-determination and sovereignty, the U.S. military presence on the island increases, in spite of the negative consequences that this brings and the repudiation shown by the Puerto Rican people. Many are the Puerto Rican patriots who have suffered and continue to suffer political incarceration in the United States for the sole crime of being loyal to their history and struggling for the independence of their homeland.

In spite of the intense campaigns that have been carried out, 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners continue serving long sentences of up to 106 years in U.S. prisons. Their human rights are violated on a daily basis. They live in subhuman conditions. They deserve the recognition and solidarity of this committee.

Without a doubt, the Puerto Rican brothers and sisters jailed in U.S. prisons are a clear example of why we must — now more than ever — carry out our responsibility to the heroic people of Puerto Rico.

For all these reasons, Cuba believes that it is the unavoidable duty of this committee to denounce the situation that confronts Puerto Rico and the continued attempts to deny the inalienable right of this sister nation to self-determination and independence.

Mr. Chairman, your excellencies, distinguished representatives:

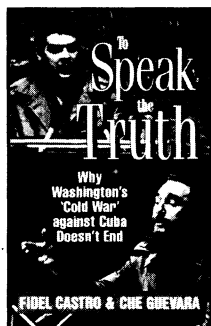
Cuba, once again, loyal to its traditions and history, calls upon all men of good will, as José Martí said 106 years ago, to join together our efforts and help Puerto Rico to be free and independent.

Thank you very much.

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# UN committee supports Puerto Rican self-determination, independence resolution

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

UNITED NATIONS — After hearing testimony from pro-independence and other groups August 10-11, the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization voted to approve a resolution, sponsored by Cuba, supporting the right of Puerto Rico to self-determination, including independence.

In submitting the resolution, Rafael Dausá, who is the deputy permanent representative of Cuba to the United Nations, explained, "Cuba believes it is an unavoidable duty of this committee to denounce the situation faced by Puerto Rico and the continuing effort to ignore the inalienable right of this sister nation to its self-determination and independence" (see statement on facing page).

The commission's decision is "an extraordinary triumph for Puerto Rican independence, given that it's been seven years since the committee approved a resolution on this question," said Fernando Martín, vice president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party. "They have postponed it year after year."

This year 10 governments voted for the resolution, with zero against and six abstentions. In addition, the representative of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) missed the vote and later asked that their vote in favor be counted. The representatives of Russia and Venezuela were among those who abstained from the vote, saying that the committee should not issue a resolution on Puerto Rico's status because a plebiscite is projected there in coming months. The findings of the Special Committee will be presented to the next UN General Assembly.

Unlike previous years, UN officials closed the visitor's gallery to the public during the committee hearings.

A U.S. government spokesperson responded to the Special Committee decision saying Washington does not recognize UN jurisdiction on matters regarding Puerto Rico. Major U.S. newspapers chose not to report the UN Special Committee's decision.

Of the more than 30 delegates who spoke at the hearing, the majority were pro-independence. Some called for Puerto Rico to become the 51st U.S. state and a few defended the existing "commonwealth" status. Nearly every speaker described Puerto Rico's current status as that of a colony, offering divergent solutions to this problem.

## Significance of telephone strike

A few speakers referred to the significance of the telephone workers' strike against the sell-off of the government-run company. "In the past months, our people have opened an extraordinary fight in the streets in defense of our national patrimony and against privatization," stated Julio Muriente, president of the New Movement for Puerto Rican Independence (NMIP). "The government has responded with repression and police brutality.... The strike of the people led by the telephone workers shook Puerto Rico with an impressive, national two-day strike, unmasking the treacherous and anti-national character of the colonial administration."

"We call your attention to the U.S. military presence in Puerto Rico," said Eunice Santana, a leader of the World Council of Churches. She underlined the "deteriorating quality of life" for Puerto Ricans in Vieques, where the United States Navy is expanding its operations. "Since 1972 they have had knowledge of the presence of toxic and carcinogenic contaminants."

Under the pretext of fighting drug trafficking, the U.S. Navy plans to build radar installations, which emit harmful electromagnetic rays, in Vieques and the southern town of Juana Díaz. Vieques residents have a 26 percent higher rate of cancer than inhabitants of the rest of the island, Santana pointed out. Puerto Ricans are denied access to beaches, fishing areas, and cultivable land in Vieques, and "the ecosystems are altered and destroyed, putting in danger the marine life, plant and animal life, and the future of the inhabitants for generations to come."

Vanessa Ramos of the American Association of Jurists asked how it is possible to carry out a process of real self-determina-

tion "with the intimidating presence of the FBI and other U.S. police agencies, surrounded by active military bases and operations all over the island? This is not a process of self-determination. It is a flagrant violation of the fundamental human rights of a people...that continue to stand and fight.



Tens of thousands rallied for independence July 25 in Guánica, Puerto Rico.

Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Other speakers who petitioned for independence included Lolita Lebrón, who commanded a group of four Nationalists that carried out an armed action on the U.S. Congress in 1954 and spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons; Juan Mari Brás, a longtime leader of the movement for independence; Manuel Fermín Arraiza, president of the Lawyer's Guild of Puerto Rico; Jorge Farinacci of the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico; Olga Rodríguez of the Socialist Workers Party (see statement on facing page); and others.

A number of the pro-statehood speakers began their remarks by offering examples of the colonial status of Puerto Rico, but argued that statehood would rectify the island's second-class status.

Fernando Escabí Méndez, 24, who came as part of the pro-statehood delegation, described himself as "a citizen with no vote...[on] an island where the concept of sovereignty is vague at best." He gave a scathing account of Washington's colonial exploitation and domination of the island. He then said that becoming a state would give Puerto Rico greater representation in the U.S. government.

Escabí complained that not all U.S. politicians want Puerto Rico as a state. "Unfortunately, some regressive lawmakers still resist to sponsor this process because of biased views about Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans. For instance the noted U.S. Representative of Connecticut, Republican Nancy Johnson, recently said to a delegation of Puerto Rican leaders that the United States is a melting pot and that Puerto Ricans have failed to melt."

A few of the speakers present at the Special Commission proceedings supported Puerto Rico's current status. Carlos Vizcarrondo Irizarry of the Popular Demo-

cratic Party defended the commonwealth status, arguing that previously held plebiscites, which usually have yielded a majority of votes for commonwealth, reflect an autonomous decision by Puerto Rican people. He opposed statehood status because it would strip Puerto Ricans of their national

on the U.S. government. The Rosselló administration has been pushing to get four voting options in the referendum, a change from the three usual categories of statehood, independence, or commonwealth. The new "free association" category, a form of commonwealth supposedly offering more autonomy, further fractures those opposed to statehood, potentially giving the statehood forces a majority vote.

Marisol Corretjer, representing the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, said, "One hundred years ago the United States invaded Puerto Rico, our national territory. And still, in 1998 they are playing with our sovereignty in the Congress of this empire with the Young Bill.... This project is not valid because they must hand over all [state] power to the people of Puerto Rico and then we can sit down and talk about a plebiscite."

Wilma Reverón Collazo, leader of the Hostos National Congress, an umbrella group of a dozen pro-independence organizations and nonaffiliated *independentistas*, said, "The U.S. government has always been a magician in the art of appearances.... While they draw up papers, bills, and discussions regarding Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and its own government, they violate each and every one of the principles recognized as necessary in any self-determination process."

## Free Puerto Rican political prisoners

Several speakers at the UN meeting, as part of their testimony, demanded the release of the 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S. jails. Ana López, coordinator of the New York chapter of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, told the UN Committee, "It is evident that the continuous imprisonment of these Puerto Rican men and women continues to violate all international human rights laws."

"Their sentences are disproportionately longer than those given to people convicted of the most heinous offenses; their sentences ranged from 35 to 90 years. Most," she continued, "have served more than 18 years, or three times as long as the average time served to people convicted of homicide. And they continue to be subjected to inhumane prison conditions, which violate basic human rights. López pointed to the wide ranging support for the release of the prisoners including 11 Nobel prize winners, several U.S. Congresspersons, and Puerto Rican elected officials on state and federal levels."

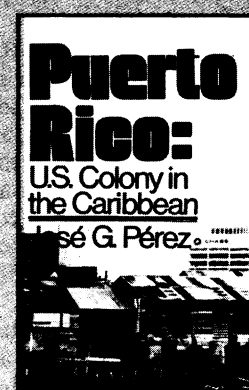
Benjamín Vélez, representing Pro-Libertad, issued a written statement calling for the release of the prisoners. The statement highlighted the case of Oscar López, a political prisoner held in Marion "prison from 1986 to 1994, during the period when the prison was scrutinized and widely condemned by human rights organizations in the U.S. and internationally." The testimony described the conditions López faced in solitary confinement, locked up in an 8 ft. wide by 9 ft. long cell — for an average of 22 hours a day and for several days." Vélez said that after a long fight to get López out of Marion after being placed there again, "I am exuberant to announce that...López was taken out of Marion last Thursday, August 6," and is being transferred to a federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he will be in the general prison population.

identity

## Debate on plebiscite

Some of the speakers supported a plebiscite on Puerto Rico's status. One such initiative is the Young Bill, introduced into the U.S. Congress by Rep. Donald Young, which calls for a referendum on Puerto Rico's political status to be held by Dec. 31, 1998. That bill has also been backed by the ruling New Progressive Party, led by Puerto Rican governor Pedro Rosselló. The bill would give U.S. Congress the authority, among other things, to expand English-language requirements on the island.

Pro-statehood governor Rosselló, frustrated by the fact that the bill has stalled in Congress, has also been pushing for a local referendum, which was just agreed to in Puerto Rico's House of Representatives August 12. If approved in the island's Senate, the vote will probably take place in December. The results will be nonbinding



From Pathfinder

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JOSÉ G. PÉREZ

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# How Cuban patriots decisively defeated and demoralized the Spanish colonialists

When Washington declared war on its Spanish rival in April 1898 in order to seize Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam for its own imperial interests, the Cuban people had just defeated the Spanish army in a three-year war for independence. The article below, reprinted from the July 12, 1998, issue of *Granma International*, describes the 1895-98 Cuban war for liberation. It was published under the title, "The war the Cubans won and lost."

BY GUILLERMO JIMÉNEZ SOLER

One century ago, when the United States intervened in the three-year war that Cuba had been waging against Spain since 1895, the island's victory was generally accepted both among the conquered and the conquerors.

According to Admiral Cervera, chief of the Spanish naval squadron annihilated by the U.S. Navy in the bay of Santiago de Cuba on July 3, 1898, "War (with the United States) was accepted by Spain when the island of Cuba was de facto lost."

As Generalissimo Máximo Gómez, head of the Cuban Liberation Army (EL), commented immediately after defeated Captain-General Weyler was replaced by General Blanco at the end of 1897: "Spain lacks the conditions...to prolong the war for a further two years, and the Cubans are able to resist for as long as they want."

By the end of the first year of the war, the setback suffered by the Spanish forces had become an evident fact. They had proved incapable of detaining the westward march commanded by Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, which in just three months had whipped like a hurricane from Mangos de Baraguá in the east of the country, reaching Mantua in the extreme west on January 22, 1896.

To contain this insurrectional tidal wave, in June 1895 Spain had dispatched to the island the most well-known and capable of its generals, Arsenio Martínez Campos. But as early as Christmas 1895, in a speech in the capital on December 27, he had virtually acknowledged his incapacity to control it. Four days previously, only 15 minutes after having initiated the Coliseo battle, the general abandoned the field of operations. One week earlier, he had suffered a spectacular defeat at Mal Tiempo where a headlong machete charge ordered by the Máximo Gómez left over 300 casualties. In confir-



Battle in Havana between the Cuban and Spanish cavalry during independence war

mation of his premonition, the day after his speech, the Spanish forces were definitively left in the rear of the Liberation Army after the Calimete battle.

Faced with such a disaster, Spain tightened the rope by appointing Valeriano Weyler as Martínez Campos' successor. Weyler was Spain's most merciless general but in the long run he also was unable to defeat the Cubans, in spite of exterminating a large section of the population on his way.

But, as Gómez had predicted, "after the westward march, it was all a question of time," having subsequently formulated his plan to defeat the Spanish forces without directly engaging them. Thus, for more than 18 months, from January 1897, 40,000 of Weyler's soldiers fought 41 battles against 3,000 of Gómez' men in La Reforma, in central Cuba, without being able to dislodge them from an area of a few square miles.

From December 1895 onwards, apart from the ports and two or three localities, the Liberation Army controlled the territory of Camagüey and Oriente. After the culmination of the westward march, the entire countryside was dominated by the Cuban troops who, operating a few minutes from the capital, made incursions into its perimeters.

That superiority attained by the Cuban forces was based on Gómez' strategy of extending this war across the entire island, destroying in its path the colonial system's economic support and deploying a war of attrition against the enemy by immobiliz-

ing large numbers of troops in Trochas and other larger towns, as well as utilizing the climate and tropical diseases to the Liberation Army's benefit.

Those tactics were based on campaigns of forced marches, nocturnal marches, countermarches, encirclements and movements to distract the enemy forces, utilizing units with great mobility and combining a swift cavalry with a rapid and versatile infantry capable of turning into the former. Using great initiative and improvisation the Liberation Army selected the terrain and the timing for the battles, availing themselves of an efficient information system.

Spain's defeat was a total one, given that it had not stopped in "sacrificing up to the last man and the last peseta" in order to crush the insurrection, having organized the largest and best-equipped army commanded to date by some of its most valiant generals, and which exceeded the sum total of soldiers confronted by all the continent's liberators, from George Washington to Simón Bolívar, and in an area more extensive than that of Cuba.

Those 15,000 outstanding soldiers stationed in Cuba at the beginning of the insurrection swelled to reach some 300,000 to 350,000 in service at the peak moment of 1897. Of these, around 200,000 were regular troops, their correlation of forces in relation to the Liberation Army oscillating between four to one at the start of the westward march in October 1895, and six to one at the end of 1897. In spite of this, on May

19, 1897, Sagasta, leader of the Liberal Party could only bewail in the Spanish Cortes the fact that "after having dispatched 200,000 men and having shed so much blood on the island we are merely masters of the ground on which our soldiers tread."

However, at the beginning of 1898, shortly before the U.S. intervention, that impressive war machine had been reduced by half due casualties, sickness and repatriations of the wounded.

That was not fortuitous, as Generalissimo Gómez counted among his forces the ravages of the climate and tropical diseases, which devastated the raw recruits. Gómez commented that "his three best generals were June, July and August," and in his deliberate campaigns during those months he pushed the enemy troops toward the most swampy and inhospitable areas.

During 1897, some 400,000 Spanish soldiers were hospitalized, equivalent to each serving soldier occupying a bed three or four times in the year. That year, Sagasta lamented "that the Cuban war is costing us 100 soldiers who die there daily."

Thus, Spain's arrogant policy had become mired in a bog converted into a genuine national tragedy with the loss of close to half a million men, according to Spanish historians' calculation, while the Liberation Army suffered only 10,665 casualties.

Moreover, the treasury of the metropolis was bankrupt. By mid-1897, the state coffers were exhausted and in June, Spain was forced to have recourse to the first of various internal and external loans. The economic collapse was of such magnitude that future generations of Spaniards coined an expression to describe any major loss: "more was lost in Cuba."

By now, the dominant slogan in the Spanish Senate was "not even one more man or peso" for Cuba. Thus, by the end of 1897, the Spanish army was unable to mount operations and its government even less able to continue sending it reinforcements. General Blanco, on replacing Weyler in October of that year, informed Prime Minister Sagasta that "...the army was spent and weak, crowding the hospitals, without the strength to fight or barely lift their weapons..."

Its defeat was widely accepted in Madrid, a view shared by both the ruling party and the opposition, who, of one accord, offered Cuba the crumb of an autonomous government which was installed on January 1, 1898, when it was too late to withdraw the offer.

The situation in 1898 was succinctly resumed by the outstanding Spanish politician Pi y Margall: "We have not been able to defeat them with 200,000 men because they are the masters of the countryside, they know every last fold of the terrain in which they are fighting, they are aided by the climate and they are fighting for independence; they are moved and exalted by an ideal and we have none. Our soldiers go there by force..."

The opportune and skillful participation of the United States, with the complicity of the defeated Spanish governors, would rob the Cubans of such a great victory.

## SWP on Puerto Rico's sovereignty

Continued from Page 8

land. Working people in the United States have a vital stake in joining the effort to win their freedom. And we did so, once again, this past July 25, demanding that U.S. President William Clinton free them — immediately and unconditionally.

### Imperialist foreign policy

The colonial domination of Puerto Rico has been a keystone of U.S. foreign policy since the island was seized from Spain in the first war of the imperialist epoch. It serves as a reminder, above all to the peoples of Central America, the Caribbean, and South America, of the true character of U.S. interests throughout the hemisphere.

The U.S. government has covered Puerto Rico with military bases and has used it as a launching pad for military assaults on other nations, from Cuba to the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Grenada, and Panama. Puerto Rican youth, like working-class youth in the United States, have been forced to served as cannon fodder in U.S. wars of aggression, from both world wars to Korea and Vietnam. Today, in the interests of U.S. imperialism, they are deployed throughout Latin America, the Mideast, the Balkans, the Korean peninsula, and other flashpoints of class struggle around the globe. Every aspect of this foreign policy is alien to the interests of working people in the United States.

Mr. Chairman:

The growing crisis of the world capitalist system is driving greater and greater numbers of workers in the United States to re-

sist the employers' assaults on their wages and social gains — from the U.S. telephone strikers today to the General Motors auto workers and the farm workers in California's strawberry fields.

These same conditions are spurring renewed working-class struggles in Puerto Rico as well. The recent telephone workers strike and the general strike by half a million workers to oppose the sell-off to Yankee interests of the state-owned phone company are harbingers of struggles to come. They confirm the power of Puerto Rican working people when organized and the capacity of the working class to demonstrate the way forward in the fight for Puerto Rico's national sovereignty.

### An example for U.S. workers

As an airline worker whose union faces a major fight in the months ahead to win an acceptable contract — after nearly a decade of having our wages and working conditions driven down — I can say that the example of the Puerto Rican telephone workers' battle inspired many of my co-workers and has given us greater confidence in our own ability to unite and stand up for our rights.

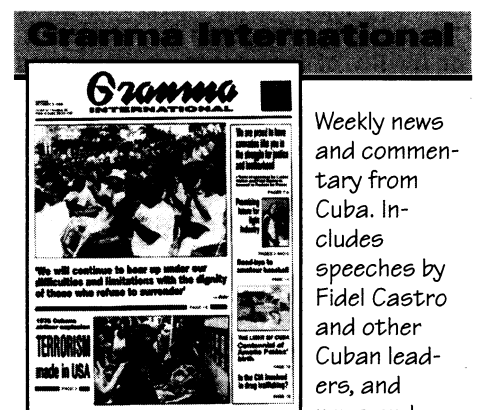
For workers and farmers in the United States, Puerto Rico's freedom is not simply a matter of solidarity, as important as that is. As long as Washington denies Puerto Rico its sovereignty and independence, labor in the United States will be hobbled in our struggles for social justice. Our own political consciousness, human solidarity, and fighting capacity will be sapped.

That is why this year we celebrate 100 years of resistance to colonial and imperialist rule, not only in Puerto Rico but in its sister nation of Cuba. The Cuban people freed themselves from U.S. domination with their 1959 revolution. Since then — despite 40 years of a relentless, brutal campaign by the U.S. government to punish them for the audacity of making that island the first free territory of the Americas — the Cuban people have shown what can be achieved when an oppressed people win true independence and become the masters of their destiny.

Cuba has consistently championed Puerto Rico's fight for national independence and set an example of dignity and selfless, internationalist solidarity. The socialist course freely chosen and steadfastly defended by the Cuban people has proven the only possible road to achieve genuine independence. Cuba shows the way forward for working people worldwide.

For these reasons, distinguished Chairman, the condemnation by this committee of colonial rule over Puerto Rico, despite Washington's objections, will be a boost to all those everywhere fighting for the right to self-determination. An end to U.S. colonial subjugation of Puerto Rico will advance the interests not only of the people of that nation, but of the vast majority of those who live and toil in the United States. The future of all humanity will be served.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this committee, for the opportunity to express these views before you here today.



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# Strikers push back nonunion contracting at Bell Atlantic

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG  
AND MICHAEL NEGGIE

NEW YORK — The Communications Workers of America (CWA) phone workers won a victory over Bell Atlantic on August 11, following a two-day strike. The telephone giant caved in to virtually every union demand, and agreed to a two-year contract subject to membership approval. Voting will take place by mail over the next four weeks.

The workers demanded a halt to the company's efforts to increase the use of non-union labor, enforcement of Bell Atlantic's contractual obligation to provide pension improvements, and hiring temporary workers permanently with full union protection and benefits.

The proposed contract would cover 73,000 CWA members at Bell Atlantic from Maine to Virginia. The previous contract dates back to a four-month strike in 1989 over the company, then NYNEX in New York, demanding workers pay for health benefits. It was extended three times.

The strike coincided with the contract expiration dates at other regional phone carriers. Some 48,000 CWA members at Bell South settled their contract without a strike. Their tentative contract includes a 12.4 percent wage increase over three years, as well as a provision that the company will hire more workers to end massive forced overtime.

As we go to press, 6,500 members of CWA Local 1298 in Connecticut are "on strike alert," having rejected a proposed settlement with Southern New England Telecommunications. The rejected offer would maintain a "two-tier wage system that people are very upset about," according to union steward Mike Petrone. While the rejected proposal narrowed the two-tier setup, it was "not enough" Petrone stated. The Connecticut bargaining committee has been meeting with a federal mediator with negotiations scheduled to begin August 20. The current contract is extended through August 22.

The International Brotherhood of Elec-

trical Workers (IBEW), representing 17,000 Bell Atlantic workers in New England, did not strike but continued to negotiate. According to IBEW Local 2222 President Ed Fitzpatrick, most major issues have been settled. The IBEW represents line workers and operators in New England while customer service and clerical staff are in the CWA.

IBEW members did honor the picket lines of the 2,800 CWA members in New England, though, in locations where both unions are represented, and 1500 IBEW members in upstate New York also stayed out.

## Strikers were prepared for battle

Workers in New York are jubilant over the quick strike victory, with a sense of its importance. "The whole thing wasn't just for us but for the future of the workers at Bell Atlantic," said Ron Jackson, celebrating the victory at the company's midtown headquarters. "We got what we wanted, what we came for," added Artie Freer, a computer installer. "You just can't treat people like that anymore," he explained, referring to company attacks over the recent period.

The CWA members were prepared for a battle. For the last year, local-by-local discussions took place to prepare for the possibility of a strike, discussing key issues and getting set to mobilize the ranks.

Commemorating the death of a striker, run over by a scab's car on the picket line during the 1989 strike, CWA members in New York held "red-shirt Thursdays." Over the last six months, more and more workers wore the union colors, with a majority participating by the time of the August 8 strike.

Many members of the union, convinced of the likelihood of a fight, established strike savings. One member of Local 1105 told the *Militant* she'd participated in a plan by putting aside "\$30 or \$40 a week, deducted directly to the credit union."

By August 7, with negotiations at an impasse, the CWA organized a two-hour walk-out from 3-5pm and held rallies throughout



Militant/Megan Arney

CWA workers at "strike-ready" rally at Bell Atlantic in Manhattan August 7.

New York City, numbering up to 2,000 at the Pearl St. Bell Atlantic building in lower Manhattan.

At the company's building in Inwood, chants were led by Spanish-speaking workers: "¡Arriba, abajo; sin contrato no trabajo!" the chant rang out, answered with the English equivalent, "No contract, no work!"

No one returned to work from the time of the walkout through the official beginning of the strike the next night, according to pickets. Leading up to the strike deadline of midnight August 8, CWA members mobilized at selected locations in New York City. Strike pickets went up over the weekend, and additional rallies were held Monday, August 10.

## Pushing back nonunion subcontracting

Among the most important gains won by the union was a provision that nearly all hourly work done for Bell Atlantic and its subsidiaries will be by CWA members. Over the course of the recently expired contract, the company has been opening subsidiaries with the purpose of eroding the union shop. An August 8 *New York Times* article bluntly noted, "Bell Atlantic has defended using the nonunion subsidiaries, saying it can increase profits by using cheaper, more flexible workers."

One letter of agreement in the settlement

returns nonunion operations to union control. For instance, according to the *New York Daily News*, a Bell Atlantic Plus facility in Hampton, Virginia, will close October 1, with the jobs of the 700 workers there returned to CWA members. Bell Atlantic will retain the ability to move up to 0.5 percent of its work between its northern and southern facilities, and can subcontract the same percentage of work.

In addition, a no-layoff clause continues from the previous contract, and new provisions are proposed for jobs phased out through changes in technology and downsizing.

At Bell Atlantic Mobile, a cellular phone subsidiary that employs 7,100 nonunion workers, no provision has been made to establish a union shop.

Leading up to the expiration of the old contract, the company had refused to honor a contract provision, known as "6&6," under which workers who choose to retire get six years added to their time on the job, as well as six years added to their age for the purpose of calculating their pension. The new proposal extends that provision though 1999 and includes other pension improvements.

Bell Atlantic's standard hiring practice is to bring in workers as temporary for one year. Under the new contract, all temporary workers hired up to May 1 this year were made permanent as of August 11, with a full benefit package.

Hourly pay is increased 3.8 percent as of Aug. 9, 1998, and 4 percent a year later, with additional lump sum payments of \$500 at ratification and \$400 on the first anniversary.

The contract also contains so-called "service standard" bonuses of up to \$700 in the years 2000 and 2001. This incentive pay underlines Bell Atlantic's drive to increase the use of merit pay along the lines its non-union competitors do.

The two-year term of the contract leaves many CWA members anticipating another fight. With last month's announcement that Bell Atlantic plans to plunk down \$52.9 billion in stock to purchase the GTE Corp., many workers think the company may be looking forward to taking another crack at weakening the CWA.

One worker assessed the union movement's strength in light of the recent UAW strike at GM as he rallied at midnight in the Bronx as the strike began: "I think we're in a good position, from a union perspective."

Michael Neggie is a member of CWA Local 1106 at Bell Atlantic in Queens, New York. Megan Arney in Newark and Elena Tate in Boston contributed to this article.

# CWA workers strike US West

Continued from front page

service problems in US West territory, while enabling the company to use bigger profits to finance new businesses, including its new

## Congo, Angola

Continued from Page 16

backed by Washington, Pretoria, and Kinshasa — to prevent the coming to power of a government led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). For more than a decade, successive attempts to overturn the MPLA government — including armed invasions by apartheid South Africa — were smashed with the decisive assistance of Cuban internationalist troops, who fought alongside the Angolan army.

UNITA participated in elections in 1992, but refused to accept the results — it lost. Savimbi's group resumed armed attacks until 1994, when it signed agreements that it never implemented to dismantle its army and become a normal political party.

Since May, Savimbi's troops have retaken more than 100 localities throughout Angola, consolidated their control over a large swath of the country's diamond-producing regions, and killed hundreds of people. In response, the government deployed 18,000 troops in regions under its control.

The UN Security Council has provided de facto encouragement to UNITA, while claiming that it wants to forestall war. UN envoy Lahkdar Brahimi said in early August that UNITA needs sufficient "political space" to comply with the accords. Meanwhile, the Security Council called on both the government and UNITA to cease "hostile propaganda, refrain from laying new mines and to stop forced conscriptions. The two parties were urged to renew efforts towards national reconciliation."

cable venture.

A few days before the strike, union locals in several cities ran an ad with a picture of a milk carton with the picture of a US West worker on it and the caption, "Missing: US West worker — last seen working forced overtime for the phone company. His family misses him. Please help." Several workers in the St. Paul repair call handling center report their families cut out the ad, taped in a picture of their family member, and put it up in their homes.

The company wants to have repair operators and technicians on a new program where their pay would depend on how quickly and accurately their work is done. Workers would be paid as if they were on a piece rate assembly line, with 20 percent of a workers pay dependent on whether the repair was made on time and on whether or not there is repeat trouble.

Repair operators would be paid no money for calls that resulted in no repair. For example, if someone reports their caller identification system doesn't work and the operator explains that all they need to do is replace the batteries in the unit, the operator gets no credit for that call. A technician might lose money if he or she has to take extra time dealing with deteriorating cables or equipment that US West should have upgraded.

When asked about the new pay plan, Mike Phillips, who has worked at US West for 30 years, said, "I don't like it. It is going to cause infighting. It's going to be hard on new people."

A similar pay plan was forced onto sales consultants three years ago. More than two-thirds of those workers are unable to earn more than the base pay, and turnover in the department is very high. Many workers learn the trade and then either transfer to another department or go to work for another tele-

communications company.

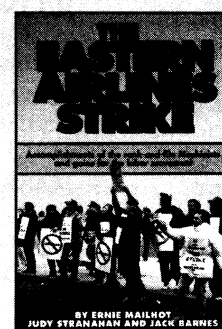
This pay plan clearly is an attempt to divide the workforce, in addition to being a way to up the profits for the company. In the last week before the strike, eight sales consultants in St. Paul decided to pull out of the union. They are among the few who do make more money on the new plan and disagree with the union's position against it. The company is also trying to impose a new health proposal requiring each worker to go with the cheapest HMO in their city. To maintain their current doctors, workers would be required to pay an extra \$800-\$1,000 a year.

Many CWA locals held rallies and mass picketing at noon August 17. Three hundred strikers rallied at US West's Minnesota headquarters in downtown Minneapolis.

In Des Moines, Iowa, about 250 members of CWA Local 7102, many wearing blue union T-shirts, rallied in front of the company offices there. Sarah Downing, president of the local, addressed the strikers with an update on negotiations. There are about 1,000 strikers in the Des Moines area. Following the talk, the unionists marched around the building.

Anticipating the strike could last a while, the Des Moines workers are planning to rally at 5:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the East University Ave. switching center, and on Wednesdays at the downtown US West office.

Becky Ellis is a member CWA Local 7201 at US West in St. Paul. Tim Mailhot, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Des Moines, contributed to this article.



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# London fails to undercut Irish struggle

BY PAMELA HOLMES  
AND TONY HUNT

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — The British colonial rulers in Northern Ireland are falling flat in their attempt to reverse nationalist gains by exploiting sympathy for the 28 people killed and more than 200 injured by a car bomb in the town of Omagh August 15.

The growing nationalist confidence was underlined by a week of cultural, sporting, social, and political events in the republican areas of Belfast August 2-9, as well as the historic agreement in Derry August 3 between the Bogside Residents Group (BRG) and the rightist Apprentice Boys. The Apprentice Boys made significant concessions in the organization of their annual sectarian parade. This forced London to ban or reroute sectarian marches through other small nationalist communities.

On August 18, a group calling itself the Real IRA [Irish Republican Army] claimed responsibility for the Omagh bomb. The group later announced a cease-fire. Meanwhile, London and the capitalist rulers in the south of Ireland have taken aim at democratic rights. Using the bombing as a pretext, on August 19 the Dublin government announced proposals they called "extremely draconian." Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said the measures, if approved by an emergency session of the Cabinet, would include restricting the right to bail for suspected "terrorists," allowing judges to infer guilt if a suspect refuses to answer a question, and extending the potential imprisonment of suspects without charge from 48 to 96 hours.

Sinn Fein, the party leading the struggle for a united Ireland, condemned the bombing and called on those responsible to cease their activities. In response, the big-business media called on Sinn Fein's leadership to cooperate with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) — the heavily armed police who enforce British rule — in the hunt for the perpetrators. "I'm not an informer," Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness told BBC TV in response.

A group called the 32 County Sovereignty Committee, which opposes the April 10 agreement on the future of Northern Ireland, was fingered in the press for the bombing, a charge the group vigorously denied. The son of one of its leaders was arrested with four others August 18 under London's Prevention of Terrorism Act, which allows detention without charge for seven days. Michael McKevitt, the companion of longtime Irish fighter Bernadette Sands-McKevitt, has been accused of masterminding the bombing. Both deny having anything to do with the bombing.

## Events underline nationalist confidence

"The British government has been unable to break you people of republican Belfast and throughout Ireland," declared Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams at a rally August 9 in front of Belfast City Hall. Thousands had just marched there in a demonstration, 27 years after the British government imposed internment without trial in the north. The event marked the 30th anniversary of the opening of the most recent phase of resistance in 1968 and the 200th anniversary of the 1798 rebellion led by the United Irishmen, headed by by Wolfe Tone, a Protestant leader of the Irish freedom struggle who was inspired by the 1789 French revolution. "It's taken 30 years to get this far and we haven't gone away. A lot of people died to get us here," said John Macstravick. "We were prevented from marching to the city center until a few years ago."

Eighteen-year-old Stiofan Macleid, said, "There's more chance of a united Ireland now than there has been for a long time. We are definitely more confident today."

One among a group of four 11- and 12-year-olds, who asked for their names not to be used, said, "The Brits should be arrested because they killed a lot of our people. They said they wouldn't be on the streets but you see them every day. They come up to the schools all the time... and get bricked!"

International delegations from Britain, the United States, and the Basque country joined the march. A delegation from Cuba carried the banner of the local Cuba Solidarity Group. Their revolutionary greetings to the rally were enthusiastically received. In town all week for the West Belfast Festival, the delegation was led by Alfredo León, from the international department of the Central

Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. A full-page interview with León was featured in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, a newspaper that reflects the views of Sinn Fein, and a shorter interview appeared in the local *AndersonTown News*. Adams spoke at the August 8 unveiling of a memorial to four Irish Republican Army volunteers — including Bobby Sands, who died leading a hunger strike for political status for republican prisoners in 1981. Until a cease-fire in 1997, the IRA waged a military campaign to end British rule. Addressing the 1,000 in attendance, Adams pointed to the 200-year continuity of struggle for Irish freedom. "The United Irishmen first raised the equality agenda.... They brought the flag from the barricades of Paris," he said, pointing to the Irish flag. "The unity of orange and green under liberty, fraternity, and equality."

Former political prisoner Martin Meehan addressed a "30 Years of the Struggle" forum in North Belfast August 5. He is the chairperson of Saoirse, the organization calling for the release of all political prisoners.

At "West Belfast Talks Back," Sinn Fein leader McGuinness told the audience of 500 that "Unionism is in the greatest crisis it has seen since partition.... The Unionist vote is in decline and the nationalist vote is rising and it's scaring the daylight out of the Unionist leadership." However, the Sinn Fein leader put the biggest responsibility for the continued second-class status of Catholics in Northern Ireland on the British government.

Brendan MacCionnaith, leader of the

Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition, said, "This year the Orange card was played at Drumcree and it was torn up," describing events in Portadown. That's where the rightist Orange Order was humiliated after its triumphalist march was halted by London.

The BRG had prevented a potential conflict in Derry from becoming a rallying point for loyalists — those loyal to the union with the United Kingdom — to retake the ground lost on the Garvaghy Road. MacNiallais called on the Apprentice Boys to now engage in face-to-face dialogue. On the Apprentice Boys' August 8 march there was only one violent incident, when an RUC cop pulled a gun on a group of nationalist youth. *Republican News* paid tribute to the discipline of nationalists.

## Release of political prisoners

Under the terms of the April 10 agreement, some 420 prisoners are eligible to be released within two years. The first releases were expected by the end of August. Speaking at the August 9 rally, Martin Meehan urged nationalists not to be complacent and to maintain actions in the streets. "Not one prisoner has been released in the occupied six counties," he added. "There are still six prisoners incarcerated in jails in England. Use that as your marker."

During the Annual Prisoners' Day at the Felons Club August 7, a panel of speakers reviewed the history of prison struggles. Their accounts highlighted London's constant failure to break Irish fighters and the leadership role of women prisoners and fam-

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### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Eyewitness Report from Ireland.** Speaker: Brad Downs, Socialist Workers Party and member, United Auto Workers, who just returned from Ireland. Downs witnessed protests against triumphalist Unionist marches through nationalist neighborhoods. Fri., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m.

Dinner 6:30 p.m.

**What Is the Root of Detroit's Economic Crisis?** Speaker: John Sarge, Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in 15th C.D. and member of the United Auto Workers. Fri., Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Both events to be held at 7414 Woodward.

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#### Brooklyn

**The Crisis Facing Family Farmers Today.** Speakers: Gary Grant, President of the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association, Tillery, North Carolina; John Bender, Empire State Family Farm Coalition; Ken Dibbell, New York dairy farmer, member of the National Family Farm Coalition; and others. Fri., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. 59 Fourth Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

### OHIO

#### Cleveland

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ily members. Chris Moran of the Committee Against Strip-Searching explained that six women prisoners in Maghaberry jail are strip-searched when leaving to go to court.

The brutality of the British occupying forces was also highlighted at a "Forgotten Victims" event. Many of the 300 in attendance were relatives of 400 people killed by British troops and RUC since 1968. Bill Rolston of the Relatives for Justice group explained that for London "there are two classes of victims. One are 'real' victims and the others are victims of the RUC and British army. A lot of effort has gone into forgetting these victims, both by the British state and the media."

"The RUC has to go," Sinn Fein president Adams said at the August 9 rally — a view echoed on signs in nationalist areas.

Responding to Unionist demands that Sinn Fein declare that the "war is over," Adams said in a newspaper article that "the war will be over when all of those who have engaged in war — and some are still engaging in war — stop; when the British army of occupation, which still maintains a huge presence in republican areas, begins demilitarizing instead of militarizing; when all the prisoners are free; when there is justice and equality, and when we have a proper policing service."

*Pamela Holmes is a member of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union in London. Paul Davies from Manchester and Jim Upton from Montreal contributed to this article.*

**"Struggles in Steel"** Video show about the fight against racial discrimination in the steel mills. Speaker: Leroy Watson, Socialist Workers Party, member of the United Steelworkers of America. Fri., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. 1832 Euclid Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Hear the Socialist Workers Candidates in D.C.** Speakers: Sam Manuel for Mayor of Washington, D.C.; Mary Martin for delegate to the House of Representatives; Brian Williams for City Council Chairman; Olympia Newton for City Council At-Large. Sat., Aug. 22 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**The Nazis: A Warning from History.** Speaker: Terry Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 28, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel (9) 379-3075.

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**Neurotic?** — From Tokyo, AP reports: "In another bleak assessment of the economy, the Bank of Japan said...the ratio of job offers to seekers has dropped to an historic



Harry  
Ring

low and that incomes are falling as well." The Bank glumly observed: "Consumer sentiment seems to be turning cautious again."

**Malcontents** — If approved by

a bankruptcy judge, the three top dogs at FPA Medical Management will collect handsome raises and bonuses. Meanwhile, the judge is getting noise from thousands of workers fired in Texas, Arizona, and California. They've been denied accrued vacation money and severance pay.

**Thieves fall in** — Al "Chain-saw" Dunlap, king of the downsizers, and Sunbeam appliances have joined forces to cope with a stockholder suit and a federal probe.

Dunlap was fired in June, apparently for cooking the books and juggling sales results. Sunbeam has

agreed to pay him \$52,000 accrued vacation pay, but it's still dodging his demand for \$27 million severance pay.

**A truly great society** — Two million children continue to die each year because they're not vaccinated against measles, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, polio, or tuberculosis, reports the UN children's agency, UNICEF.

**Besides, it's only kids** — In selecting school sites the Los Angeles school district doesn't worry much about environmental risks. Like, for instance, the inner-city school built on the location of

former furniture factories and a gas station. And across the street from a former chrome plating plant. Declared an official: "There are no good sites for schools in an urban environment. You can't choose bean fields."

**No affordable housing, says who?** — At the Beverly Hills Plaza Hotel, de luxe suites that usually go for \$9,000 a month are now available for \$5,500.

**Modern Times** — Milan jewelers are marketing a rosary shaped like a credit card. With multiclass appeal, its available in plastic, copper embossed, or diamond-studded

gold. The card seems to have Vatican approval. Meanwhile, caution was voiced that some users might think "they can enter the Gates of Heaven by punching in their personal identification number."

**Thought for the week** — "The Caribbean leaders say their embrace of Castro is also pragmatic. In a region where the U.S. cuts its foreign aid by 90 percent between 1985 and 1995, Havana's advanced medical and educational resources have more to offer than Washington." — Report by *Los Angeles Times* on Fidel Castro's visit to Caribbean nations.

# How Washington militarized Puerto Rico

The following is an excerpt from "The U.S. Militarization of Puerto Rico," published in the collection *One People, One Destiny: The Caribbean and Central America Today*. The presentation below was made to the February 1986 meeting of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America held in Managua, Nicaragua. Doris Pizarro was at that time the deputy general secretary of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. The book *One People, One Destiny* is copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY DORIS PIZARRO

The military use of Puerto Rico for the achievement of U.S. objectives in the Caribbean region was always one of the main reasons motivating the Spanish-American-

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

Cuban war...

Above all, the aim was to assure the United States of a territory that could be turned into a great military base where it could do as it pleased, without the interference of any government nor the application of any authority other than its own.

On March 2, 1917, the U.S. Congress approved a law called the Jones Act, imposing U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans. Leaving aside the dramatic implications that such an imposition has on a people struggling to defend its nationality and independence, the Jones Act paved the way for the use of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans for military purposes.

This unilateral and foreign law enables us to determine the type of relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States that has prevailed up to the present day. It is therefore worth bearing in mind that the problem of militarism and militarization in our case refers to the extension of the colonial power's military apparatus into the colony and its impact on the colonial society without the mediation of local groups...

A few days after imposing U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans, the United States began its participation in World War I. This was the first time that Puerto Rican youth were recruited to go to the battlefield thousands of kilometers from their homeland to

defend the interests of U.S. imperialism. This was the beginning of the long list of Puerto Ricans who were killed, wounded, or incapacitated while serving as cannon fodder for the colonial power.

The same thing happened in World War II, in the U.S. aggression against Korea (where more than 700 Puerto Ricans were killed), and in Vietnam where, according to the Pentagon's figures, more than 1,300 Puerto Ricans were killed and many thousands more were wounded.

All told, more than 200,000 Puerto Ricans have served in the U.S. armed forces since 1917. At present more than 10,000 Puerto Ricans are serving in that country's armed forces.

**U.S. military since 1959**

U.S. military installations in Puerto Rico had been used previously as a base of support in the bloody coup financed by the CIA in Guatemala in 1954. After the revolutionary victory in Cuba, however, our Caribbean island-nation's role as military policeman grew.

The 1962 economic blockade of Cuba was coordinated from Puerto Rico. Many of the planes that carried thousands of U.S. marines in the April 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic took off from military and civilian airports on Puerto Rican territory.

Dozens of ships and other naval forces at U.S. bases in Puerto Rico were placed on a state of alert during the people's uprising in Trinidad in 1970.<sup>1</sup>

Even more striking was the role U.S. imperialism assigned Puerto Rico during the cowardly attack on Grenada in October 1983, to which we will return later.

Equally important is the use of our young people and our territory in the U.S. threats of military escalation against Nicaragua and Central America.

In recent years Puerto Rico has been turned into an almost exclusive domain of the U.S. Navy. After the closing of the Ramey Fields strategic bomber base, the air force's activities have been reduced to providing support to units of the so-called Puerto Rican Air National Guard and to the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program in schools and universities.

The U.S. Army maintains a base in San Juan — Fort Buchanan — although there is no longer a large garrison there. The main activities of the regular army are:

1. Recruiting Puerto Ricans to serve outside the island (more than 10,000);
2. Organizing units of the reserves (more than 4,000 troops);

3. Supporting the so-called Puerto Rican National Guard (12,400 troops in 1980);

4. Coordinating the Reserve Officers Training Corps program in schools and universities;

5. Intelligence activities;

6. Various services for veterans and their families.

The U.S. Navy has its most important Caribbean naval base in Puerto Rico — Roosevelt Roads Naval Station — which is one of the largest in the world. This base covers an area of 37,000 acres, with 22,000 acres on the island of Vieques, more than two-thirds of which has been occupied by the military. Roosevelt Roads is the center of a complex of installations in the mountain region of Luquillo, Vieques, St. Croix (Virgin Islands), and in the waters east, northeast, and southeast of Puerto Rico.

Roosevelt Roads is also the headquarters of the Caribbean Naval Command, which is responsible for the naval forces stationed at Guantánamo, Cuba, and in Panama. Also located at this large naval base is the Antilles Defense Command, which would be put in charge of all U.S. military forces in the event of an emergency in the Caribbean. Located there as well is the South Atlantic Command, which coordinates U.S. naval activities with the countries of the Latin American Southern Cone and with South Africa.

Also located in this complex is the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range, of which Vieques is a part, where they experiment with new weapons and carry out naval maneuvers and shelling practice with the participation of forces from NATO and Latin American countries. Finally, the Underwater Range, an installation utilizing the most advanced technology, is the main practice ground in the Atlantic for submarine warfare.

In addition to the Roosevelt Roads complex in the east, the fleet has the Sabana Seca Communications Center near San Juan, an installation that carries out electronic espionage. There are also various communications centers to the west and south. The former Ramey base is now under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard and

could be activated by the navy any time it deemed it necessary to its interests.

The so-called Puerto Rican National Guard is in fact a branch of the U.S. armed forces in our country. It is made up of more than 12,000 troops, the majority of them Puerto Rican. In the past the National Guard has been used as an instrument of repression against workers on strike and against the patriotic movement, with the barely disguised aim of provoking a fratricidal struggle in which Puerto Ricans confront Puerto Ricans....

**U.S. invasion of Grenada**

In mid-1981 the United States staged the Ocean Venture '81 military maneuvers, considered the largest in the Caribbean since World War II. Part of these maneuvers were held on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques which, as we have already stated, is occupied by the Yankee navy.

In a speech by Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop that year, he pointed out that the imaginary name given to the island invaded in Ocean Venture '81, "Amber and the Amberines," was a clear reference to Grenada and the Grenadines. In 1982 and 1983, Ocean Venture maneuvers were repeated, with aims similar to the earlier one.

Months before the invasion, maneuvers called Universal Trek '83 were held on the island of Vieques. Their aim was to create an atmosphere as close as possible to reality and to work out the final details of the operation. The maneuver consisted of the invasion of a Caribbean island by sea, air, and land, and the capture of an airport in the face of enemy ambush....

Puerto Rico served as a staging ground for at least half the invading troops....

In addition, an undetermined number of U.S. soldiers of Puerto Rican origin took part in the Grenada invasion.

<sup>1</sup> For two months in early 1970, Trinidad was shaken by a massive upsurge. While beginning under the slogan of "Black Power," the upsurge increasingly drew in workers of Indian origin. In response to the growing movement, the government of Trinidad declared a state of emergency while U.S. warships sat offshore.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



Sept. 7, 1973

UNITED NATIONS, New York — A sense of excitement permeated an audience packed with supporters of independence for Puerto Rico when the United Nations Committee on Decolonization met last week.

Juan Mari Brás, general secretary of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), and Rubén Berrios, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), spoke before the committee Aug. 23 and 24. This unprecedented event was the first time that leaders of the independence movement in Puerto Rico have been invited to address the body.

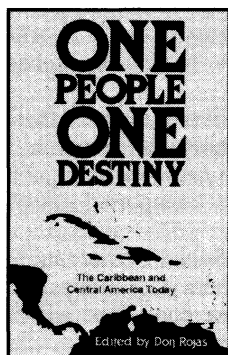
Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States since the end of the Spanish-American War. In 1952, the U.S. tried to disguise this fact by formally granting Puerto Rico the status of "Commonwealth." In reality, however, the island continues to be a U.S. colony.



September 6, 1948

Harold Russell, handless World War II veteran and star of the Academy Award motion picture "The Best Years of Our Lives" has accepted the national chairmanship of the defense committee for James Kutcher, legless Newark veteran who faces dismissal from his \$40-a-week Veterans Administration job because of his membership in the Socialist Workers Party. Kutcher, who lost both legs in combat in Italy and has taught himself to walk with artificial limbs and two canes, has challenged the 30-day dismissal notice sent to him on Aug. 13. He is fighting for his job despite his admitted affiliation with an organization on Truman's and Attorney General Clark's political blacklist. Mr. Russell is a hospital buddy of Kutcher. They occupied adjoining beds for five months. When informed of the "loyalty" purge action against his former hospital-mate, Mr. Russell immediately offered his services in Kutcher's defense.

## From Pathfinder



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Edited by Don Rojas

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# U.S. hands off Sudan, Afghanistan!

Continued from front page

Bill of Rights at home — all under the pretext of fighting terrorism. In fact, U.S. officials have warned they may order new attacks. What will be the next country assaulted?

“Today we have struck back,” declared U.S. president William Jefferson Clinton. But who is “we”? Clinton is not speaking for working people — in the United States or anywhere else in the world. Clinton and all other Democratic and Republican politicians speak for a tiny handful of super-wealthy families who own the industry, land, and banks in this country and whose profit interests reach around the world.

Working people here have nothing in common with the U.S. government or the employers it represents. Strikers at US West, farm workers fighting for a union in California, and other toilers here have everything in common with fellow workers and farmers in Sudan — such as the chemical workers whose factory was bombed in Khartoum — and in other nations targeted by Washington’s barbaric acts. We are part of the same class and have the same enemy: Washington and Wall Street.

Washington says its military assaults on Afghanistan and Sudan were targeting “terrorist-related facilities” somehow linked to those responsible for the bombs that exploded in the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. But U.S. officials don’t even bother to offer any evidence to back their claims. Their message is: “We don’t need to prove any facts. We’re Washington, the indispensable nation,” as U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright likes to refer to the U.S. government. This is like the cops who break down your door and tell you: “You don’t have any rights. We don’t need an arrest warrant — *we are* the law.”

Or, as Dimitri Simes, president of the Nixon Center, put it, “If you punish the wrong guy for a particular act, that’s not even so terrible, if you know for sure this is a bad guy.”

Why does Washington launch these assaults? It is part

of the U.S. rulers’ increasing reliance on military force to further the interests of the declining U.S. empire. These attacks are of a piece with Washington’s recent aggression against Iraq and its moves to deploy troops against the workers state in Yugoslavia. The U.S. rulers continue to threaten the Korean people with nuclear bombs. Anyone who doesn’t bow to Washington is a target.

While the bombing of the U.S. embassies does not advance the interests of working people anywhere, one must ask: Why is it that U.S. embassies are the ones that are targeted? To put it differently: Why is the U.S. government hated so much around the world, including in Africa? It’s because the U.S. empire, sinking its tentacles increasingly in all corners of the globe, is identified by millions as a plunderer of resources and the wealth produced by the sweat and blood of workers and peasants. State terrorism has been mastered by the U.S. rules to perpetuate and extend their domination and robbing of the wealth working people produce throughout the world. The bombings of the U.S. embassies are simply a case of chickens coming home to roost.

Washington is the biggest threat to the world. They have more chemical weapons than anyone. It was the CIA that ordered the 1961 assassination of anticolonial hero and Congolese president Patrice Lumumba, as U.S. officials recently admitted. It’s Washington that supported the apartheid regime in South Africa for years. It’s the U.S. government that bombed Libya in 1986, intervened in Somalia three years ago, and has supported successive military regimes in Kenya itself. They are the ones who have locked up 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S. jails, some for 18 years. All those who oppose Washington’s criminal actions against Sudan and Afghanistan should speak out loud and clear. One good example is the New York Socialist Workers campaign, which, as we go to press, has called an emergency protest at the federal building in downtown New York.

## Don’t try youth as adults

The case of two Black boys, ages seven and eight, charged with murder in Chicago has been sensationalized in the national media. These two children are portrayed as brutal, aggressive monsters. The August 11 *Chicago Tribune* headline summed up the line: “Police say suspects not too small to kill.” This is part of the rulers’ offensive to criminalize youth and blame them for society’s ills.

The investigation of the murder of 11-year-old Ryan Harris has been a travesty of justice from start to finish. With no physical evidence and no witnesses — and dismissing other leads — the cops hauled two young children into the police station, interrogated them for hours, charged them with first-degree murder, and called the case closed. The police have pushed the boundaries of what they can get away with in disregarding the democratic rights of the accused children, including the right to a lawyer, protections against self-incrimination, and the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

This case is part of a broader campaign nationally to convince working people that there is a wave of “child crime” — an assertion used to justify a culture war against youth, particularly those who are Black or Latino.

“Unless we, as a society, act to nip tormented kids in the bud, try to anticipate trouble before it happens, there may be more horrific incidents, like the one in which the 7-and 8-year old are charged. ... Our future as a civilized, compassionate and functioning society is a stake,” declares an editorial in the *Chicago Defender*. Commentaries like this promote the idea that there are some people who are just born evil and are bringing down “civilized culture.”

The government’s answer is to apply adult courts and prison sentences to young people. The Texas Legislature has even debated imposing the death penalty on children as young as 11, although the actual execution would be postponed until he or she turned 17. Cities in other states have passed gang laws, curfew laws, and imposed metal detectors in the public schools.

In face of these facts, working people and all supporters of democratic rights should join in protesting the criminalization and brutal treatment of the seven- and eight-year-old. We should demand:

End the harassment of the children and their families! No youth to be tried or sentenced as adults! Drop the charges against the boys!

## British troops out of Ireland!

The following statement was issued August 20 by the Communist League in the United Kingdom.

Britain’s rulers are cynically seeking to exploit the deep sympathy for the 28 people killed by the car bombing in Omagh, Northern Ireland, to try to erode the gains made by the nationalist struggle to end their rule there. In the name of “combating terrorism,” it is Irish people, their democratic rights, and the rights of working people in Britain that are their real target. But London will fail.

The April 10 agreement on the future of Ireland registered the weakening of British rule, brought about by the expanding struggle for Irish unity and independence. The nationalists’ achievements were highlighted this July when the Orange Order was compelled to back down from its rightist, pro-British marches through Catholic areas. The refusal of Catholics to accept British-imposed second-class status is also signaled by the growing support for Sinn Fein. In the most recent elections, the republican party increased its vote more than any other party, and in Omagh itself is the largest political party.

London would like to use the bombing by the “Real IRA,” a split from the republican movement, to see if it can chip away at these gains. Government ministers and media pundits raise the possibility of reintroducing internment without trial and convictions on the sole word of the police. Several arrests have been made since the bombing under the undemocratic “antiterror” laws that allow detention without charge for seven days and no right to a lawyer for the first 48 hours.

These are all measures used over the last 30 years to intimidate the Irish people as a whole, and through

scapegoating to force a division with working people in Britain. The mass nationalist resistance had pushed these measures onto the back burner, and this year London was forced to repeal its internment laws.

Following London’s lead, rightist politicians in Northern Ireland are now floating the idea of delaying the release of political prisoners and excluding Sinn Fein from the Northern Ireland executive. At the same time London is trying to pressure the Dublin government and Sinn Fein itself to collude with its response.

Through its crocodile tears London is seeking to make out that its 17,000 occupying troops and the hated Royal Ulster Constabulary are the forces of civilization and peace. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is London and its armed forces that are the driving force of violence. The troops were first deployed in 1969 to break the Irish civil rights movement, which was protesting the British-imposed system of discrimination against Catholics. In February 1999 a public inquiry will open, won by the nationalist struggle, into the 1972 massacre known as Bloody Sunday. That was when British troops killed 14 civil rights protesters. In addition to directly organizing such violence for decades, London has funded, armed, and supplied information to the loyalist death squads.

Too much has been fought for and won to reverse the gains of those fighting for a free, united Ireland. Nevertheless, supporters of the Irish freedom struggle need to maintain and intensify their campaign against British rule. Every step taken by London should be opposed — Britain has no right to take a single measure against the Irish people. There is only one road for London, to pull out its troops and GO!!

# Washington bombs Sudan, Afghanistan

Continued from front page

ing complex.” They said hundreds of people may have been present at the time of the evening assault.

Clinton, who ordered the assault, made a pretense of rushing back to Washington from his vacation. But Cohen confirmed that the assault had been “planned for several days.”

A CNN reporter cited an unnamed Clinton administration official as saying that the attack was a success in “disrupting the facilities,” but that the “U.S.-led war against terrorism continues” and there “may be more strikes.”

Washington’s ‘antiterror’ propaganda

Washington began cranking up its propaganda campaign against “radical Islamic fundamentalists” after the August 7 bombings of the embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, which left about 250 people dead and 5,500 injured. U.S. officials especially cited their standard list of “terrorist” states — including Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Sudan — and initiated the roundup and arrest of more than a dozen people from throughout the Mideast and North Africa.

Cohen immediately threatened military retaliation, “swiftly and with significant force,” against any government Washington declared was responsible for the attacks. As part of whipping up their “antiterrorist” campaign, Washington suspended routine operations at several embassies in Africa, as well as those in Pakistan, Switzerland, and Albania. Some 150 Marines and Navy commandos were deployed around the U.S. embassy in Tirana, Albania, August 16 after U.S. officials claimed they had “credible evidence” of a plan by a supposed international terrorist cell to bomb the building.

Several bourgeois figures began calling for a lower standard of proof in prosecuting those accused of “terrorist activities.” Dimitri Simes, president of the Nixon Center, a Washington policy institute, told the *New York Times*, “I don’t believe you need the same level of proof as a court of law.... And if you punish the wrong guy for a particular act, that’s not even so terrible, if you know for sure that this is a bad guy.”

Immediately following the bombings in Tanzania and Kenya, the U.S. state department assembled what Susan Rice, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, called “a routine roundup.” About a dozen Iraqis and Somalis, for example, were detained in Tanzania August 10.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation told the press it was reviewing a list of 200,000 suspects and more than 3,000 organized groups in its computerized “database of terrorists.” Meanwhile, the big-business newspapers ran sensationalist headlines, photos of mutilated bodies, and quickly regurgitated Washington’s blame for the bombings on several Islamic organizations in the Middle East. The first such names included the Liberation Army of the Islamic Sanctuaries; Islamic Jihad; several Islamic informational and charitable organizations; Albanians fighting for independence in Kosovo; and Saudi businessman Osama bin Laden, who was formerly backed by Washington when he organized right-wing militias to fight the Moscow-backed regime in Afghanistan.

By August 15 Washington had extradited from Pakistan to Kenya a man the U.S. government alleges carried out the bombing. Mohammed Saddiq Odeh, a 34-year-old Palestinian, was held for nine days by the Pakistani regime, which claims he made a confession, though there is no other evidence against him.

On August 18 the Pakistani government arrested two other men — one from Saudi Arabia, the other from Sudan — as suspects in the bombings. In the days leading up to the August 20 air strikes, bin Laden was increasingly referred to in the big-business press as Washington’s main target.

U.S. troops held off volunteer rescue efforts

Among workers and others in Kenya, there is widespread resentment over the unequal treatment given to those killed and injured in the Nairobi bombing, in which 12 U.S. citizens and more than 200 Kenyans died. U.S. Marines prevented Kenyan volunteers who wanted to begin rescue efforts from entering the building immediately after the blast. The U.S. ambassador stated the reason was concern for the safety of these “good Samaritans.” But the *New York Times* reported August 13 that U.S. officials said that the marines’ role was to protect the embassy’s documents.

Several Kenyan newspaper editorials reported that U.S. citizens were taken from the embassy while Kenyans were left. In addition, Kenyans were crowded into jammed hospitals while Americans were transported out of the country.

Charity Ngilu, a leader of the Social Democratic Party in Kenya, said, “We did not see them [U.S. troops] first of all saving lives. They were more concerned with their building and property.”

The same *Times* article quoted two unnamed women who were working in a camera shop. “The people are angry,” said one woman. “They say the Americans are doing nothing. They didn’t help bring out the bodies.”

Bismarck Odida, 35, an electronics repairman, said “We are angry with the Americans. They’re troublemakers.”



# Pennsylvania miners keep up their strike

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a

and threw up a round-the-clock picket line at the mine entrance. "We're sick of the claw-backs; it's time to draw a line in the sand," Gary Allan, a maintenance fitter at the site, told *Militant* reporters who visited the picket August 8.

ers at neighboring mines who had previously been covered by the same agreement. A number of the Huntly East strikers said that this had weakened the unity of all mine workers in the region.

"We thought we lost everything last year," said Allan, "but this year they seem to have found some more." The company's central demand in the new round of contract negotiations is for an end to "trades recognition." This would allow maintenance workers to do work previously done by miners, and vice-versa. The union sees this as a way to slash the workforce. "They want one guy to do two jobs," Allan commented.

At a meeting August 10, the strik-



Militant/Nell Wheeler

UMWA Local 803 members picket in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, July 27.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania — After four months the strike of 59 miners against Jeddo Coal Co. here continues with no negotiations and no apparent movement toward negotiations.

Since the strike by members of United Mine Workers of America Locals 803 and 1531 began on March 26, the bosses have not tried to mine any coal from the anthracite strip mine, but they are still hauling coal that was mined before the walkout.

"We're not letting down," striker Jim De told the *Militant*. He described how strikers have prevented some trucks from hauling coal by "just walking alongside them and explaining the situation. We didn't raise our voices or anything — and they drove out the other side with their trucks still empty."

The miners, who have been without a contract for four years, are fighting the company's attempt to impose its "final offer." This includes paying wages that are about \$2.50 per hour lower than at other unionized mines in the region and gutting seniority rights and other union work rules.

Jeddo has proposed filling in large portions of the huge strip mine with solid waste trucked in from New York. The strikers have helped to mobilize opposition to this scheme, which has stopped it so far.

Striker Richard Patskan, whose father was killed in an underground mine accident, said he thought labor should fight for health care for all. "Everybody is facing the same thing, from layoffs to wage cuts," commented striker Wayne Pesotone. "Labor has to stick together."

### New Zealand coal miners strike Solid Energy

HUNTLY, New Zealand — Rejecting fresh concession demands from their employer, Solid Energy, workers at the Huntly East coal mine walked off the job August 6

Sixty miners and 28 maintenance workers, all members of the Engineers Union, work at the underground facility. Allan explained that in June 1997 the company threatened to close the mine. In a close vote the union then agreed to a contract containing stiff concessions. The work week was increased from 36 to 42.5 hours, and penalty rates for overtime work were abolished.

Solid Energy also succeeded in forcing separate contracts on work-

BY FELICITY COGGAN AND COLIN PARKER

TAINGAEHE, Northland, New Zealand — After finishing evening milking July 30, sharemilker Russell McDonald and his supporters — local dairy farmers and farm workers — celebrated a victory in a dispute with McDonald's previous employer, farm owner Barry Barfoote. Earlier that day, they had ended a 10-day picket at Barfoote's farm gate after reaching a deal that the farm owner would release McDonald's herd of 170 cows. McDonald is still required to pay \$120,000 in court costs to Barfoote, who sacked him earlier this year by ending his sharemilking contract.

Like many sharemilkers, Mc-

Donald had a "50:50" contract. He owned the cows and some machinery such as tractors, looked after the herd, and provided the labor to milk them. While Barfoote owns the land and buildings, income from the sale of the milk was split on a 50:50 basis between the two. Sharemilkers comprise about one-third of all dairy farmers in New Zealand and are responsible for 60 percent of milk produced, McDonald told the *Militant*.

McDonald's problems with his employer date back two and a half years, to the beginning of his contract on Barfoote's farm. In a telephone interview with the *Militant*, McDonald explained that the farm owner, who has assets worth around

\$4 million, had reneged on promises to share grazing costs and allow him to increase the herd, and as well as withholding his monthly paycheck.

Farmers often work for many years as sharemilkers to save enough to buy their own farm. McDonald was anticipating being able to do this when this contract ended. "This has effectively blown 14 years of my life out of the water" he said.

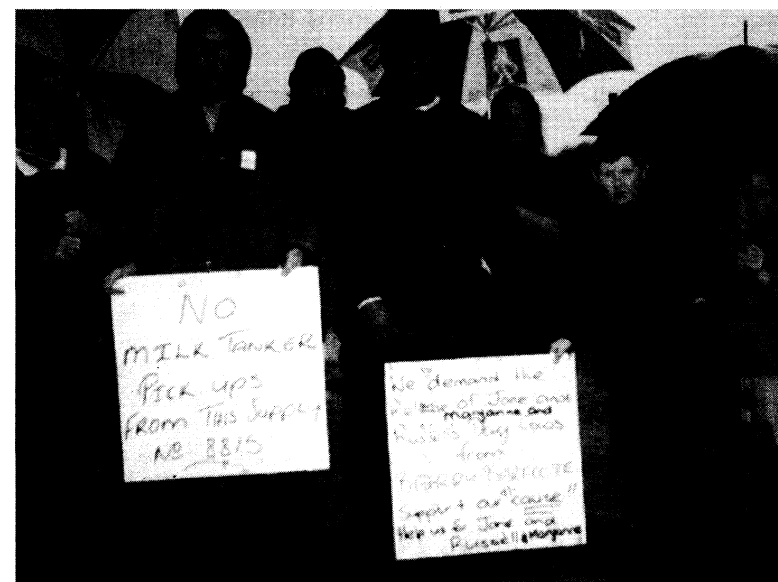
In March Barfoote sacked McDonald, using the excuse that his herd was three cows short of the number specified in the contract — a matter usually resolved by compensation. The firing sets a bad precedent, explained McDonald. "You're going to get families, cows, and machinery turfed out willy-nilly." He said that he believed Barfoote was looking for a way to end the contract early to get his own herd on the farm.

The matter went to arbitration. The arbitrator ruled in Barfoote's favor, stipulating that part of McDonald's herd should be held by the farm owner as security for substantial legal costs also awarded him. McDonald finally secured an advance of money from a benefactor to use as security, allowing the herd to be released July 30.

The picket, at times up to 30-strong, drew in local farmers and farm workers, outraged by Barfoote's actions. "They can't just take your cows," farm worker Nicky Clayden told the *Militant* on a visit to the picket July 25.

Few of the protesters had been involved in such an action before.

Lee Oleson, a member of the United Transportation Union, and Nell Wheeler in Newark, New Jersey; and Terry Coggan, a member of the Engineers Union in Auckland, New Zealand, contributed to this column.



Militant/Felicity Coggan

Picket line July 25 demands return of Russell McDonald's herd.

## LETTERS

### Reject pro-cop campaign

Workers at Ford Electronics where I work are discussing the death of undercover cop William Hancox, who was stabbed to death in a mall parking lot on August 5. Two women who are white, described in the press as "drifters," have been arrested and charged with second degree murder.

Every co-worker who is Black that I spoke to said they were "relieved" that the cops had not arrested a Black person. They said every time this happens they and their kids get more racist cop harassment on the street. I said I knew where they were coming from, but I pointed out that an arrest doesn't mean guilt. We have to defend the presumption of innocence, which cops don't do.

Another co-worker said that the cop "was too young to die." The media has been playing up the fact

that Hancox was a father with a wife who is eight months pregnant. The cops and capitalist politicians are organizing a massive "law and order" funeral August 10. Ten thousand cops from a variety of cop agencies throughout Canada and the United States are expected to attend.

I replied that I get angry when I see these pro-cop campaigns and political funerals every time a cop is killed.

Where are the parades and media campaigns for safe working conditions when ordinary workers get killed on the job, like the 26 Westray coal miners who were murdered by their negligent profit-hungry bosses in Nova Scotia a few years ago in an explosion caused by an illegal buildup of coal dust? The company owners and managers got off without criminal charges. The Steelworkers union is now trying to get the federal criminal code amended

so that employers who kill workers can be charged.

The *Toronto Star* reports that between 1961 and 1997, 112 cops were killed on the job in Canada. Over that same time span, tens of thousands of workers were killed and maimed on the job.

The USWA lawyer working on the Westray case reports that today in Canada 900 to 1,000 workers die on the job each year — that's three a day!

Two weights, two measures. Two classes with different interests. For ruling-class families, the life of a cop who defends the "law and order" of their profit system, is sacrosanct. The death of a worker who creates their wealth by selling his or her labor power, is not worth mentioning. It's just a cost factor in their balance sheets.

John Steele  
Toronto, Ontario

### 'Lenin on Trade Unions'

I bought *On Trade Unions* by Lenin at the Pittsburgh Active Workers Conference and began the task of reading it. The passage noted below reminded me of some aspects of the discussion and presentations:

"The spontaneous upsurge of the masses in Russia proceeded (and continues) with such rapidity that the young Social-Democrats proved unprepared to meet these gigantic tasks."

This unpreparedness is our common misfortune, the misfortune of all Russian Social-Democrats. The upsurge of the masses proceeded and spread with uninterrupted continuity; it not only continued in the places where it began, but spread to new localities and to new strata of the population (under the influence of the working-class movement, there was a renewed ferment among the student youth, among the

intellectuals generally, and even among the peasantry).

Revolutionaries, however, lagged behind this upsurge, both in their 'theories' and in their activity; they failed to establish a constant and continuous organization capable of leading the whole movement."

David Johnson  
Toronto, Ontario

Editor's note: The excerpt Johnson cites is from VI. Lenin's pamphlet *What is to be Done?*, written in 1901 as part of the fight to forge what became the Bolshevik party.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. 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.

## S. African strikers demand pay

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Oil, chemical, and automobile workers came out swinging against the bosses in the annual wage negotiations here. More than 40,000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) walked out of oil refineries, and chemical and pharmaceutical plants in the first week of August.

More than 20,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa struck the seven major auto assembly plants a week later. Picket lines were militant and determined, and thousands of workers joined marches in Johannesburg and other cities.

A central demand of both unions is for wage agreements that outpace the rate of inflation, which currently hovers at about 6 percent. But further price rises are on the way. The South African rand has lost 20 percent of its value against the dollar since May and banks have raised interest rates to record highs.

The chemical workers' union is demanding a 10 percent wage increase and a R2,000 monthly minimum wage (about \$315). The employers began by offering only 6-8 percent. Auto workers called for a wage increase of two percent more than the inflation rate in the last two years of a three-year agreement.

NUMSA and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organization settled the strike on August 17. The agreement does not guarantee an inflation-plus-two percent wage package, but it does ensure that workers will achieve wage increases that at least meet inflation if it rises above 7 percent. At lower levels, wage increases will be more than the inflation rate. The auto bosses were under pressure to settle quickly because of export contract obligations.

CWIU strikers succeeded in blockading several oil refineries and depots in the first few days of the walkout, and petrol stations began running out of fuel. The union removed the blockades after court orders on behalf of the employers.

At the Amalgamated Chemicals Association (ACA) plant to the north of the city, shop steward Lynn Bullock said that about 70 workers had struck the pharmaceutical distributor at this location. More than 100 strikers — including workers from other plants — were outside the front gate in a spirited picket.

Striker Cynthia Mangesi, whose first language is Xhosa, said that she started as an assembler in 1990, and pointed to the importance of affirmative action. "There is no

development here. You work in the same place until you die. And I'm one of the only Africans working in the plant." Most ACA workers are black, but were classified under the apartheid regime as Colored, a term that persists.

Mangesi says that increasing the minimum wage is critical. "I support my whole family. This month there will be no money, but we must do this or have no future."

Few workers in South Africa would agree with the view expressed by many middle-class commentators that nothing has changed here since the first democratic, non-racial elections in 1994.

Asked about the changes, Mangesi put it succinctly. "Yes, things are so different. We workers can now fight together. Before, we had to take whatever the company meant to give us. Now we don't.... And we can talk now."

Both the CWIU and NUMSA are affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which groups those trade unions that participated in the movement against apartheid rule led by the African National Congress (ANC). Several thousand members of the South African Chemical Workers Union also struck against chemical companies, beginning and ending their walkout before the CWIU strike.

Spokespeople for the bosses violence-baited strikers and said the workers were scaring away investors. A typical editorial in the August 9 *Sunday Independent* said that "South Africa can no longer afford the disastrous spate of strikes now threatening to wreck the economy.... The international markets, clearly convinced that the government is unable to contain a growing labour militancy, have already spoken and their judgment is reflected in the plummeting value of our currency." The paper scolded that unions must "see beyond their immediate self-interest."

## Puerto Rican 'independentista' wins transfer from maximum security prison

BY VERÓNICA POSES

CHICAGO — The campaign to free Puerto Rican political prisoners scored a victory August 6 when the Bureau of Prisons transferred Oscar López Rivera from solitary confinement in the federal prison in Marion, Illinois, to the U.S. penitentiary in

Terre Haute, Indiana. He is now in the general prison population.

López is one of 15 Puerto Rican independence fighters being held in U.S. jails. He is in the same prison with Ricardo Jiménez, another Puerto Rican political prisoner.

The U.S. government claims López is a

central leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) and he has been singled out for particularly heinous treatment.

He was first jailed in 1981 and sentenced to 55 years in prison for "seditious conspiracy." Later in 1988 he was framed for "conspiracy to escape" and 15 more years were added to his sentence.

The only evidence in the trial was testimony from another prisoner. López spent the last 12 years in solitary confinement. For nearly three of those years he was locked up in a Florence, Colorado, maximum security prison.

For most of this time, he was kept locked in a bathroom-sized cell in complete isolation for 22 hours a day. He has been subjected to sleep deprivation, intrusive body searches, and a nearly complete lack of outdoor recreation.

He was not allowed direct contact visits and could only talk to his visitors through Plexiglass and a telephone. He could only leave his cell in handcuffs.

Other fighters who have been jailed at Marion include American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier and Puerto Rican Nationalist Rafael Cancel Miranda.

"This is a tremendous victory" said Marcos Vilar, coordinator of the National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, one of the main organizations involved in the campaign to free the 15 fighters for Puerto Rican independence. "We've been on a campaign for almost two years to get him out of Marion."

Last year activists from Chicago and other cities picketed the facility. Thousands of people around the world have sent letters demanding López's transfer.

Press reports have indicated little if any popular support for either Kabila's government or the rebels. As of August 17, the rebellion was said to be encountering very little opposition and had already taken major towns in the east and west of the country. Some news reports stated that the rebels might be within Kinshasa, the Congolese capital, within a week of that date.

These events will also have consequences for neighboring Angola. As the Angolan people won their independence from Portugal in 1975, UNITA launched a civil war —

Continued on Page 11

### Rally in Alabama condemns police brutality



Militant/Rich Stuart

About 1,000 workers and youth marched through Talladega, Alabama, August 15 demanding justice for Donald "Bruno" Nabors, a Black Vietnam veteran gunned down by police July 31. The march, organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, ended with a rally at City Hall. The crowd included activists from Atlanta and from Anniston, Decatur, and Wedowee, Alabama.

NUMSA spokesperson Tony Kgobe replied that there had been recent strikes by workers in the United States at General Motors and at Hyundai in South Korea. "Even in developed countries workers embark on strike action," he said.

Tony Leon, leader of the Democratic Party, which is fast becoming the chief opposition party to the ANC, called for a curb on union power. Casting himself as a de-

fender of the poor and unemployed, he urged a ban on secondary strikes and picketing, the secret balloting of workers at home before strikes, and making unions liable for the loss of profits resulting from a strike.

The ANC's Shepherd Mdladlana, recently appointed Labor Minister, refused calls to intervene in the strikes. He pointed out that workers' right to strike is written into the bill of rights.

## Military rebellion threatens Congo gov't

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Large-scale military clashes have broken out in southern Africa. In early August, a military rebellion opened against the government of Laurent Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), which directly affects neighboring Rwanda and Uganda. Imperialist governments, particularly Washington, Brussels, and Paris, are maneuvering to stake out a position in the region. U.S. president William Clinton has ordered two warships with 1,200 Marines to head for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

At the same time, the government of Angola is mobilizing troops in response to renewed assaults by the reactionary National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi. Since 1994, the Angolan government and UNITA have operated under the terms of a United Nations "peace" accord. The U.S., Russian, and Portuguese governments are "monitoring" the accord. A U.S. official said the Angolan government has been warned not to do anything "precipitous."

The big-business press is once again presenting the events in the region largely as a consequence of alleged ethnic hatreds between those of Hutu and Tutsi background.

But while some forces are using appeals to reactionary nationalism along these lines, these are class, not "ethnic" conflicts.

Kabila, a former businessman, stood at the head of an armed rebellion that ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997. Kabila's march on Kinshasa reportedly had strong military support from the governments of Rwanda and Uganda. The Rwandan government in particular, which opposed Mobutu, also wanted to put an end to armed raids by militias in eastern Zaire that had participated in the massacres in Rwanda in 1994. As many as half a million Rwandans were butchered that year, especially those of Tutsi background. The slaughter had its origins in the social relations foisted upon the African toilers by colonial powers Germany and later Belgium.

The forces fighting Kabila today comprise 19 battalions consisting of about 15,000 troops. The rebellion includes former officials of Kabila's regime, a cross-section of the military, people of Rwandan birth and Tutsi background living in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and — according to Kabila — Rwandan troops. Kabila says Rwanda has invaded and that his troops will take the war back into Kigali. The government has locked up hundreds of "Rwandans"