

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Locked-out Kaiser Aluminum**  
**workers rally in Spokane**

— PAGE 11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 28 AUGUST 16, 1999

## Washington consolidates Yugoslavia occupation

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS  
 AND BOBBIS MISAILIDES

ATHENS, Greece — Thousands of working people, youth, soldiers, and others have hit the streets in cities and towns throughout Serbia. They are taking advantage of the first openings since the U.S./NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia began March 24 to express their outrage against the Belgrade regime and its policies. Meanwhile, the U.S.-led NATO forces are consolidating their occupation of Kosova, reinforcing and exacerbating the national chauvinism promoted by the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic.

The protesters' main demand is the resignation of Milosevic, explained Dusan, a leader of the Student Union of Yugoslavia, in a phone interview from Novi Sad. Other demands include the creation of a provisional government, new elections, and democratic rights.

"The demonstrations are positive," said Dusan, who asked that his last name not be

Continued on Page 6

## Caravans prepare to shove off for Active Workers Conference

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Dean Cook, one of the oil workers fighting a lockout by Crown Central Petroleum, and others in the Houston area are revving up their engines to begin a two-and-a-half-day caravan to Oberlin, Ohio — the location of the August 5-8 Active Workers Conference. "A couple catfish workers in Belzoni, Mississippi, are making plans and working things out to go," Cook told the *Militant*. Catfish workers — most of them women who are Black — have been in a fight for many months to demand an end to miserable working conditions and discriminatory treatment. "They are doing some fund-raising this weekend" to cover the costs of the trip, Cook said.

A student from Guatemala is also planning to join the caravan. "His first link to us was through *Perspectiva Mundial*," the Spanish-language sister magazine to the *Militant*, said Laura Garza, a Steelworker and member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee in Houston.

He was referred to the magazine on the Internet. "He wrote to *Perspectiva* asking if he could subscribe and be hooked up with like-minded people in his area. They directed him to the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists in Houston."

The student wrote to socialists in Houston, who invited him to a recent educational weekend with a theme of celebrating the

Continued on Page 5

## Shipyard strikers: 'We've got to stand up for rights'

Newport News workers discuss impact of their fight

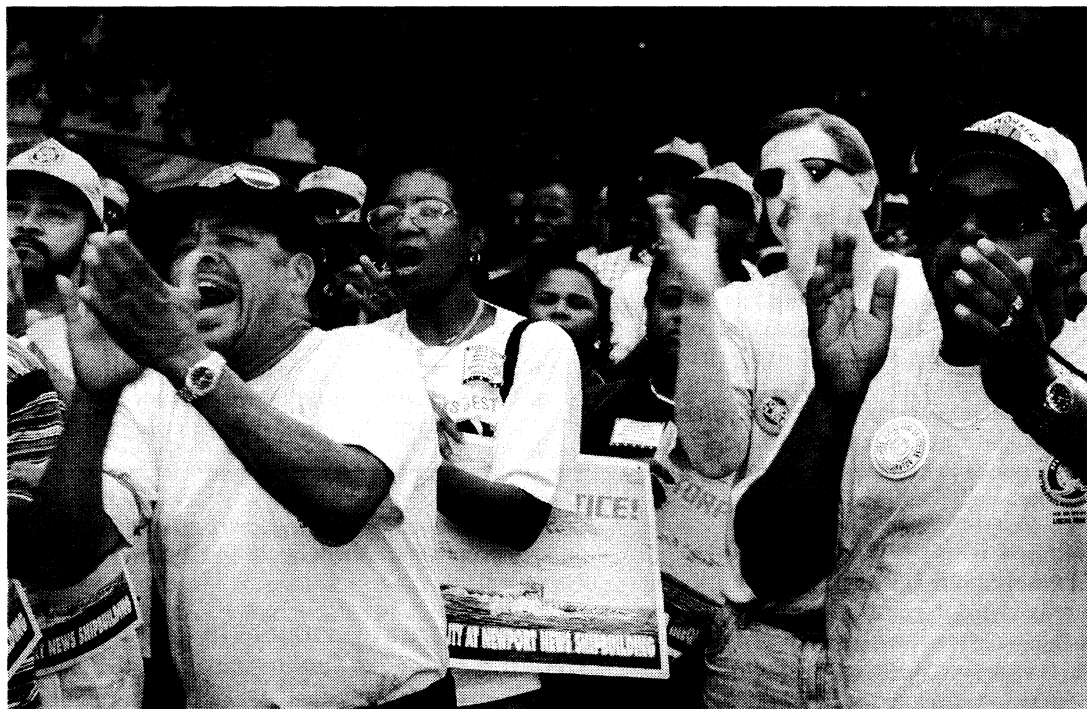
BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia — More than 4,000 striking Steelworkers packed the Hampton University Convocation Center July 23 to hear about and discuss a tentative contract agreement between negotiators for United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888 and Newport News Shipbuilding, reached a few hours before.

At this meeting, and over the course of the next week, Steelworkers who have been on strike for 16 weeks have been discussing and debating the contract, what's been accomplished through this strike, what more can be won, and how best to strengthen the union in its ongoing fight against the company.

The ratification vote, originally scheduled for July 27, has been postponed until July 30, in order to allow local mem-

Continued on Page 8



Militant/Salm Kolis

Members of USWA Local 8888 at Newport News rally in Richmond, Virginia, June 25.

## Protesters demand: 'Free Puerto Rican political prisoners, U.S. Navy out of Vieques'

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "We are here to demand the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners," said José López, the ex-

ecutive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center from Chicago, as he addressed an enthusiastic crowd of 250 people at a rally July 23 in Lafayette Park across from

the White House. "We are here in solidarity with the people of Vieques."

López explained that the people of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, through their ongoing protests against the U.S. Navy occupation of their land, were teaching an important lesson. Through these protests, he said, "The Puerto Rican nation is coming together as one people" to tell the U.S. military to get out of Puerto Rico.

Local resident David Sanes was killed in an April 19 "accidental" bombing in Vieques by the U.S. Navy during their war in Yugoslavia. This sparked widespread protests across Puerto Rico, involving fishermen, workers, youth, and others, including bourgeois political figures. On July 4, tens of thousands of people marched in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, calling for the Navy to get out of Vieques.

After listing many of Washington's attacks on Puerto Rican nationalists, 17 of whom are imprisoned in U.S. jails for advocating their country's independence, López stated, "We're also here to remind the U.S. that 101 years ago they invaded Puerto Rico. It's time to exercise self-determination and independence."

A number of participants in the Washington, D.C., action decided to come after joining picket lines at federal buildings across the country July 7, to protest that day's sentencing of José Solís Jordán to 51 months

Continued on Page 4

### FROM PATHFINDER

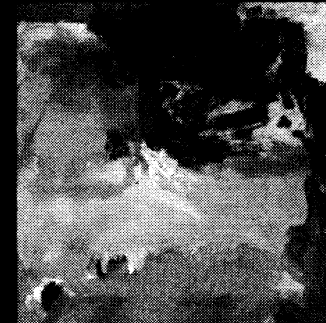
#### CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

"Revolutionary-minded workers must learn to read broadly, to take complicated questions seriously and work at them — and to study together with co-workers, youth, and newly won members of the communist movement. The capitalist rulers do everything they can to confuse workers, to make us believe we must rely on experts, wizards, and pollsters. They try to obfuscate — about economics, about stocks and bonds, about the monarchy in Britain, about the church in Poland, about class relations in the United States, about education and wage differentials, you name it." \$23.95

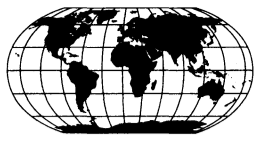
Jack Barnes

#### CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER



WORKING-CLASS POLITICS  
 AT THE MILLENNIUM

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



**Washington kills 33 in Iraq**

U.S. warplanes killed 17 civilians, wounded 18 others, and destroyed a number of houses on July 17, in an assault on the city of al-Najaf in southern Iraq. The al-Manadhirah subdistrict, where the bombing took place, is a civilian neighborhood in which there are no military units. The same day, the imperialist forces bombarded the city of al-Kufah, killing 16 civilians and injuring nine.

Washington has bombed Iraq more than 60 times since December 28, in what U.S. officials call "low-intensity warfare." Since its murderous war against that country in 1991, the U.S. government has maintained "no-fly" zones over much of Iraq and carried out repeated attacks with the aim of replacing the Iraqi regime with one that is subservient to imperialism's interests in gaining a strategic military foothold in the Mideast.

**Tokyo threatens north Korea**

Tokyo threatened to end all aid to north Korea and suspend its \$1-billion promised investment in providing the country with nuclear reactors and fuel-oil shipments. The Japanese government claims Pyongyang may test-fire a long-range missile as the pretext for balking on the agreements. Washington, which maintains a massive military presence in and around south Korea, has backed Tokyo, asserting that the north Korean government might use missiles to transport weapons of "mass destruction."

**Basque independence fighters are released from prison**

The Spanish state was forced to release 22 members of Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity), the Basque pro-independence political party, from prison after they had served 19 months of a seven-year sentence. The Constitutional Court ruled the leaders were convicted under a 1973 law that was unconstitutional. They were accused of collaborating with the ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom), an armed Basque liberation organization.

The Basque leaders were jailed for the so-called collaborative crime of attempting to show an election campaign video on television. The video included the ETA's proposals for a process leading to self-determina-



**Students protest Tokyo war moves**

Students protest in Tokyo in late July against bill to give legal status to the flag and anthem linked to Japan's imperialist wars. The legislation coincides with stepped-up moves by the Japanese rulers to prepare for military intervention in the region.

tion for the Basque people, who are an oppressed people in northern Spain and southern France.

**Protests force government in Ecuador to freeze fuel prices**

Two weeks of work stoppages and demonstrations involving thousands of taxi drivers, peasants, indigenous people, and other workers forced Ecuadoran president Jamil Mahuad to reverse a 13.1 percent hike in fuel prices. Mahuad agreed to freeze fuel prices for a year and lift the state of emergency. The president has been planning a \$3-billion austerity program, including the sales of six generating companies and one electricity distributor, in order to ensure a \$400-million agreement with the International Mon-

etary Fund. Inflation in Ecuador is the highest in Latin America, and the banking system threatens to collapse.

Mahuad first tried to raise the price of fuel in March, but taxi and bus drivers responded with a strike and protests across the country causing a national standstill. The government's new attempt ignited a protest in early July initiated by the taxi drivers, who were soon joined by the transportation unions including more than 60,000 truck and bus drivers. A general strike was called by the Patriotic Front, an umbrella organization of union, indigenous, students, and community organizations, in support of the transportation workers. Thousands of peasants marched into Quito, the capital city, to join the protests.

One of the main indigenous organizations, Conaie, joined in by blocking the highways, stopping transportation of produce to the cities, and occupying public institutions. Banana workers also joined in the strike.

**Farmers in Argentina demand relief from plummeting prices**

As prices for commodities plummet and debts mount, thousands of farmers marched into the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires July 21, demanding compensation from the growing agricultural crisis there. As long columns of buses and trucks packed with demonstrators snarled the city, hundreds of cops stood behind metal barriers. The protesters, who charge the government with ignoring farm foreclosures and layoffs, called on the government to lower taxes, particularly gas and auto lev-

ies, and reduce highway tolls they must pay to bring their goods to market. The farmers also want relief from debt financing. Farmers were joined by farm workers and transport workers, who carried out a strike in early July over imposed taxes. After a three-day strike by farm workers in April, the government of President Carlos Menem said it is working on measures to ease the crisis.

**Virginia abortion ban lifted**

U.S. District Judge Robert Payne struck down a Virginia law that would ban a late-term abortion procedure dubbed partial birth abortion by opponents of a woman's right to choose. The law, Payne ruled July 16, was dangerously vague and violated the due process clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Payne also noted that it did not contain an exception for abortions performed when a woman's life or health is in jeopardy. Virginia state attorney general Mark Earley, an opponent of a woman's right to choose, said he would appeal the decision.

Virginia is one of 28 states that have attempted to ban the late-term abortion procedure. But in 20 of those states these laws have been blocked or severely limited by the courts. Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Utah have laws still in effect.

**Prisoner dies while fighting fire**

An man incarcerated in a state prison died before dawn July 18 while fighting a wildfire in southern California. He was one of about 50 prisoners who were put to work fighting the 2,000-acre brush fire. The inmate was using a chainsaw in the dark when he fell from a 150-foot cliff, according to Ventura County officials. State prison inmates are commonly used to fight wildfires in California.

**Florida rulers execute again**

Blood formed a puddle on Allen Lee Davis's chest as he was executed at the Florida State Prison in Starke, Florida, July 8. While prison officials said it came from a nosebleed, Dr. Michael Bell, chief deputy medical examiner in Miami-Dade County, said people who are electrocuted don't usually bleed. The July 8 execution was the first in Florida in 15 months and the first in a new electric chair. The older one, nicknamed "Ol' Sparky" was replaced after 76 years. The gruesome scene sparked renewed calls by some politicians to replace the electric chair with lethal injections. The American Civil Liberties Union of Florida has called for a halt to executions.

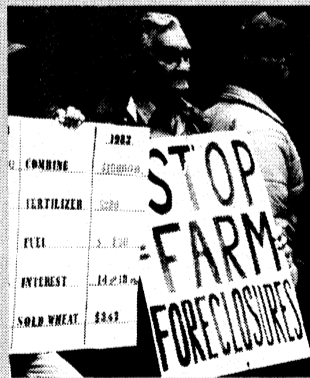
Less than two weeks later at the same prison, an inmate on death row in Tallahassee was apparently killed by prison guards. Frank Valdez, 36, was found dead in his cell. He had broken ribs and boot marks on his body. Nine guards at the prison have been suspended pending an investigation; one of their lawyers claimed Valdez killed himself.

— MEGAN ARNEY AND HILDA CUZCO

**THE MILITANT**

**Build workers and farmers alliance**

Farmers throughout the world are being squeezed by low commodity prices and foreclosures. The 'Militant' covers farmers' struggles and explains why workers and farmers need to unite against mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, capitalist bosses, and merchants. Don't miss a single issue!



**SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**

**NEW READERS**

\$10 for 12 issues

**RENEWAL**

\$15 for 12 weeks

\$27 for 6 months

\$45 for 1 year

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**The Militant**

Vol. 63/No. 28  
Closing news date: July 29, 1999

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE  
Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS  
Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from July to August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: TheMilitant or via Peacenat at: themilitant  
Internet: TheMilitant@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/pubs/militant

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.

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

Subscriptions: United States: for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.  
Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year sub-

scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. Asia: send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4.

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

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

Iceland: Send 5,800 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

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

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

# Iceland farmers are pressed by bankruptcy, glut in farm products

BY GYLFI PÁLL HERSIR  
AND ARNAR SIGURDSSON

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — About 90 families in Thingeyjasýsla, in the northeastern part of Iceland, are facing problems as the local Cooperative Thingeyinga (KTH), one of the last farmers cooperatives in the country, goes under. It has already been divided into "beneficial" and "non-beneficial" sections, and the profitable ones are being sold to private partners. What happens with the farmers' credit remains an open question. Their products have been sold by and through the co-op for credit against purchases of fertilizer and other goods through the same co-op.

Farmers cooperatives were founded in Iceland at the end of last century with the aim of facilitating commerce for the rural population: marketing their products, making goods cheaper, and helping win new markets abroad.

Until about 15 years ago, amalgamated cooperatives ran stores in most Icelandic towns. They also operated plants to process fish and lambskin, produce clothing, and more.

The KTH cooperative buys all the milk and meat (mainly sheep, as well as beef and pork) from the farmers. KTH has 2,000 members, farmers, and others. It operates a

dairy, slaughterhouse, packinghouse, and department store. KTH also held shares in different businesses.

In May the cooperative halted all operations and farmers could not get any money. Sigurdur Jónsson, a retired farmer at Ystafell, told *Militant* correspondents the farmers may not receive anything for their milk delivery of the last five weeks and that the money kept in the cooperative in order to buy fertilizer may be lost. They were forced to agree to sell the dairy facility to another dairy cooperative and the meatpacking operation to a bank.

Farmer Kári Thorgrímsson at the Gardur farm has 170 sheep and 17 cows. Besides this he catches and smokes trout. Like many other farmers, Thorgrímsson now has to work other jobs; he travels around to shear sheep.

Thorgrímsson thought that a farmers demonstration in Brussels earlier this year was the most important event of the decade. In particular he appreciated that farmers came from many countries. He noted the media in Iceland paints farmers as backward, saying it is "important to overcome the division between farmers and workers. We have been taught workers are always making demands. But we should work together." Thorgrímsson also commented, "A concept of free trade is being used as a whip on farm-



Kári Thorgrímsson, farmer at Gardur in Thingeyjarsýsla, Iceland, explains farm crisis. *Militant*

ers. In one sense it is okay to open up trade for farmers' products with other countries. But then farmers have to build our own organization, collaborating internationally."

Ólöf Ásgeirsdóttir runs a farm together with her brother's family at Vogar. Aside from the farm, they are self-employed in tourism. She said they were worried because they had made investments to attract tourists to their farm. She expected some farmers will be forced off their farms because of the bankruptcy of KTH.

Agriculture accounted for only 2 percent of the national income in Iceland in 1998, down from 5.1 percent in 1980. Around 5

percent of the workforce are employed in agriculture today, compared to 8 percent in 1980 and 16 percent 1960.

In face of a crisis of overproduction, farm quotas were initiated in agriculture in Iceland in 1979, with the aim of cutting the number of sheep in the country from about 900,000 to 500,000. This pushed many farmers from their farms in the 1980s. In more recent years, farmers have been allowed to buy and sell quotas for raising sheep and cows.

*Sigurður Haraldsson contributed to this article.*

# Fish workers protest job losses in Iceland

BY SIGURLAUG GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

THINGEYRI, Iceland — Ninety workers in this small fishing town of 400 residents have lost their jobs because their employer, the fish processing company Raudsída, has closed and its future is uncertain. Around 60 of the workers are young Polish immigrants who have been here less than two years.

Raudsída had operated fish processing houses in three other towns on the northwestern peninsula of Iceland that have now closed, leaving almost 300 workers unemployed. More fish processing workers will be unemployed soon as other companies begin annual shutdowns related to the fishing quota system. The "quota year" begins September 1, and by mid-summer the quota is filled. But this year several of those companies seem to have growing financial problems.

An unusually high percentage of the residents on the northwestern peninsula are immigrant workers, many from Eastern Europe. Over the last 20 years an especially large number of workers from Poland have come on one-year contracts. Many of them have settled and brought their families.

"We have tried this before," said Gunnhildur Elíasdóttir, a woman in her 40s who has always lived here. She said many people have moved away and the government doesn't seem to care whether people live there or not. When the crisis hit

Raudsída at the beginning of June and workers realized they were not going to get paid, they organized to sit down in the cafeteria. "I was worried about all the Polish workers they brought here on contract, that they wouldn't stand with us," Elíasdóttir said. But "they were even more up in arms than we were. We wanted the owner to come and tell us what was going on and he said he would come the following day. We thought we would go back to work and have the meeting the next day, but the Polish workers said, 'No! If he can come tomorrow, he can come today.' And he came."

But no salaries were paid and the plant closed. Workers are guaranteed their salaries by the state in case of bankruptcy, but it always takes time. The union board decided that those workers who need it can receive loans from the union fund to buy food. "The Polish workers have no credit card and no bank grants them a loan," said Elíasdóttir. She criticized the media, which made a big fuss about the union fund and tried turn the situation on its head, claiming the union was lending the company money.

One Polish worker, Darek Bochra, responded to this reporter's request to meet with him by organizing about a dozen very young Polish workers to come to the apartment where he lives with his brother and cousin. They all hope to get their pay and unemploy-

ment benefits if production doesn't start up again, but are not sure what will happen. They are not planning to return to Poland. Joanna Eliza Wrona, who graduated from high school just before she came here, said, "There is no work to be found in Poland."

Apart from the question of whether these workers will be able to receive unemployment benefits, they have been working on a contract with this particular company and their immigration status is not settled.

Meanwhile, about 50 kilometers from here in Ísafjörður, seven workers and the union Baldur were recently charged by the Central Organization of Employers with obstruction and damage during a six-week strike in May-June 1997. The bosses are claiming large compensation for the strike, during which the union organized pickets at harbors all over the western peninsula and down the coast to Reykjavik in the south.

One of the places the fishing companies involved in the strike decided to test was Thingeyri. "We were not on strike because there was no work at the time," said Elíasdóttir. "Then they sent a trawler that was originally from here, with several workers from here, to be unloaded. But we did not allow it."

This reporter also spoke with two of the workers who had been charged, Adalheidur Steinsdóttir and Trausti Ágústsson. They

were both laid off from where they worked before the strike. Steinsdóttir has two part-time jobs today. Ágústsson has several jobs and his wife was illegally fired from the same plant during maternity leave.

Steinsdóttir explained the charges are based on news reports and newspaper articles on picketing at harbors where the local unions were not involved by formal decision. "No industrial union supported us formally. We were even attacked by leaders of big unions for receiving and making public declarations of support from members of their unions," said Steinsdóttir. Although many companies closed shortly after the strike and many have moved on to other parts of the country, both workers said that few regret having gone through that strike.

Three Young Socialists visited the area July 24-25 and spoke with Sigridur Bragadóttir, one of the workers who was charged. "We have to win this case," she said, "or the right to strike will be hurt." She stressed that they received a lot of material and moral support during the strike. She gave the example of an older woman who had gotten a little extra for her pension, so she sent the check to the strikers.

*Young Socialists Ólöf Andra Proppé and Ögmundur Jónsson contributed to this article.*

# South Yorkshire farmers discuss rural crisis

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — "We lose £5-£6 on every sheep that we sell and £10-£16 on every pig," said Charles Hague, a livestock farmer from Morley in south Yorkshire. "We've stuck with the pig farming as long as we can, and now we're going to have let that side of the farm go." Hague farms 350 acres and also raises cattle. He explained that his other business, a small road haulage firm, is currently subsidizing his farm.

The drop in prices was a hot topic among farmers arriving at the Wharfedale livestock market in Otley, just north of Leeds. "It's not just the seasonal drop in lamb prices — we expect that — but the long-term collapse of prices over a couple of years," said Ben Atkinson during a visit by *Militant* correspondents. "The seasonal drop in lamb prices has gone from £40 to £34 in a week, but a year ago it was £60." Atkinson raises 70 sheep and 20 suckler cows on a small area of land, just 35 acres. He also runs the market at Otley. "The market was started in 1893 as a cooperative, but its now a limited company that makes a small profit,"

Atkinson said. "However the only people that can become shareholders in the business are farmers and local butchers, no supermarkets or abattoirs (slaughterhouses).

"There is no reflection of the seasonal drop in prices we take for the sheep we raise and what the supermarkets charge the customers," he added. "Go and check the supermarket prices for yourselves — and you'll see."

"Farmers are very resilient and it takes a lot to push us off the land, but that is what is beginning to happen," Atkinson said. He described how a tenant farmer he knew had decided to sell his stock and machinery and started to train as a forklift driver in a potato processing plant. "He has no land as an asset, and he was only able to get half of what he could have a year ago for all his stock."

This farmer is not alone; Richard Brooke, another tenant farmer who comes from Warth-on-Dearne, near Rotherham, said, "My accountant has recommended that I close the business down because we think we are going to lose £35,000 this year. He

thinks we will not be able to pay off a £50,000 overdraft because, apart from the livestock, we have hardly anything to sell."

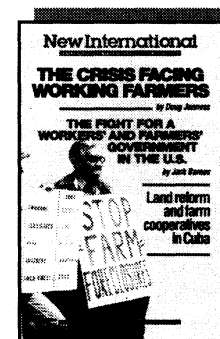
"More and more farmers are only farming part-time and are subsidizing loss-making farms by working," noted Hague.

The hold the major supermarket chains have over the prices farmers get for their produce is a source of frustration. Atkinson described how supermarkets are trying to tie individual farmers to year-long contracts, dubbed "farm assured schemes," cutting out the sale of farm produce through local markets. Under these schemes farmers have to let their farms undergo inspection from the supermarkets every year and often only get contracts for the best cuts of meat from their livestock.

"It takes 60 days to get paid by a supermarket that you sell to, but the supermarkets demand immediate payment for the goods that they sell to customers," said Tom Gutchin.

*Paul Davies is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union in Manchester.*

In New International no. 4



- ◆ The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States  
JACK BARNES
- ◆ The Crisis Facing Working Farmers  
DOUG JENNESS
- ◆ Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba  
TWO SPEECHES BY FIDEL CASTRO \$9.00

DISTRIBUTED BY PATHFINDER

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690.

# Puerto Rico protests

Continued from front page  
in jail on trumped-up charges.

Solis was framed by the U.S. government based on the testimony of FBI informer Rafael Marrero and a slew of FBI agents who accused him of involvement in the 1992 bombing of a U.S. military recruiting facility in Chicago. The other 16 advocates for Puerto Rico's sovereignty behind bars in the United States are serving sentences of up to 105 years.

Young Puerto Rican *independentistas* and others came in two buses from Chicago, and two others from Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey. Protesters also drove from Orlando, Florida, New York, Cleveland, Ohio, and elsewhere, as well as coming from the Washington, D.C. area.

## 'It's about time to speak out'

Marcolo Bethea, a young Puerto Rican from New York, didn't know about the protest, but joined in when he passed by visiting the capital. His grandmother is from

Vieques. "I saw this and I thought it's about time," Bethea said. The Puerto Rican political prisoners "have got to be freed. Why won't they free Puerto Rico?"

Luis Díaz drove 14 and a half hours with a vanload of others from Orlando, Florida. He explained they came to Washington as part of the international effort "to show that we want the U.S. military out of Puerto Rico and our prisoners out of jail.... The movement around Vieques is also important because people are starting to know what North American imperialism, especially the naval forces, are doing in the Caribbean."

Carlos López, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Chicago, came to the protest with a co-worker. He was impressed with the rally. "You can see the unity of the Puerto Rican people for the freedom of their political prisoners, people who have fought for the liberation of their country," said López, who is from Ecuador. "These people are showing that with unity you can change

things, including things like the abuses of the U.S. against the working class."

Several speakers addressed the rally across from the White House, including Marcos Vilar from the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners. Vilar read off the names of each of the Puerto Rican political prisoners. After each name the crowd shouted, "¡Presente!" (Here with us!).

Vilar explained that the day before, a number of the activists visited the offices of 60 U.S. congressmen and senators to ask them for support to free the prisoners and to thank a few of them who sent letters to President William Clinton about the prisoners. Later in the program several people who had



Militant/Stu Singer

About 30 people picketed outside a government hearing in Arlington, Virginia, July 23, protesting U.S. Navy presence in Vieques, Puerto Rico. Later they joined more than 250 people at Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C.

been part of these visits addressed the gathering.

In mid-afternoon the rally moved from Lafayette Park to picket on the sidewalk directly in front of the White House, and then moved back to the park. Seventeen people staged a civil disobedience action, and were arrested. Organizers of the protest held an ecumenical service in support of the political prisoners that evening.

## Navy faces growing pressure in Vieques

Prior to the noon rally at the White House, about 35 of the protesters picketed hearings of the Special Panel on Military Operations on Vieques. This panel was set up by the Clinton administration to "...reconcile national security needs with the concerns of the people of Puerto Rico about operations at that portion of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico." It was organized in response to the protests in Puerto Rico against the killing of Sanes April 19.

As the Navy brass walked to the hearings they were greeted by chants from the pickets including, "U.S. Navy out of Puerto Rico!"

Inside the hearings, Marine Lt. General Peter Pace explained that the 2,000 marines

in Kosova had their last training in Vieques. With the suspension of live-fire exercises following the outrage sparked by Sanes's death, "We are facing a real-time strategic crisis" with the lack of training for combat missions.

Former congressman Lee Hamilton asked Vice Admiral William J. Fallon, one of those testifying at the hearing, "We heard from the governor of Puerto Rico and other political leaders there. Their assessment is that there is unanimous sentiment among the people of Puerto Rico that there is a serious problem with the Vieques situation. What is the Navy's assessment of this?"

Fallon answered, "Sir, the Navy deals in facts, not sentiment."

Hamilton replied, "What people think is a fact and they have consequences," he said. "Are you aware, sir, of the consequences of the Navy failing to make any substantial changes in the situation there?"

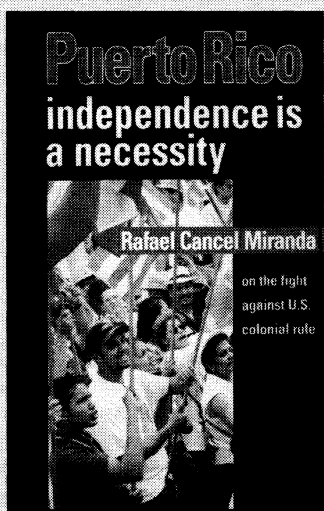
The next day, July 24, the panel moved to Vieques to hear testimony from a dozen community leaders there. They were greeted by hundreds of protesters chanting, "¡Vieques sí, Marina no!" (Vieques yes, Navy no!) and "Navy, criminals!"

Greg McCartan contributed to this article.

from Pathfinder

## Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda  
In two interviews, Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today." In English and Spanish. \$3.00



Available at bookstores listed on page 12.

# Women miners, supporters hold 21st conference

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DES MOINES, Iowa — The 21st National Conference of Women Miners and Supporters was held in Des Moines, Iowa, June 25-27. The conference was sponsored by the Coal Employment Project and the CEP's Iowa support group. It was endorsed by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Since 1977 the CEP has fought to get women hired in the mines, many times

through affirmative action lawsuits. The organization has also helped women maintain mine jobs once they are hired.

Miners, former miners, and others attended this year's conference. One third of the gathering were working miners, out of the 45 total in attendance. The largest delegation, seven miners who are Native American, drove all the way from Kayenta, Arizona. They work at a Peabody strip mine on the Navajo Nation and are members of

UMWA Local 1924.

Darlene Benally, recording secretary of UMWA Local 1924, said they valued the CEP because "there still is a lot of harassment in the workplace. The bosses make comments that women aren't strong enough to do 'male' work and they don't provide bathrooms for the women." Benally said there are 13 women who work at the Kayenta mine, 6 of whom attended the conference.

As in previous years, the CEP conference featured presentations by workers involved in struggle. Titan Tire strikers from Des Moines addressed the meeting. Linda Burgess talked about the year-long strike against Titan, and described the encouragement they had gotten for their fight by going to a Freeman United Coal miners strike solidarity rally last year.

"The miners' picket line had a sign with big letters that read 'Scab of the Week.' Every week there would a different name on it. When I came back to Des Moines we put a 'Scab of the Week' sign in front of Titan. The sign was there for two days and it was stolen. Titan hated that sign," Burgess told the conference.

The 21st conference passed a resolution to send a letter of support to UMWA Local 1984 then on strike against the Deserado mine in Colorado and to go back to local unions to get solidarity for the strike (see article on page 10).

Among other speakers at the conference were UMWA international president Cecil Roberts and Bill Brumfield, UMWA International Executive Board member from Illinois.

The conference concluded with a business meeting on June 27. A proposal from the board of directors of the CEP to dissolve the organization and no longer hold annual conferences was approved by a majority of those in attendance. Linda Lester, chair of the board, said that because there is no hiring taking place in coal mining the CEP is not able to get funding to continue operating.

Although there was not much discussion of the board's perspective to shut down the organization, one participant explained from the floor that there was hiring going on that includes women, and that women miners still needed the CEP. A working miner from West Virginia, said that without the CEP, it would be harder on women in her local. During informal discussion examples raised by conference participants pointed to a younger generation and women getting jobs in the mines today in several states.

# Tehran papers review Malcolm X in Farsi

Below are English translations of two reviews of the Farsi translation of the Pathfinder title *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*. The book was published by Talayeh Porsoo Publications in Tehran, Iran, early this year in a run of 2,000.

The first review was published in the Tehran daily *Kar va Kargar* (Work and Worker), which is associated with Khane Kargar (Workers' House), an offshoot of the workers *shoras* (councils) formed during the Iranian revolution. The second one is from the Tehran daily *Khordad* (a month in Iranian calendar), where the review appeared in the back page with a color photo of the cover of the Farsi book with Malcolm's picture. *Kar va Kargar's* review also accompanies a photo of the cover.

In addition to *Kar va Kargar* and *Khordad*, the Tehran daily *Sobhe Emrooz* (This Morning), published a two-paragraph description of the book taken from its introduction in the July 14 issue. Two other publications announced the publication of the book: the Tehran daily *Hamshahri* (Townsmen) on July 12, and the July issue of the monthly *Hoghooge Zanan* (Womens' Rights).

The monthly *Jahane Ketab* (The Book World) under the section on Politics and Economy wrote a brief description of the four Farsi titles recently published by

Talayeh Porsoo — *Malcolm X Talks to Young People; Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War* by Jack Barnes; *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro; and *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara.

Pathfinder Press distributes these books internationally. For a list of all Farsi titles please see the 1999 Pathfinder Catalog.

*Kar va kargar*  
June 20, 1999

This book is a collection of speeches by Malcolm X from the United States, Britain, and Africa translated by Masoud Saberi and published by Talayeh Porsoo. Malcolm X was a revolutionary fighter and Moslem who belonged to the oppressed Black people of America. Those who have read the autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley know that Malcolm X's early childhood, his juvenile years, and even his youth were filled with many hardships, deviations, and injuries. Then his life changed when he met a fighter in prison. After this his ideas and beliefs began to be transformed, so much that he chose Islam, made pilgrimage to Mecca, and changed his name to Malik El-Shabazz.

Since in his youth Malcolm X went through so many intense and instructive ex-

periences, undoubtedly his speeches will be instructive to the youth. Although more than three decades have past since he was assassinated, Malcolm's speeches still have preserved their freshness, are filled with revolutionary ideas, and are calls to action.

Well done, lively photos add to the attractiveness of this collection of speeches. By looking at the photos and reading the speeches one is taken to the historic period in which Malcolm X spoke and fought.

We recommend studying this book to everyone interested, especially the young people.

*Khordad*  
June 6, 1999

*Malcolm X Talks to Young People* is a collection of one interview and four speeches by Malcolm X that were given in the last months of his life in Ghana, Britain, and the United States.

The book was first published by Pathfinder Press in New York in the English language and is published here in Farsi for the first time.

Malcolm X says, "The young generation of whites, Blacks, browns — you're living at a time of revolution, a time when there's got to be change. People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built."

# YS members join teams to talk with textile workers

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY GABRIEL CLARK  
ANDAIDEN BAKER

On July 13, a team consisting of members of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party from Birmingham and Atlanta began a trip to meet workers at textile mills throughout the South. The team was organized in light of the recent unionizing victory of textile workers at Fieldcrest Cannon (now Pillowtex) in Kannapolis, North Carolina.

The team met at Auburn University, where we set up a Pathfinder literature table to sell the *Militant* and books to students. We sold six copies of the *Militant* newspaper and a copy of *The Struggle Is My Life* by Nelson Mandela. Young Socialists were able to meet and discuss various issues surrounding youth today with two Auburn students. One student was eager to hear about the Militant Labor Forum on textile workers struggles that had just taken place in Birmingham, and to discuss more with YS members. We are going back to have a class with him and others on "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics," the first section in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

From Auburn, the team went to the Fieldcrest Cannon mill in Phenix City, Alabama. There we sold eight copies of the *Mili-*

tant to workers.

After spending the night in Atlanta, the team left for the Fieldcrest Cannon mills in Kannapolis. We sold 14 copies of the *Militant* to workers there, who brought the *Militant* into work to share it with co-workers and also gave us a good taste of their recent victory. And we got a feel for the various view points on the recent events.

Union supporters are gearing up for the next round in the fight — getting a first contract. They are not waiting around for the National Labor Relation's Board to decide that they won the June 22-23 union election — but are continuing to organize inside the mill. The UNITE union hall on the main street in Kannapolis is active and a union meeting was being planned.

Some workers who voted for the union remain skeptical of what the union will provide. Several young workers expressed that they will be happy if winning the union gets them a raise. Some workers said they hated the job so much that they did not bother to vote.

At the second Fieldcrest Cannon plant, where we sold five copies of the *Militant*, we met a worker who told us, "All I can say is that I'm glad we got the union. It means a lot to us." In the last election a majority of workers in this plant were opposed to the union. Workers reported that the company practice of "devaluing the looms" making weavers work more looms while lowering wages had convinced many workers that their only hope was to join the fight for a union.

Since the team visited Kannapolis, the NLRB began hearings on July 27 on the election at Pillowtex.



Militant/Dan Fein

Selling the *Militant* and talking politics with textile workers outside Cone Mills in Greensboro, North Carolina. YSers joined this team and others like them across the country.

After Kannapolis, the team traveled to Greensboro, North Carolina. In the morning, we went to Cone Mills, which makes denim cloth. There, we sold five copies of the *Militant* newspaper. In the afternoon, we set up a Pathfinder literature table at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Despite the lack of traffic due to the reduced number of classes, we were able to sell six *Militants*.

Later that afternoon, the team went to Eden, North Carolina to the Karastan mill where rugs are made. Workers there recognized the *Militant* from when socialist workers were in the mill, and purchased nine copies of the paper.

To conclude the trip, we paid a visit to strikers at Continental General Tire in Charlotte, North Carolina. We were able to discuss the different issues surrounding the strike in recent weeks. The unionists told us they were organizing to get to Washington, D.C., for the planned solidarity rally for the Newport News shipyard workers. Strikers bought four copies of the *Militant* at the picket line.

During the three day trip, the team sold a total of 58 copies of the *Militant* to workers and youth from around the South through our various sales at shopping centers, campuses, and mills.

## Caravaners prepare to go to Active Workers Conference

Continued from front page

40th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban revolution. He took a five-hour bus ride from Lafayette, Louisiana, to participate.

That caravan from Texas will also meet up with conference participants driving up from Birmingham, Alabama.

Socialist workers and young socialists in Birmingham are making use of the last several days before the conference to ensure that every Young Socialists member and interested youth attend. As part of this, YS members in Birmingham have organized a class with a few students at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, on "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics" the opening section of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Socialist workers on the East Coast have continued to anchor teams with co-workers and Young Socialists to visit and talk with Steelworkers in the Newport News shipyards. Mary Martin, a member of the International Association of Machinists, reports a striker and his wife — both *Militant* readers — in the course of discussing politics and the conference, referred them to a fight at Newport News, Inc., a small warehouse that processes mail orders. Workers there have been trying to organize into a union. Three of them bought copies of the *Militant*.

Some 14 shipyard workers bought the paper during a two-day solidarity trip of workers from New Jersey and Washington, D.C. A young Navy sailor after seeing the "Stop U.S. gov't strikebreaking!" headline expressed his solidarity with the strikers and laid down \$1.50 for a copy. As part of the trip they also visited a meatpacking plant in Smithfield where one worker recently died on the job from heat stroke. Sixteen workers there bought the *Militant* at the factory gate during a morning shift change.

Supporters in Michigan are helping plan two caravans. The possibilities for the first caravan began to materialize earlier in the year "with a worker we got to know again while doing solidarity with poultry workers on strike against Tyson in Indiana," wrote Chris Hoepfner in a note to the *Militant*.

"This United Food and Commercial Workers member, a longtime reader of the *Militant* who was quite active in the strike, invited us down last week to a protest against a cop killing of a Black person in Louisville. . . . We've been able to have a couple of discussions with him and a co-worker of his on *Capitalism's World Disorder*." That caravan will start in the coal mining region west of Louisville, and also swing up to Cincinnati to pick up a few

supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, "and then it's on to Oberlin."

"The second caravan," writes Hoepfner, will begin with an auto worker "who participated in the educational weekend in Detroit this past week where we focused on *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes and *Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*" by Leon Trotsky. "Another leg of this caravan will come in from Flint, Michigan, with a worker from a stamping plant who recently participated in a week-long team to Newport News, Virginia," as part of being a regular participant in the socialist summer school. They will come through Detroit to join a number of conference goers, then stop in Toledo, Ohio, to pick up a jeep factory worker.

In Chicago efforts are being made to encourage every organized supporter of the SWP to come to the conference. So far of the 18 supporters there, 10 are definitely going. Two more are trying to work out final kinks in their plans. SWP branches across the United States have been holding meetings with nationally organized party supporters to maximize participation at the Ohio gathering.

Socialist summer school classes have been fertile ground to win people to attending the conference. One student leader at DePaul University, who ran into socialist workers during protests against the U.S. government assault on Yugoslavia, has attended almost every class and has given one of them on a section of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. She is going to the Active Workers Conference.

Socialist workers in Atlanta will join a couple of farmers in Georgia they have worked with over the past year, as well as a couple of young workers who are planning to drive to the northern Ohio event.

In St. Louis, one airline worker at TWA says he wants to attend the Active Workers Conference. He has been a part of two classes on *Capitalism's World Disorder*, which he hosted at his house.

### Panels reflect party's advances

The conference will open with a panel discussion "that will reflect some of the most recent things vanguard workers have been focusing on in the class struggle," explained Norton Sandler, one of the conference organizers and a member of the SWP's Trade Union Committee. "This includes work around the strike in the Tidewater area of Virginia where United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 members will vote on a contract July 30. One of the panelists will speak about mixing it up with these strikers over the last week in Newport News

and a nearby farm area in North Carolina."

"Another panelist," Sandler continued, "will describe what it was like to be on a bus with Kaiser workers from Ohio to Virginia, discussing what's going on in the working-class movement in a concentrated way over a couple of days."

"One of the most important experiences to get across in the panel is the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Hundreds of copies have been sold since it was printed earlier this year. A panelist will explain how valuable the book has been in discussing world politics with workers and farmers."

The SWP/YS-organized summer schools that have taken place across the country will have a place in the panel, Sandler said. "The Young Socialists deployed their forces in three regional centers: Birmingham/Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles/Bay Area. Some YS members went to these regions just for the summer. They got their first jobs in industry, largely at meatpacking and garment and textile factories."

"They studied the history of the communist movement, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, while they joined class-struggle activities taking place from textile mills in Kannapolis, North Carolina, to Newport News."

"The panel will also bring up to date progress made around the SWP financial campaigns launched at the June 1 National Committee meeting in Chicago. Nearly half of the SWP branches have decided to move into smaller headquarters that better fit the local unit's size and resources. The Miami and Des Moines branches will have already moved by the time of the Active Workers Conference."

"The final piece," according to Sandler, "will introduce the irreplaceable work of the party's supporters, beginning with the campaign they are leading to increase their monthly contributions to the party from a total of nearly \$140,000 a year to \$170,000."

The first day and a half of the conference are devoted to the first two panels and to talks by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and *New Internationalist* editor Mary-Alice Waters. Their talks will generalize and draw out the political conclusions of some of the experience described in the panel discussions.

### Classes based on Marxist theory

Then, the agenda will turn to classes that will add to these discussions by concentrating on Marxist theory and the generalized experience of the working class over the past 150 years. The classes are built around unwind-

ing, reformulating, and answering some of the central questions that came out of the socialist summer schools. One such question a YS member asked during a class by veteran SWP member Tom Leonard in Santa Cruz, California, was: "Why do party members always pose broader issues of world politics and social struggles to co-workers in their work in the unions, not just focus on trade union tactics?" A class during the conference will seek to answer this, drawing on the pamphlet *What is to be Done?* by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, among other readings.

Another question from the Santa Cruz class that will be addressed is, "Why did the SWP return to calling for a workers and farmers government in the early 1980s, a position it had stepped back from in the previous two decades in favor of calling for a 'workers government'?"

The class entitled "Russian revolution: birth of the worker-bolshevik," will draw on *History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky to answer the question "what is a worker-bolshevik?" asked during a summer school session in Los Angeles. Some other working titles for classes at the conference include, "Rights of nations to self-determination: a Marxist application from Quebec to Puerto Rico to Kosova," and "Struggle for a proletarian party and organizational principles of the SWP."

### All out for 'Red Week' in New York

A number of Young Socialists members, interested youth, and workers of all ages are making plans to go straight from the Active Workers Conference to New York for the August 9-15 "Red Week" project to paint and make other improvements at the Pathfinder Building. That's where Pathfinder books, as well as the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, are edited and printed. At least a dozen young socialists will join in the week-long project, and more volunteers are needed.

Many members and supporters of the communist movement from the northeastern region will turn out for this project in New York, especially on the final weekend. As part of the week, SWP branches in New York and New Jersey are planning a class and video showing by Ma'mud Shirvani on Wednesday, August 11, taking up the history of the 1920 Baku Congress and the role of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia during that time. That Friday, supporters in the New York area will hold a Militant Labor Forum with a panel discussion on the Irish freedom struggle. On Saturday, August 14, supporters of the communist movement will relax and celebrate the week's accomplishments with a dance party.

# Yugoslavia occupation

Continued from front page

used. "It's the only way to get rid of Milosevic, who is to blame for the war." Dusan and other leaders of the Students Union of Yugoslavia helped lead sustained protests against the Belgrade regime in 1996-97. Last year the group organized canvassing throughout Serbia against the suppression of national rights of Albanians in Kosova.

Dusan said the largest demonstration in Novi Sad so far took place July 2. That protest action of 10,000-15,000 people was called by Zoran Djindjic's Alliance for Change and a coalition of opposition parties, which include the Union of Social Democrats of Vojvodina and the Democratic Reform Alliance. The Party of the Democratic Community of Hungarians of Vojvodina also supported the demonstration. The Alliance for Change also held rallies July 13 in Zrenjanin and Svetozarevo.

Novi Sad is Serbia's third-largest city and the capital of the Vojvodina region, home to a large minority of ethnic Hungarians. The city councils in Novi Sad, Nis, and Sombor have passed resolutions calling for Milosevic's ouster.

## Reject nationalism of gov't opposition

"The demonstrations are a good thing," said Dragan Duric, officer of international relations of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Montenegro. But "the opposition parties participating in them present the wrong reason for getting rid of Milosevic. They are nationalist and say he should go because he lost the war." The reason Milosevic should resign, said Duric, "is that his policy led to war. He is responsible for 10 years of war."

Hundreds of demobilized reservists have been at the forefront of daily demonstrations in the southern towns of Vranje and Krusevac, demanding back pay. On July 13 the reservists, who were activated for duty during the NATO bombing, moved to block the road to Skopje. Many reservists and Serb refugees from Kosova are settled in southern Serbia, an area where Milosevic has enjoyed significant electoral support in the past.

Some 7,000 demonstrators in Valjevo attempted to force their way into City Hall July 12. The previous week a protest that was not organized by any political party drew some 20,000 people, including many reservists, who poured into the streets of Leskovac. They chanted, "Thieves, thieves!" and "Changes, changes!" It was one of the biggest demonstrations to date.

Rallies involving thousands of people have continued there every day since, said Duci Petrovic, a leader of the Students Union of Yugoslavia in Nis, in a July 14 phone interview. They are led by the local Center for Human Rights.

"The demonstration was sparked by the arrest and sentencing to 30 days in jail of a basketball player who made a statement on TV during a game that Milosevic should resign," explained Petrovic. "One of the de-

mands there is to free him."

An alliance of 52 groups has launched a campaign to collect signatures calling for Milosevic's resignation. According to Milan Nikolic, vice president of Nezavisnost, a 300,000 member union federation free from government control, about 32,000 signatures had been collected July 5-12 in 18 towns in Serbia.

On July 12 campaigners began collecting signatures in 20 Belgrade areas. When cops threatened the activists with arrests the effort was suspended. The next day 15,000 signatures were collected without police interference.

Vuk Draskovic, head of the chauvinist Serbian Renewal Movement, who has served in the past as deputy prime minister in the



Milosevic government and controls the Belgrade city council, has also called on Milosevic to resign. He announced his own campaign separate from the Alliance for Change and held his first rally in Kragujevac July 18.

## Devastation from U.S.-NATO bombing

Working people throughout Yugoslavia are now faced with the disastrous results of the imperialist bombing campaign. While electricity and water services are mostly restored, the massive destruction of the country's infrastructure has left millions of workers without income or the prospect of one.

"We have not seen any money since April, and are surviving with what an uncle is able to send from abroad," said Christina Ranic, a member of Nezavisnost who worked at the sprawling Zastava auto plant in Kragujevac. "Recently we were given some sacks of flour from the government, but that is all." She reports that only a few workers from the plant have been called in for cleanup.

Meanwhile, Washington has made it clear that no "aid" will go to Yugoslavia while Milosevic is in power, cynically dangling the possibility of reconstruction funds. Clin-



Above, a toxic cloud above the industrial park in Pancevo, Yugoslavia, on June 8, the day after U.S.-NATO bombs destroyed the oil refinery there. Left, a July 5 rally in Leskovac, Yugoslavia, to demand back pay for soldiers and others, as well as the ouster of President Slobodan Milosevic.

ton administration officials, aiming to influence future political developments, have stated they may only release some funds to cities where mayors are part of the opposition forces.

"Clinton said he will not give a penny until Milosevic goes," said Dusan. "But our experience as well as Iraq show that sanctions only hurt working people. They don't help the fight for democratic rights, since working people's energy goes to find a way to survive and not fight for a change in government."

"The U.S. government is hypocritical," he continued. "It is responsible for war crimes from Vietnam to the bombing of Yugoslavia. It is as criminal as Milosevic: NATO killed working people with its bombs in Yugoslavia, and Milosevic killed Albanians in Kosova."

"The aid to be sent is just words, only promises" said Duric. "Only we can help ourselves. We don't expect the U.S. government or other countries to solve our problems."

Despite its calls for the ouster of Milosevic, Washington appears concerned about the forces that are coming to the fore with these protests. According to a July 12 *New York Times* article by Jane Perlez, "The Clinton administration is finding it difficult to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the opposition protests.... They are disillusioned with the leaders who galvanized crowds in Belgrade against Mr. Milosevic in the winter of 1996-97."

## NATO expands occupation

The US-led NATO forces are consolidating their hold on Kosova with a force now numbering 34,000 troops. They plan to deploy at least 50,000 soldiers there. This massive occupation force has carved Kosova into five sectors, each under U.S., British, French, German, or Italian command.

The deployment began after the murderous 78-day bombing campaign of Yugoslavia, which totally devastated most of the country's infrastructure and industry. During that assault an intense campaign of "ethnic cleansing" carried out largely by paramilitary forces loyal to Milosevic, as well as his regime's special military forces, led to the expulsion of more than one-half of Kosova's Albanian population. Thousands of Kosova Serbs who disagreed with Belgrade's brutal campaign fled as well. Most of the Albanians are now returning to bombed-out villages and homes.

The NATO occupation has provoked an exodus of Serbs and provided cover for forces identified with the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) to persecute Serb residents in Kosova. Fourteen Serbian farmers were

killed July 23, apparently by UCK gunmen.

The UCK had waged an armed struggle for an independent Kosova. By the start of the bombing campaign, however, it had become an instrument of NATO, despite the firm position of the intervening imperialist powers against independence. UCK leaders signed an agreement to demilitarize by September 19 and to form a police force as an auxiliary to NATO. An estimated 5,000 UCK members remain armed.

"The relatives of a friend of mine are among the Serb refugees from Kosova," relates Dusan. They were held for two days at the border with Kosova by Serbian police because the Belgrade regime is trying to force Serbs to stay in Kosova.

"They were forced to flee by UCK thugs and gangs from Albania," Dusan continued. The UCK is "doing the same thing paramilitary troops and other Serbian criminal elements did to the Albanians in Kosova. Eighty percent of Serbs have left. NATO troops stand by — they don't care."

Sonja Podrotovic, a representative of Women in Black, addressed the question of Serb refugees from Kosova speaking in Athens July 10. "They receive no assistance in putting their lives back together again. They are kept isolated from local people. Like previous waves of Serb refugees — from Croatia and Bosnia — this policy has led each time to them being used by the most extreme nationalists to fuel the next phase of the war." Women in Black has organized since the early 1990s throughout the formerly federated Yugoslavia against nationalism and ethnic cleansing.

## More attacks on Yugoslav federation

The Montenegrin regime of Milo Djukanovic, a former ally of Serbia's Milosevic, has hitched its star to NATO in hopes of getting a better deal from imperialism. Washington and the European Union are holding out a carrot of loans and investments to spur the process of secession from the Yugoslav federation, which is now composed of Serbia and Montenegro. Nevertheless, mass demonstrations were organized in Montenegro against the NATO bombing. The regime has plans for a referendum on independence and has floated proposals for issuing passports and a new currency tied to the German mark.

Belgrade maintains an estimated 25,000 troops in Montenegro. The republic's 15,000-strong police force is loyal to the local regime. Duric said Milosevic has stated plans to reform the Yugoslav Army in Montenegro into a Federal Police Force. "If this happens it will increase tensions further with the possibility of civil war," he said.

Duric reports that tensions have decreased since the end of the NATO bombing and there are no longer army checkpoints in the streets. "Everyone is afraid of holding a referendum," said the unionist. "If it is held now it will increase tensions."

When asked about a separate deal with imperialism to benefit Montenegro, he replied, "The destruction of factories in Serbia by NATO has affected working people in Montenegro through massive unemployment, since Montenegro's economy is integrated with Yugoslavia."

## FOR MORE READING ON YUGOSLAVIA

### The Truth about Yugoslavia Why Working People

Should Oppose Intervention  
GEORGE FYSON, ARGIRIS MALAPANIS,  
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

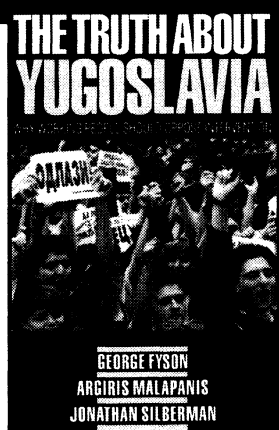
Examines the roots of the carnage in Yugoslavia, where Washington and its imperialist rivals in Europe are intervening militarily in an attempt to reimpose capitalist relations. \$8.95

### Capitalism's World Disorder Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

"We have watched the first large-scale war take place in Europe in almost half a century. There has been massive, sustained artillery shelling. Air power has been used to bomb civilian populations in Europe for the first time since the bombing of Dresden, London, and other cities during World War II.... All this has been taking place in Yugoslavia. It is a war that has brought to the surface the deepest conflicts among the imperialist powers in Europe and North America since the collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses at the opening of the 1990s." — Dec. 31, 1994

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



# Irish nationalists to London: quit stalling

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — "Those who demand the decommissioning of IRA weapons lend themselves in the current political context... to the failed agenda which seeks the defeat of the IRA. The British government have the power to change that context and must do so. It remains our view that the roots of the conflict in our country lie in British involvement in Irish affairs," read a statement issued by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on July 21.

The statement was issued following the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) refusal to participate in the executive of the newly formed Northern Ireland Assembly. UUP officials said they would not be seated alongside Sinn Fein, the party that is leading the struggle to end British rule in Ireland.

The IRA's statement targeted the British government's "lack of political will to confront the unionist veto," and reaffirmed the republican organization's determination not to surrender their weapons.

Despite heavy use of its armed forces, the British government failed for more than 30 years to break the struggle for civil rights and for a united Ireland. This failure led it to restructure its rule and enter negotiations with the Republic of Ireland and a broad range of political parties in the British-occupied north of Ireland. The process culminated in the adoption of an agreement last year that was to have led to the establishment of new political institutions.

Since then the British rulers and pro-Brit-

ish Unionist political forces have continually pressed the IRA to surrender weapons in the hope that they can take back ground and stall the process of political change.

British secretary of state for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlem termed the IRA statement as "unhelpful."

Reginald Empey of the Ulster Unionist Party claimed the IRA was trying "to bully and browbeat the British government," while the London *Times* ran an editorial describing the statement, in a quote from UUP leader David Trimble, as "menacing words."

The editorial demanded Labour Party prime minister Anthony Blair back the Unionist demands for the surrender of IRA weapons. It also insisted the government halt any reform of Britain's police force in Northern Ireland, known as the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Reflecting the concern among some in the British establishment that they had given up too much in the face of the rising resistance of Irish nationalists, the Conservative party demanded the government halt the release of all republican prisoners.

The decision of the UUP to refuse to attend the Northern Ireland Assembly and to put forward candidates for its executive provoked the resignation of its Deputy First Minister Designate Seamus Mallon. Mallon is a member of the reformist nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party.

The stance of the Unionists reflects their declining political confidence, following further advances made by Irish nationalists. In the previous weeks residents of the national-



Militant/Phil Waterhouse

Irish fighters speak in London in January against rightist Orange Order marches in Northern Ireland. Many marches were rerouted this year, reflecting the Unionists' declining political strength. At far right, Garvaghy Road nationalist leader Brendan MacCionnaith.

ist Garvaghy Road in Portadown, Northern Ireland, were able to prevent the rightist Orange Order from marching through their community for the second year running.

The British government now intends to put the formation of the assembly's executive "into review" in September, and has recalled

former U.S. senator George Mitchell to handle negotiations between the parties in the north of Ireland. Commenting on this latest British schedule, Sinn Fein vice president Pat Doherty said, "The one thing for sure is that we cannot allow the Unionists to use this review as just another stalling exercise."

## Irish republicans fight deportation by U.S. gov't

BY MEGAN ARNEY  
AND KATHIE FITZGERALD

NEWARK, New Jersey — Some 30 people packed a court room here June 29 to support the fight of Irish nationalists Malachy and Bernadette McAllister and their family for political asylum in the United States. The family fled their home in Belfast, Northern Ireland, after an assassination attempt by pro-British gunmen in 1988.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) recently denied both Malachy, today a construction worker, and Bernadette's claim for asylum, saying the family would not be in any danger if they returned to the British-occupied north of Ireland. The McAllisters disagree.

"There's a 10-year gap between the deaths of Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson," said Malachy McAllister, referring to two well-known civil rights attorneys murdered by loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. "Obviously that tells you something. There's still collusion with the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] there.... These are people

who are very prominent and fought for civil rights and the nationalist cause, and if the loyalists are able to do that to them, what have they been able to do to ordinary nationalists such as ourselves?"

The INS also ruled that Malachy's past convictions were criminal, not political. In the early 1980s, Malachy was arrested and detained by the RUC in the notorious Castlereagh prison on the word of an informer. He was threatened until he was forced to confess to their charges. British officials used this "confession" and the informer's testimony to convict McAllister of conspiracy to murder a RUC officer in a juryless "Diplock" court. He served several years in Long Kesh prison.

With an Irish nationalist record McAllister, once out of prison, was put on a short list for harassment by pro-British forces. On Oct. 2, 1988, "four loyalist paramilitaries came to the house. They pointed the guns through the windows," he told the *Militant*. Malachy and Bernadette McAllister had left on an unplanned vaca-

tion, but Bernadette's mother and their four small children were at home.

"When our oldest son Gary [then 11] looked out the bedroom window, one of the gunmen was standing at the gate and he pointed up and literally shot into the bedroom where the kids were," Malachy explained.

Although there was a RUC patrol not 100 yards away, it took the police 20 minutes to come to the house. This gave the attackers time to make good their escape, as the RUC claimed to have seen nothing.

Shortly after, McAllister's police file, complete with his address, and the weapons used in the attempted assassination turned up in a loyalist safehouse not far away.

The McAllister family fled to Canada and filed for refugee status. Their petitions were denied, Malachy's due to his previous convictions and Bernadette and the children because, the Canadian government claimed, they had nothing to fear from returning to Northern Ireland.

The McAllisters also learned from government files that Canadian authorities had

informed British intelligence of Malachy's pending deportation. The family entered the United States in the spring of 1996. Shortly after their arrival they secured legal representation and applied for political asylum.

Federal Judge Henry Dogan has granted the McAllisters a continuation until August 31 to give the U.S. government time to address arguments raised by the defense.

Gathering on the courthouse steps after the June 29 hearing, the McAllisters pledged to continue their fight and asked their supporters to do the same. A McAllister Family Justice Committee has been formed, which Malachy told the *Militant* he'd like to see reach out to all supporters of democratic rights and fighters for justice such as those in the New York-New Jersey area who have been campaigning against police brutality. "In the context of my being brought up in Belfast, losing your first job because of your religion, I can see the correlation between my upbringing and what's going on in New York with Blacks and Hispanics," Malachy said. "There've been situations where they've been targeted by the police. I can see the parallels being a nationalist targeted by the RUC."

The defense committee is calling on supporters to attend the August 31 hearing at 8:30 a.m. at the Federal Building in Newark and to write letters to Attorney General Janet Reno.

*Kathie Fitzgerald is a member of the United Transportation Union. Larry Quinn, a member of the Communications Workers of America, contributed to this article.*

## NAACP holds its 90th convention

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — The NAACP promoted restrictions on firearms as a way to prevent racist attacks on African-Americans and other oppressed nationalities as one of the themes at its 90th national convention. Some 3,000 delegates and observers attended the event held in New York City, July 10-15. Attendance at the convention dropped about 40 percent from the previous year.

"The [National Rifle Association] used their considerable influence to block any effective gun control legislation in the 106th Congress," said NAACP president Kweisi Mfume during his keynote address July 12. He said the recent racist shooting in Indiana and Illinois by ultrarightist Benjamin Smith was the "inevitable result."

Mfume announced the NAACP was filing a class-action lawsuit in federal court against the firearms industry to promote greater "responsibility and accountability." He said the NAACP was not pursuing financial compensation from the litigation. The suit was filed July 16 in the Federal District Court in Brooklyn, New York.

The New York convention also adopted a resolution to establish an "official FBI E-mail address" for reporting "hate crimes" and "hate E-mail."

Another major initiative Mfume outlined in his address was a campaign to press for the inclusion of oppressed nationalities in a leading or starring role in some of the 26

new television shows for the fall season. He said the NAACP would be "calling on every member of the House and Senate to support congressional hearings on whether networks are denying" equal opportunities.

One of the workshops at the gathering included presentations on voting rights and electoral redistricting, which has eliminated some Black voter majorities that existed in a few Congressional districts in the South. The NAACP announced a campaign to register 4 million voters for the 2000 elections.

The convention deliberations took place as the Boston School Committee voted July 14 to scuttle the city's school desegregation plan. That move would end the busing program next year. At its 1997 convention the NAACP reaffirmed its support for school desegregation plans, including support for busing programs.

One resolution approved by the delegates called for U.S. president William Clinton to pardon the court-martialed survivors of the 1944 explosion at the Port Chicago naval base in northern California. The measure would also restore benefits to surviving soldiers and widows. All the men handling ammunition at the military base were Black sailors placed in labor gangs because of the Jim Crow segregation policy of the U.S. Navy. As result of forced speed up and dangerous working conditions, a ship being loaded with 5,000 tons of ammunition blew up July 17, killing 327 men. Fifty of the sailors were court-martialed and found guilty of mutiny by an all-white

jury when they refused to load ammunition after seeing the effects of the blast.

The convention included keynote speeches by two Clinton administration officials, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Vice President Albert Gore.

Albright referred to the recent U.S.-NATO assault on Yugoslavia as she called for using the "lessons of Kosova" to guide U.S. policy on Africa. She released a State Department report at the convention titled, "Arms and Conflict in Africa," which lays the groundwork for future U.S. military intervention in African countries.

There was little discussion at the convention about the stepped-up resistance among working people such as the strike at the Newport News, Virginia, shipyard, which has a predominantly Black workforce. While a resolution was passed supporting overtime pay for farm workers in Maryland, the organization also made a major point of publicly accepting donations from major corporations such as AT&T.

"There needs to be some serious checks and balances on the contributions we receive from corporations, so they don't take over," said Tammy Johnson, an NAACP member from Milwaukee who belongs to the Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 9. "AT&T is continuously trying to break the communication workers union, blaming the union for demanding more raises, when they raise their rates," she said.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Wed., August 4

#### United Steelworkers of America Rally

Post Falls, Idaho — 5:30 p.m.  
Greyhound Park. Speakers include David Foster, District 11 Director, USWA; and Jerry Schonover, president of USWA at Ravenswood

Thurs., August 5

#### Protest Boeing's use of scab aluminum from Kaiser. Support striking USWA workers at Kaiser.

Seattle, Washington — Meet at 1:30 p.m. at Machinists District Lodge 751, 9125 K15th Place S.; then march to The Boeing Company's Corporate Office.

# Newport News strike

Continued from front page  
bers to receive and read the entire contract. Voting will take place at two locations: in Newport News, and in Ahoskie, North Carolina, where a large number of shipbuilders organized by Local 8888 live.

The July 23 gathering was no ordinary union meeting. It lasted at least five hours. Many strikers got there plenty early with discussions going on everywhere — inside and outside the auditorium. Going into the meeting the mood among thousands of these workers was open minded but determined to win “a world-class contract.”

“If you don’t stand up for your rights the company will mow you down,” stated Bill Bailey, a rigger with 21 years at the yard, on his way into the meeting.

A handful of striking workers held up hand-made signs outside the Convocation Center saying, “Vote No to third-class contract.” They attracted a lot of attention and some skeptical questions from the workers streaming into the meeting who knew nothing about the proposed settlement. Since the resumption of federally mediated negotiations on July 7, the union and company agreed to maintain a total blackout on the status of the talks.

There was a strong reaction by many of those at the meeting against the length of the proposed agreement: nearly five years. The 58-month contract would raise the average hourly yard worker’s pay by \$3.10 by the year 2004. It would immediately hike pensions for those with 30 years of service from the current average of \$506 a month to \$750 per month, and to \$900 per month by January 2002. The union was seeking a \$3.70 per hour wage boost over three years and an immediate boost of pensions to \$900.

A big point of contention is the fact that the company can take up to 28 days to call workers back. Workers will be required to take a drug test and physical examination as well as requalifying on their jobs as welders, pipefitters, and for nuclear work.

“I think they’re trying to push this con-

tract down our throats,” stated Mike Lee, a material supplier with 12 years at the yard. “It’s almost the same contract we walked out over. The pensions went up but the wage increase amounts to only 62 cents [per hour each year] — 12 cents more than what we walked for.”

“I think we can get better than this if we stay out longer and keep fighting,” was the reaction from Michael Porter, a pipefitter with 16 years seniority. “I hope everyone will say no.”

“This is probably the best we’re going to

## Average Wages in the Federal and Private Shipyards

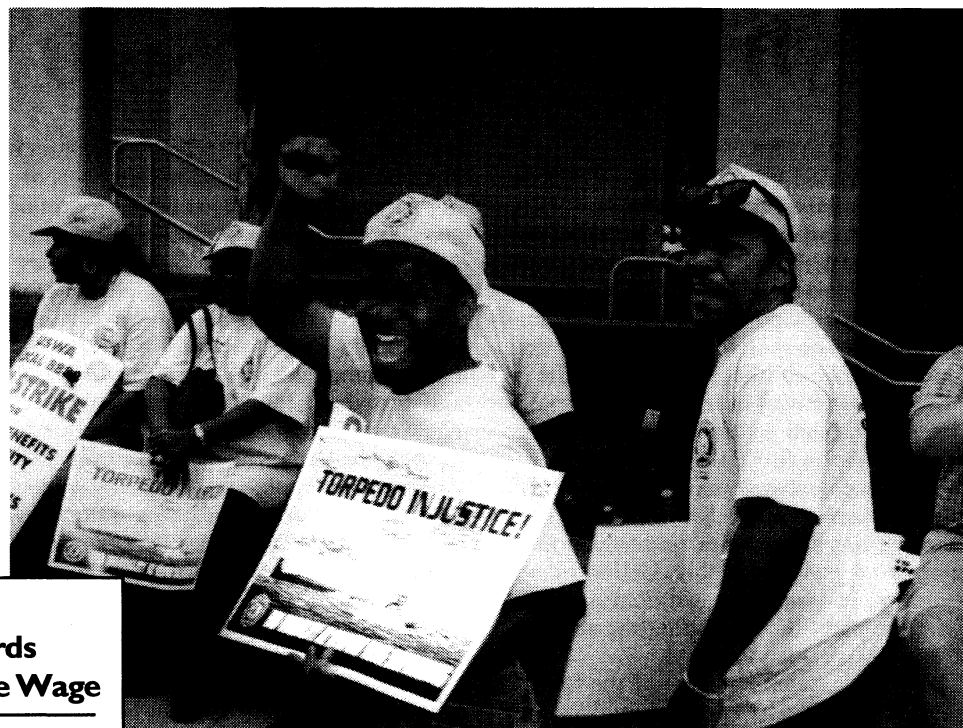
| Shipyard                   | Average Wage |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Pearl Harbor, Hawaii       | \$ 21.74     |
| Puget Sound, Washington    | \$ 19.65     |
| Baltimore Coast Guard, MD  | \$ 17.45     |
| Portsmouth, Maine          | \$ 16.84     |
| Bath Iron Works, Maine     | \$ 16.00     |
| Electric Boat, Connecticut | \$ 15.73     |
| Norfolk Naval, Virginia    | \$ 15.55     |
| Ingalls Shipbuilding, MS   | \$ 14.07     |
| National Steel & Ship, CA  | \$ 12.98     |
| Newport News Ship, VA      | \$ 12.00     |
| Avondale Industries, LA    | \$ 9.45      |

\*\*\*Information from the AFL-CIO

get,” commented James Ward, also with 16 years at the yard. “There’s still a whole lot missing, like no provision for early out [for retirees].”

### Majority Black workforce

Shipyard workers at Newport News, a majority of whom are Black, are among the lowest paid in the industry. According to the AFL-CIO, Newport News Shipbuilding ranks second to the bottom in average wages



Militant/Salm Kolis  
Above, members of USWA Local 8888 at on strike Newport News rally in Richmond, Virginia, June 25. Left, a chart of U.S. shipyards and average wages at each.

at \$12.00 per hour. Avondale Industries in Louisiana is at the bottom at \$9.45 per hour. Electric Boat in Connecticut is at \$15.73. Pearl Harbor in Hawaii tops the list at \$21.74.

The previous four contracts at Newport News prior to the current proposal provided minimal average wages increases — a total of \$4.33 over the past 16 years. This breaks down into \$1.13 per hour in the 1983 contract, \$1.48 per hour in the 1987 contract, \$1.72 in the 1991 contract, and no increase in 1995.

“In five years, we’re still going to be five years behind everybody else,” stated Gerald Blose, a mechanic at the yard, in an interview with the *Virginia Pilot*.

Prince Brown, who has four children, objected to the fact that under this contract the weekly cost of his health insurance premium would double to \$23.80. And that’s only for

the first year. The contract also fails to restore the vacation time and holidays that were taken from the workers in the last contract.

Workers at the lower end of the production pay scale and support employees — those doing janitorial and maintenance work — get even smaller raises in the range of \$2.30 to \$2.70 per hour, well below the \$3.10 average. “Some people only get a \$2.50 raise over the life of the contract and that’s not right,” stated Steve Moton, with 10 years at the shipyard. “It’s not a contract for the future. A lot can happen in five years, taxes can go up, the cost of living can rise. A three-year contract is better.”

Virginia is a so-called right-to-work state, so workers are not obligated to join the Steelworkers even though the union has won the right to represent all 9,200 of them. Leading up to the strike and through the early days of the walkout, union membership soared to some 8,000 members — more than 85 percent of those eligible to join. During

# Why workers should reject basic steel contract

BY SUSAN LAMONT  
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — United Steelworkers of America (USWA) members who work at U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel Corp. mills and mines are currently voting, by mail, on proposed new five-year contracts. At the end of July, similar tentative agreements were also announced at Ispat Inland Inc. and National Steel Corp.; steel-

The length of the agreements — five years — is way too long, as we know from bitter experiences under the current six-year agreement.

The proposed agreement at Bethlehem Steel contains a measly \$2 an hour wage increase over the life of the contract — \$.50 in February 2000; another \$.50 in August 2001; and the final dollar in February 2003 — the fourth year of the pact. Taken on top of inflation, the paltry raise in the last contract, and the massive give-backs of the 1980s, wages of workers in basic steel have yet to catch up to where they were 15 years ago. The new contract won’t change that. In five years we will be making even less in real dollar terms.

This is especially hard to swallow because union members know the new lean-and-mean steel industry has been raking in substantial profits for the last few years — built on massive layoffs and speedup. According to the USWA, operating profits between 1993 and 1997 rose from \$10 per ton to \$40 per ton. At the same time the steel bosses’ rate of profit continues its long term decline, so they try to squeeze even more out of us.

Under the proposed contract, probation for

new hires is nearly doubled, from 520 hours to 1,000. This means new workers will have to wait six months before getting full union protection, a change that can only weaken the union. In addition, a worker will have to labor three years, instead of the current one, before getting some protection from layoffs. Transfer rights to another mill at Bethlehem are further restricted. Those taking such bids will now have to wait one year — six months longer than the current contract — before being eligible to bid on other jobs.

There is a substantial gain in pensions for workers retiring during the next five years. The minimum monthly pension for a worker retiring after 30 years would increase from \$817.50 to \$1,687.50 a month by Aug. 1, 2002.

Workers who are already retired or their surviving spouses do not get much help from the new contract, beyond small, lump-sum annual payments. There are 172,000 retirees at both companies. For some retirees and especially for surviving spouses, little is left of their pensions after medical insurance premiums are taken out.

The contracts pit gains for those getting ready to retire against newer workers with less time and retirees who are already out of the mills. They set the stage for further inroads against new hires, who will be coming into the mills by the thousands over the next few years.

The companies backed off for now from their demand for some further concessions — such as a two-tier wage structure, eliminating overtime pay after eight hours, random drug testing, and further cuts in union jobs. But the bosses haven’t abandoned the fight to impose these things. At the US Steel/Kobe mill in Lorain, Ohio, workers are covered under a separate agreement because it is a “joint venture” with a Japanese steel company. There, the company is asking workers to agree to work up to 12 hours a day at straight-time pay.

In addition, the contracts maintain and deepen the class-collaborationist partnership perspective. The reactionary “Stand up for Steel” campaign is codified as a permanent

organization — co-chaired by USWA president George Becker and a CEO selected by the companies. It is to be funded by a contribution of \$.075 per ton shipped.

The companies’ cries to “save our steel industry” is essentially aimed at pressing steelworkers to accept contracts weaker than we could win by mobilizing union power on our own behalf. This nationalistic “America first” campaign launched by the steel bosses last fall pits U.S. steelworkers against workers in other countries, where the effects of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis are bearing down hardest.

Although many workers at Fairfield Works in Alabama felt relief when the proposed contract was announced, some of this relief turned to anger when the contract summary appeared. A petition protesting the contract was signed by hundreds of workers at the pipe mill at Fairfield Works and a demonstration of about 100 members took place outside USWA District 9 director’s office.

Some 3,000 USWA Local 1010 members at Ispat Inland’s Indiana Harbor Works in East Chicago, Indiana, recently voted virtually unanimously for strike authorization, in response to company stonewalling during negotiations. This is just one indication of steelworkers’ willingness to fight. The other USWA strikes going on, from Titan Tire to Newport News to Kaiser Aluminum, are another indication of the growing mood of resistance among workers.

A strong “no” vote will show that many steelworkers don’t accept that these contracts were the best that could be won right now, with no mobilization of union power. It will demonstrate that we want our interests put first, not those of the super-rich stockholders whose only concern is maximizing their profits. And a “no” vote will also be a step toward rejecting the companies’ anti-imports drive, which is remains a deadly trap for steelworkers.

Susan LaMont is a member of USWA Local 2122 at U.S. Steel’s Fairfield Works in Alabama. Brian Williams is a member of USWA Local 2609 at Bethlehem Steel’s Sparrows Point mill in Maryland.

## UNION TALK

workers at those companies will be meeting soon and voting as well. The outcome will affect contract talks still under way at LTV Corp., and Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. Altogether some 55,000 USWA members in basic steel are involved. The current six-year contracts expire July 31.

Some details of the agreements have been presented to steelworkers in the form of a written summary at recent union meetings. The facts speak for themselves. Steelworkers should vote “no.”

### NEW EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS TITLE FROM PATHFINDER

#### 1999 Preface to ‘Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions’

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS \$4.00

#### ALSO INCLUDES:

**Though French, We Join in Common Struggle with Others**  
by Thomas Sankara

**Strengthening our Programmatic Continuity and Political Homogeneity:**

**Organizing a Genuinely International Cadre**  
by Michel Dubois



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.



the course of the strike some 2,000 workers went back.

#### 'Let's talk contract'

International USWA president George Becker addressed the contract meeting in a session open to the media. He began his speech to a chorus of boos from many of the Steelworkers in the audience. "You lasted one day longer," stated Becker.

Many Steelworkers objected to his use of the past tense in talking about the strike. He condemned the Navy for helping the yard by paying strike-related expenses. Becker vowed that the U.S.S. *Enterprise* nuclear aircraft carrier, which is scheduled to arrive at the Newport News shipyard for repairs in early August, will be met by a floating picket line if the Steelworkers are still without a contract at that time.

Becker hailed as one of the great events of the decade the struggle by shipyard workers in Gdansk, Poland, in the early 1990s, which he claimed brought down communism in Poland and the rest of Europe. His pro-war talk hailed the *Enterprise*, which was a staging ground for military assaults against Iraq and Yugoslavia, as "the symbol of democracy." As Becker continued his talk along these lines, a number of workers in the audience shouted out, "Let's talk contract."

Thousands of Steelworkers were set to march on Washington, D.C., July 23 to demand "Stop Navy Strikebreaking." The day before the demonstration, however, union officials called off the protest, saying that negotiators were close to a tentative agreement. The mass union meeting at Hampton University was scheduled for that day instead. On the evening of July 22 USWA Local 8888 also took down their picket lines by the shipyard gates. Both of these moves were quite unpopular among a large number of strikers.

The union had reserved some 30 buses to bring striking Steelworkers to the D.C. protest against government strikebreaking. In addition, a number of buses were set to roll from around the country to bring Steelworkers and other working people to the action as an act of solidarity and support for the shipyard workers fight. These were to include a couple of buses from Charlotte, North Carolina, full of Steelworkers who have been on strike against Continental General Tire since September.

Striking workers resumed picketing at some gates July 27. A young sailor leaving work that day stopped at the 50th Street picket line and asked, "Are you guys on strike or not on strike? The newspaper says its over?"

"We're on strike until we vote on our contract, which is on Friday," July 30, explained George and Brian, two pickets who asked that their last names not be used. "We don't have a gate captain or a radio, but we're here to let the company know it's not over til it's over," they explained.

#### Navy still pushes for cuts

An unnamed Navy official quoted in the *Daily Press* said the proposed settlement at the nation's largest private shipyard will not affect the agreement the yard struck with the Navy in the midst of the strike to slash \$360 million over the next five years in labor and material costs.

Defense Secretary William Cohen made clear in a letter he wrote to congressmen that the Pentagon is determined to push this through. "If Newport News can't demonstrate lower costs over the next few years, the Department would be open to more far-reaching solutions," the letter stated.

At a USWA Local 8888 picnic held at the Newport News Park July 25, workers had a chance to discuss their thoughts since the contract meeting two days earlier.

"The company used this contract to divide us," stated Marvin Harris, a welder with 18 years at the plant. "The older guys who are about to retire got something and the people in the lower grades who haven't seen any raise in years got something. But there's nothing in it for many of us in the middle."

Edward Haynes, who has 20 years in the plant, said he doesn't like the contract but intends to vote for it. "We've lost a lot of money and I don't see what would be gained by staying out much longer," he said. "It's not just the company but they

also have the government on their side. The whole system is against us."

Alma Thomas, with 24 years at the yard, stated, "This agreement has already been signed and endorsed like it's a done deal. I feel they shouldn't have done that until we approved it. I think it's pretty good. We probably couldn't get anything more."

One sign put up on display on the picnic said, "Don't Vote No. Vote Hell No — to a five-year contract, to a four-week return time. We left as one. We return as one."

"They [the union officials] canceled the rally in Washington, D.C., because they said

we hadn't had a paycheck in too long," stated Tami Cato who has worked at the yard for 19 years. "If they're so concerned about us not having a paycheck then why are they giving the shipyard four weeks to bring us in?"

Debra Stansfield, with 19 years, said of the contract, "There's a lot of good points, but so many more bad. I have to look to the future and the long run. We're putting our lives on the line and they want to throw peanuts at us and make us mad."

One striker who didn't want his name used pointed out how much he has changed through the course of this fight. "We've gained men-

tally and socially more than financially," he said. "I didn't grasp until lately the impact and bigger implication of this strike. I'd like to go to Avondale shipyard where they're fighting for a union and show my support."

*Brian Williams is a member of the USWA in Sparrows Point, Maryland. Mary Martin and Janice Lynn, members of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, D.C.; Sam Manuel, a member of the United Transportation Union in D.C.; and Salm Kolis, a member of the USWA in Pittsburgh, contributed to this article.*

## Help build and participate in the Active Workers Conference

August 5 - 8 ■ Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio

### Structuring Party Units and Trade Union Fractions through Mass Work

... that will be the unifying theme of panels, talks, and classes, including ...

- **A rolling, three-day panel of socialist workers, other unionists, farmers, and young socialists** engaged in land and labor actions, reaching out through the unions to broader social struggles, and keeping the continuity of the communist workers movement in print.
- Talks by **Jack Barnes**, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, and by **Mary-Alice Waters**, editor of the Marxist magazine *New International*.
- **Classes** based on *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes, *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, and other books. Classes will focus on clarifying questions discussed in summer schools organized across North America by Young Socialists and the SWP.

#### Exhibits

- **Books and pamphlets** will be on sale throughout the conference — many at special discounts.
- **Socialist summer schools**, whose participants combined studying Marxism with carrying out communist union work in industry and reaching out to struggles from the strike by Virginia shipyard workers; to the unionization victory by North Carolina textile workers; to defense of Puerto Rican political prisoners, protests against police brutality, and solidarity with the Cuban revolution.
- **Keeping the arsenal of Pathfinder books and pamphlets in print.** The joint effort of party branches and union fractions, printshop workers, Pathfinder's editors, and more than a hundred volunteer party supporters from around the world who are organizing to scan, proofread, format, and reproduce the covers and graphics of more than 350 titles.
- **Expanding the use of the Internet and network computing** to advance political centralization and collaboration in the communist movement. Preview the new website of the *Militant* newspaper to be rolled out soon after the conference!



Militant/Dan Fein  
Discussing *Militant* on Continental General Tire picket line in mid-July

#### Schedule

##### THURSDAY, AUGUST 5

- 8:00 am - 12:30 pm Registration
- 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm Welcome to Ohio 1999 Active Workers Conference — *Jack Willey*
- 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm Panel discussion (1st session)
- 7:00 pm - 10:30 pm Structuring Party Units and Trade Union Fractions through Mass Work — *Jack Barnes*

##### FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

- 9:00 am - 11:30 am Panel discussion (2nd session)
- 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm The Place of the Party's Auxiliary Organizations — the Young Socialists and Party Supporters — in Building the Communist Movement — *Mary-Alice Waters*
- 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Classes

##### SATURDAY, AUGUST 7

- 9:00 am - 11:30 am Panel discussion (3rd session)
- 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm Classes
- 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm Organizing to Carry Out the Perspectives of the Active Workers Conference — *Jack Barnes*

##### Launching the Pathfinder Fund

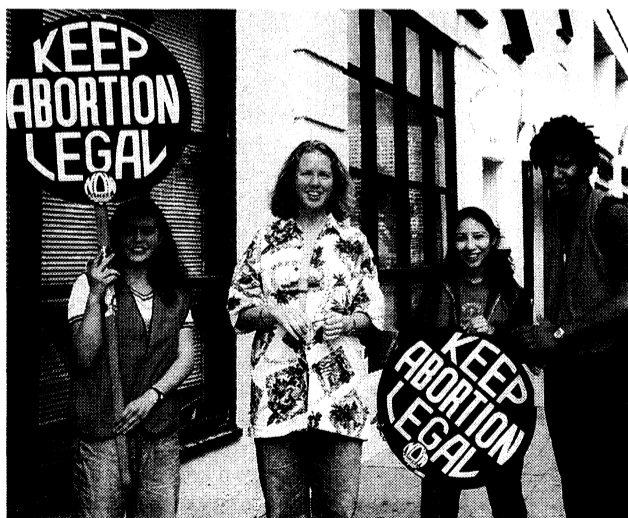
- 11:30 pm - 1:00 am Party

##### SUNDAY, AUGUST 8

- (All day) Joint meeting of steering committee members of the SWP's national trade union fractions
- Meeting organized by the Young Socialists
- Workshops for conference participants volunteering for the Pathfinder reprint project

##### Monday, August 9

- SWP National Committee meets to discuss how party branches, organizing committees, and union fractions can advance the course registered at conference



Militant/Carole Lesnick  
Members of the Young Socialists, at far right, join others in defending women's right to choose abortion, El Monte, California, in June.

Immediately after the conference, participants are encouraged to join a volunteer brigade to repaint and make other improvements in the Pathfinder Building in New York City. Start making your plans now.

FOR TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER INFORMATION CALL YS AND SWP SUPPORTERS (at numbers listed on page 12), or call the YS National Committee: (415) 824-1429

**SPONSORED BY: Young Socialists, Socialist Workers Party**

# Quebec nurses strike ends, fight continues

BY JIM WHITTON

MONTREAL — Striking nurses in Quebec voted July 21 to reject an agreement between the government and the negotiators of their union, the Quebec Nurses Federation (FIIQ), with three-quarters opposed to the deal. Even though many were on holidays, 63 percent of the nurses participated in the vote. Previously, the agreement had been approved by 62 percent of the 600 delegates of the union's highest body, the federal council.

However, on July 24, the federal council voted to put an end to the nurses strike, which had lasted in most cases 23 days and was declared illegal by the government.

Most nurses opposed the agreement, which did not budge from the government's offer of a 5 percent wage increase over three years and proposed yet another study on reevaluating the wage scales of nurses with university degrees and others. Quebec nurses, who are among the lowest paid in Canada, were demanding an immediate raise of 10 percent, followed by an increase of 6 percent over two years.

Other items in the agreement were either already in the old contract and hadn't been applied, or were so qualified as to be useless. Many nurses pointed out, there was no back-to-work agreement. The government insists on trying to collect the millions of dollars of fines imposed on the union and the penalty of two days pay lost for every day on strike.

At a demonstration of 200 nurses in front of Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard's office in Montreal July 20, Dr. Raby Youla said, "The agreement does not respect our demands. They talk about studies but there have already been a lot of studies." Yourba

is a doctor who works as a nurse because she became a doctor in Senegal and her competence is not recognized in Canada.

After the federal council approved the agreement, they proposed the nurses declare a truce until the vote on the agreement July 21. But at several hospitals nurses remained on the picket lines to express their opposition. Outside the federal council itself several nurses demonstrated their disagreement.

On the picket line in front of Notre Dame hospital in Montreal on July 22, Monique Lacroix, who has been a nurse for 28 years, pointed out, "It was unacceptable. We already had a letter of agreement in the old collective agreement on the creation of permanent positions. They will shorten the vacation period only if the employer is able. They must take out the ifs. We no longer have any confidence in that government." The period of time over which nurses can take their holidays, which was May to October, will now be May to September.

Sonia Pelletier, who also works at Notre Dame and is still considered temporary even though she has worked for two years full-time, said "I don't agree" with the decision of the federal council to end the strike. "Here we voted that they should come back to our local meeting and that is not what was done. What is disappointing is that our leaders have abandoned us because they were tired."

The strike began June 26 and was declared illegal by the Quebec government from the beginning under Law 160, which was adopted in the 1980s. On July 2 the National Assembly passed a second, more repressive law ordering the end of the strike.

In an interview published in July 10 *La*



Militant/Grant Hargrave  
Nurses on the picket line at Sacre-Coeur hospital in Montreal, July 22. Signs highlight the unionists' demands for dignity and respect.

*Presse*, Bouchard declared, "If we give in, we are finished. Quebec will no longer be governable. But if we show that an illegal strike doesn't pay, there will not be many who will want to use it from now on." Referring to the negotiations under way with the other public sector workers, Bouchard added that if he gave in to the nurses, "That would correspond to breaking through the parameters, that would give very strong arguments to the 400,000 who are waiting."

Lacroix insisted, "We are fighting for wages but also for the quality of health care. They must hire more people." Last year nurses' overtime was the equivalent of over 800 full time jobs. About 43 percent of nurses work full-time, 28 percent are part-time, and 28 percent are on call. In 1995, following massive cuts in federal government funding

to the provinces, the Quebec government closed nine hospitals in the Montreal region cutting 15 percent of all hospital beds.

Over and over on the picket lines nurses explained the overwork and stress they are subject too because there are not enough nurses. For Manon Lafrance, a nurse for 16 years at the Rivière-des-Prairies hospital in Montreal, "The agreement in principle changes nothing for the daily situation of nurses on the level of their tasks and workload. It puts in danger the survival of the nursing profession. There is nothing to attract youth."

The public health system in Quebec was established in the 1960s as part of the fight for equality by the Quebecois. Before the hospitals were private nonunion institutions controlled by the churches. Health care for the Quebecois, whose language is French, was much inferior to that for those who spoke English. Defending these gains is at the center of the present battle.

The nurses strike evoked massive sympathy in the population. There was constant honking and other gestures to show support of the nurses picket lines. In trying to turn working people against the nurses, Alain Dubuc, the chief editorialist of *La Presse*, entitled an editorial "Honk now, pay later!" Several patients joined the nurses picket lines.

Aside from declarations, however, the officials of the three major union federations in Quebec, as well as those in the rest of Canada, did nothing to mobilize this support behind the nurses.

While the nurses strike is over, there is no agreement between the union and the government. Nurses union officials announced they will seek mediation. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of other public sector workers, including many hospital workers, are negotiating for a new contract.

## Colorado miners settle strike, win gains

BY JEFF POWERS

RANGELY, Colorado — Members of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1984 returned to work at the Deserado mine July 12, ending their two-month strike against Blue Mountain Energy. The miners voted 74-14 to accept a contract that was slightly better than the company's original offer. The new agreement included a \$1.65 per hour pay raise spread out over five years, a small increase in retirement benefits (the company improved its contribution to the 401 K plan), a return to rotating shifts—something the miners were demanding, better contract wording on threats to outsource union jobs, improvements in accruing vacations, and no changes in medical, dental, and vision benefits. The UMWA was not able to secure health care for retirees, one of the major issues in the strike.

The company would only let the union employees back into the mine after they took and passed a urine analysis. All the miners took the test and no miner was told that he or she could not return to work.

No union miners crossed the picket line during the strike, but the bosses attempted to mine coal. "It looked to me like they were able to get about 20 or 30 feet a day. That is

nothing," said Local 1984 recording secretary Carol Amy. "It is easy to get 120 feet."

In June Blue Mountain Energy placed adds in every local paper in the area offering to hire scabs. Following the July 4 holiday the company began to process applications. "We heard that they gave physicals and hired 17 people," Ed Hinkle, a miner with 14 years at Deserado, said. "Since they had not been working, I doubt they were experienced miners."

"The company didn't tell people what they were getting into," Hinkle explained. "When we heard they were interviewing in Vernal [a town in Utah about 50 miles from Rangely] the union organized a team of miners who talked several people out of putting in applications."

"They were just people trying to make a living, not demons," Hinkle added.

"When the company looked like they were going to bring in the scabs it made a big difference," said Lloyd Chavez, another miner with 14 years. "It worried a lot of people." In saying this he echoed the sentiments of several other miners the *Militant* spoke with.

"A lot of what was involved in this was respect," Amy said. "We all walked out to-

gether and we stuck together and the union is a lot stronger because of it."

Since returning to work the union is fighting to get the company to abide by the contract — something they often neglected to do before. "One of the guys wrote up a boss for doing union work the day after we came back to the job," Amy said.

Both Amy and Hinkle said what impressed them the most was the solidarity of the younger workers traditionally called "green hats."

"They hired the green hats in the hopes that they would cross, but they were right there with us the whole time," Amy said. "They had come from the oil fields where they had seen their benefits taken away and they wanted to fight and saw that they could fight."

## 'Smithfield worries about hogs, not people'

BY JANICE LYNN

SMITHFIELD, Virginia — As temperatures soared above 90 degrees, Andrew Hardy, a worker at Smithfield Packing Co., died here July 7 from what was eventually diagnosed as hyperthermia, or heat stroke.

Hardy, 29, worked on the kill floor where hogs are slaughtered. This is the hottest part of the plant. Hot water is sprayed on the floor to wash away waste, and hog hairs are bumed off with flames. Hardy was taken to the nurse's office after slumping over, and died less than two minutes after a company van brought him to the Smithfield Medical Center. His family questions why an ambulance didn't take him.

Three other meatpackers suffered heat exposure July 20 and were given medical treatment.

"It ain't right," James Eley told *Militant* correspondents July 22. "They should have let him take a break where it was cool right away. This company is just worried about their hogs, not the people." Eley has worked at Smithfield Packing for nine years and hangs hams.

Jeff Wengorek, 20, works on the kill floor. He just got off his 60-day probation. Wengorek was particularly incensed at the company's statement to the media that the temperature on the kill floor was about the

same as outside. "It's much hotter inside," he said. "More fans should be installed. We should be allowed more breaks. It takes someone dying to learn anything," he said.

"They should give us more breaks, stop the line more, put in air conditioning, not work us so hard," commented another kill floor worker who was running to his second job.

A maintenance mechanic, who has worked at Smithfield Packing for three years and had worked for seven years at nearby Newport News Shipbuilding, expressed his support for the shipyard workers' strike (see front page article). He thought the union at the packing plant, the United Food and Commercial Workers, needed to be strengthened. Declining to give his name, he said, "People don't feel they can speak their mind here without being fired. The company was not concerned about the heat and working conditions, until someone got hurt."

Smithfield Packing Co. issued a statement July 20 stating its new policy would be to give workers three paid breaks and a shortened workday when the outside temperature goes above 90 degrees.

Janice Lynn is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, D.C. Dave Salner contributed to this article.

### Coal Miners on Strike

Articles reprinted from the *Militant*

- ◆ The 111-day 1977-78 strike ◆ The 1981 strike and contract rejection vote
- ◆ The UMWA and the fight against nuclear power ◆ The fight for health benefits and compensation to Black Lung victims \$5.00

### Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

Leon Trotsky

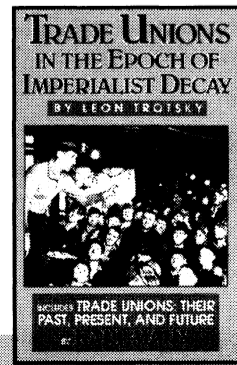
Featuring "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future"

Karl Marx

"Apart from their original purposes, the trades unions must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. . . . They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions."

—Karl Marx, 1866

In this book, two central leaders of the modern communist workers movement outline the fight for this revolutionary perspective. \$14.95



AVAILABLE FROM BOOKSTORES, INCLUDING THOSE LISTED ON PAGE 12.

PATHFINDER

# Locked-out Steelworkers: 'power in numbers'

BY SCOTT BREEN  
AND CHRIS RAYSON

SPOKANE, Washington — Hundreds of Steelworkers and supporters marched down Hawthorne Road to the main gate of Kaiser Aluminum's Mead plant near here July 17. The 600 enthusiastic marchers kept up a steady chorus of "No justice, No peace," "What do we want? — Contract Now," "One day longer," and several other chants — some with harsh words directed at Kaiser and its scab workforce.

Many workers were angered by a ruling of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) the day before the march. The NLRB dismissed all but one of the unfair labor practice charges against Kaiser filed by the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). James Scott, regional director of the NLRB's Oakland office, declared Kaiser's January 14 lockout of 3,100 union members legal.

The ruling "didn't faze me," Joe Ernest, a locked-out Steelworker, told the *Militant*. "It comes down to holding our ground on the picket lines. Our power is in our numbers."

Some workers took the ruling harder. Jon Gilliam, who has worked for Kaiser for 11 years, since he was 19 years old, said, "It knocked the wind out of me."

At a July 15 meeting near Spokane, 1,500 workers and family members showed up on 24 hours notice to discuss the impending ruling and its impact with David Foster, chairman of the USWA negotiating committee, and Paul Whitehead, assistant general counsel for the USWA near Spokane. The USWA has appealed the ruling.

Gilliam and Ernest were part of a busload of Steelworkers who made the five-hour trip to the march from Kaiser's Tacoma, Wash-



Militant/Scott Breen

Rally in Spokane, Washington, July 17, supporting locked-out USWA workers at Kaiser.

ton, plant. There was also a bus of Steelworkers from Reynolds Aluminum in Troutdale, Oregon, who brought a donation of \$2,500.

Washington State police and Spokane County sheriff's deputies had a large and visible presence during the march, blocking off the ends of the mile-long route.

Scabs, who work a 12-hour shift, were forced to remain in the plant past their shift change, evoking the taunting chant of "Overtime! Overtime! Overtime!" from the marchers. Other scab workers were held up from entering for their evening work assignments. Kaiser is trying to keep the plants going with supervisors, office personnel, and workers hired off the street. According to union officials, very few union workers crossed the picket lines.

When the march arrived at the Mead plant, the front gate was wide open and Kaiser's security guards were videotaping the marchers. USWA marshals stood across the gate entrance with their backs to the security guards to prevent the marchers from being provoked by the company. Across the road from the gate, several sheriff's deputies stood by in watchful silence.

Kaiser Aluminum has locked out USWA members at five facilities in Newark, Ohio; Gramercy, Louisiana; and Tacoma, Mead, and Trentwood, Washington. The workers had gone on strike at the end of September 1998 when their contract expired and Kaiser demanded job cuts, the gutting of seniority rights, and paltry retirement benefits. When the USWA offered to return to work January 14 under the terms of the old contract, Kaiser refused, locking the union members out.

Kaiser is currently trying to keep up production, but is running into increasing difficulties. Its aluminum refining plant in Gramercy exploded July 5, injuring 24 employees. Its profits have declined dramatically with financial losses of \$38.2 million in the last quarter and another \$38.9 million during the previous quarter.

Although most attending the march were Steelworkers and their families, there were also Teamsters and a few Machinists from the Boeing plant in Spokane. Boeing worker Kevin Winans said he was there "to right the wrong done to the Kaiser workers."

Another group of workers that had been invited and planned to attend were meat-

packers from IBP in Pasco, who went on strike a month earlier. The workers, who ended their strike the week before the march, were on mandatory overtime for this Saturday, and unable to make the trip.

There were also rallies at both the assembly point before the march began and in front of the Mead factory. A featured speaker was Gregory Bridges, Jr., a worker at Avondale Shipyard in Louisiana. Avondale workers, he said, have waged a hard-fought, six-year fight for union representation by the USWA.

Also speaking were the USWA presidents from the Tacoma, Trentwood, Mead, and Newark locals; a few politicians; Jon Youngdahl representing the USWA's Corporate Campaign against Kaiser; and several other union officials.

Carol Ford — a crane operator at the Trentwood Kaiser plant, and a leader of Women of Steel, an organization of women in the USWA — also spoke. There are about 125 production workers who are women among the locked-out USWA members at Kaiser. "I hired in here when I was 18. I'm going back in there," declared Ford. "Not for me. Not for you. But for the next generation."

Women of Steel and Spouses of Steel, a support group initially organized by wives of the locked-out Steelworkers in Spokane, played very visible, vocal, and much appreciated parts in the march, rallies, and the barbecue afterwards.

Spouses of Steel has been very active in support of the struggle of the Steelworkers since it was started, on May 1 of this year. (See box.)

Many workers said the July 17 action was an important answer to Kaiser, which is hoping that the combination of the NLRB ruling and the end of unemployment benefits in August will undermine their solidarity.

On July 19 Kaiser faxed a letter to the USWA requesting a two-week negotiating session to start August 9, at the end of which, Kaiser said, it would make its best offer for a new contract. The company demanded one condition from the USWA — that its offer, no matter what, be submitted to the membership for a vote on September 3. The USWA rejected that condition.

On July 22 the USWA and Kaiser agreed to resume negotiations starting the first week of August.

*Chris Rayson is the Socialist Workers candidate for Seattle Port Commissioner. Scott Breen is a member of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 751A.*

## The story behind Spouses of Steel

MEAD, Washington — "We were 'Wives of Steel,' until a husband of a woman Steelworker wanted to join. Then we became 'Spouses of Steel,'" Jeanne Jokkel, president of the Spouses of Steel, told *Militant* correspondents following the July 17 rally to support Kaiser Aluminum workers here.

Spouses of Steel initiated and led a rally outside Kaiser's plant in Tacoma, Washington, the weekend before the Spokane rally. That rally was attended by 125 people, many of whom came from Spokane on a Spouses of Steel bus. The rally and car caravan around the plant blocked the scabs trying to leave or enter the plant during their shift change for 45 minutes, boosting the morale of the pickets. Spouses of Steel are now organized in Tacoma, and they are helping to organize one in Newark, Ohio.

In Spokane, they meet every Tuesday evening at the union hall. Jokkel explained that they "started the group on May 1. There were four of us. Now it's grown to about 30."

"We e-mail all the unions we can find listed on the Internet and write them about their lock-out and ask for support," she said. The group also organizes a phone calling tree, calling the workers by picket group about important events.

Jokkel herself didn't start off as a supporter of the strike. "The first day of the strike, I was mad at Paul [her husband] and the union. I told him to go out and get a job."

As the strike progressed, she went down to the union hall for a Christmas party. "I was overwhelmed by the warmth and solidarity I felt," she said. Then, "I told Paul, 'I'm starting a wives' group.'" Now, "I support him and all the strikers 101 percent!"

During the barbecue, Tony Duncan, husband of one of the locked-out workers, explained why he joined the group two months ago. "It gave me a chance to release the stress and state my opinion," he said.

The Spouses of Steel are promoting a fund-raising raffle now, and plan to organize activities for the children of locked-out Steelworkers in August. They are discussing a prayer vigil in mid-September at Kaiser's Gramercy, Louisiana, plant.

— S.B. AND C.R.

## TWA workers approve contract, fight on for better wages, benefits

BY BETSEY STONE

ST. LOUIS — "I was fighting to get something better." That was the reaction of ramp worker Rodrigo Castellanos to the news that all three union groups at TWA — mechanics and baggage handlers, flight attendants, and public service agents, had approved the company's latest contract offer.

When officials of International Association of International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 142 announced the results of the election July 22, they declined give the vote totals. So workers remain in the dark about how close the vote was.

What is clear to Castellanos and other baggage handlers at the company's hub here in St. Louis is there is a lot of discontent among TWA workers with the contract.

When the agreement was first announced in St. Louis-area newspapers, there were articles touting the "double-digit" wage raises as a gain for workers. But, as Castellanos points out, when workers looked at the small print they found much of the raise cancelled by the removal of bonuses promised in an earlier offer.

"We still remain below the average in the airline industry," he said.

In the last three contracts — in 1986, 1992, and 1994 — TWA workers took big cuts. And they have been working without a new contract since 1997. Yet no provisions have been made for back pay.

Jerry Nichols, a ramp worker for 18 years, was one of many who say they voted no. He is concerned about the lack of significant improvement in company contributions to the pension plan, contributions that were

frozen in 1992 for seven years.

Nichols also pointed out the contract does not address the problem of forced overtime, which is getting worse. "We are 60 to 70 workers short," he explains. "When they are short TWA tells people they have to work a double." New hires who lack seniority are hit the hardest. Many are quitting over this issue, Nichols said.

Another issue that concerns workers is a provision that opens the way for a nonunion work force at so-called "focus" stations — stations that are slated to grow in the number of employees in coming years.

TWA workers have been battling for a decent contract since 1997 when the previous contract ran out. In the past 18 months they have walked off the job three times, effectively crippling TWA operations.

This is the second vote on a contract in recent months. The earlier offer was going to be defeated so overwhelmingly that the company did not wait for the vote to be completed before going back to the bargaining table.

In the earlier vote workers approved authorization to strike. The union also threatened to boycott targeted TWA flights if an agreement could not be reached.

There was a lot of

pressure on TWA workers to accept the latest offer. Prominent politicians in the St. Louis area, most notably U.S. Rep. Richard Gephardt, played a role in the negotiations. Before the workers had a chance to vote, these politicians, businessmen, area newspapers, university "labor experts," and top IAM officials all lauded the contract as the best TWA could do.

The highly publicized annual losses posted by TWA for the past 10 years were a factor in influencing many of those workers who voted "yes." Workers were told that if they voted "no," they were voting to not have a job because TWA would be forced out of business.

The new contract runs out in 18 months. "The fight will continue," Castellanos said.

*Betsy Stone is a member of IAM Local 1487 in Chicago.*

Available from Pathfinder

**THE EASTERN AIRLINES STRIKE**  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE RANK-AND-FILE MACHINISTS AND GAINS FOR THE LABOR MOVEMENT

BY ERNIE MAILHOT, JUDY STRANAHAN, AND JACK BARNES

The story of the 686-day strike in which a rank-and-file resistance by Machinists prevented Eastern's union-busting onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable non-union airline. \$9.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

# Meatpackers at IBP discuss outcome of strike settlement

BY AUTUMN KNOWLTON

WALLULA, Washington — After a month on strike, members of Teamsters Local 556 narrowly approved the latest contract offer by meat processing giant IBP, in a vote here July 7. Union members from the plant ratified the contract 276-258, and the majority of workers returned to work July 9.

Their fight began June 4 when the meatpackers walked out of the Wallula plant in protest over the firing of 30 workers who had protested the line speed. The union officially declared a strike June 8, after a 847-291 membership vote. All 30 fired workers were offered their jobs back as part of the settlement.

About 80 percent of the workers are from Mexico and Central America. Others are from Bosnia, Laos, and many other countries. About 800 of the 1,200 Teamsters members at IBP stayed out for the entire strike.

Though several hundred workers crossed the picket line from the start of the strike and IBP was able to continue processing some meat, the walkout crippled production at the plant. The company was forced to ship cattle to plants as far away as Idaho and Nebraska to be slaughtered, and truck the meat back to Wallula for processing.

On June 21 strikers rejected a new company proposal by a vote of 688-51. The company had increased its wage offer slightly — to a \$1.57 an hour raise over a five-year contract.

As the strike continued, IBP mounted a campaign to hire scabs and pressure the unionists to return to work. The bosses raised the starting wage to \$8.50 an hour and ran hiring ads widely on local TV and radio stations.

Strikers countered by maintaining their picket lines, organizing a support rally of 700 people in nearby Pasco June 19, and sending small teams of workers to Seattle, Portland, and other nearby cities to publicize their fight.

The new contract was approved at a stormy meeting of more than 500 strikers July 7.

"The day of the vote on the contract, the Teamsters officials told us we had no choice, that we had to accept the contract," Violeta de la Cruz, a processing worker, told the *Militant* later. "Many of us thought the strike could have continued longer if the union had supported us, but when the Teamsters said they wouldn't support us any more, many people lost hope. We had no choice then but to end the strike."

The strikers' contract demands included a \$1-a-year wage increase during a three-year contract, workers' control over the line speed, and higher sanitary standards.

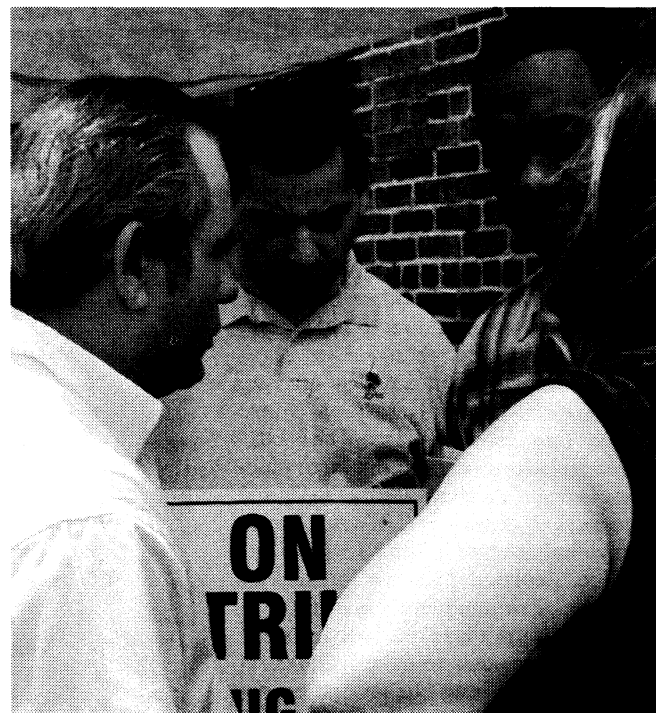
The approved contract guts the trust fund that workers previously had, replacing it with a 401(k) plan that is based on employees contributing up to 6 percent of their pay to the plan. IBP will contribute half the amount of the employees' contribution. The previous offer, which workers overwhelmingly voted down June 21, maintained the pension plan.

The maximum wage increase under the ratified contract is \$1.82 over five years for workers in the processing department. These workers will get an immediate raise of \$1.32 and the other \$.50 of the raise will be spread out over the five years of the contract. Other workers will receive raises ranging from \$1.57 to \$1.74, with the bulk given as a raise up front. The company is also distributing a signing bonus to the relatively small number of workers who were hired before December 1982, to be paid in three increments of \$700 over two months.

The only provision included in the contract about safety is the addition of two union-selected people on the plant safety committee. Both before and after the meeting in Pasco to vote on the contract there was lively debate about what was accomplished by the strike and what workers will do next to continue their fight.

*Janine Dukes and Harvey McArthur, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100 in Chicago, contributed to this article.*

## N.Y. sugar workers win support



Militant/Don Mackle

Puerto Rican fighters meet striking sugar workers in Brooklyn, in July. At far left is fisherman Ismael Guadalupe, from the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques.

BY DON MACKLE AND BETSY FARLEY

BROOKLYN, New York — Strikers at the Domino Sugar refinery here are reaching out to win support for their fight to defend their union. Six weeks into their walkout, members of several unions, including Teamsters; Laborers locals 78 and 79; Electricians Local 3; the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE); the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); Operating Engineers; rail workers; and Steamfitters have stopped by the picket line on the Brooklyn waterfront to express solidarity with the striking members of International Longshoremen Association (ILA).

On July 8 strikers were on the agenda of a monthly community meeting organized by State Assemblyman Vito Lopez in a church near the plant. Ten strikers were among the 80 people who heard ILA Local 1814 Vice President Joe Crimi ask for support against the company efforts to eliminate 100 jobs and break the union.

Earlier in the day Ismael Guadalupe, from the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, and Jorge Farinacci, from the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico, visited the Domino picket line. The Puerto Rican activists were in New York to testify on the colonial status of Puerto Rico before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. During the one-hour visit, strikers explained to the visitors the union-busting effort by the company, then got a report on the situation in Vieques by Guadalupe.

The union sent a team of strikers to set up informational pickets at the Domino plant in Baltimore, where the contract expires in December. Janet Dunbar, a forklift driver at the Brooklyn plant, spent a week on the team. "We are getting a lot of support from the union truck drivers and railroad workers," Dunbar noted.

*Don Mackle is a member of UFCW Local 174. Betsy Farley is a member of UNITE Local 23-25.*

# Peasants fight for land in Indonesia

Continued from Page 16

intimidate them at the request, they believed, of the plantation management.

Under pressure, Santoso gave the peasants a hand-written letter giving them his authority to use the land, with legal guarantees to be issued "later." With this letter in hand, the peasants moved into action. Later they discovered the letter lacked an official stamp and therefore was of questionable legal validity.

On April 30, they cut down trees marking the border between their land and the plantation. In addition, to show "that the people had the power to struggle for their rights" as one peasant put it, they wrecked and burnt several plantation houses.

After police arrested 80 peasants April 30, a smaller group returned to the disputed land the following day and began felling trees again. This time the cops fired warning shots and pursued them back to the village, kicking in doors and searching people's houses. Another 40 people were arrested that day. The police were looking for specific activists, said Osid, even searching for one man in the ceiling of his house, and coming back the following day to pick him up.

One of the arrested peasants, Tadjudin, told us that he had been held for eight days. While he himself had not been beaten by the cops, he said, many others had been. Seven of those arrested over April 30 and May 1 remain in police custody in Cianjur, charged with destruction of state property and spreading hatred against the state.

Maol and Osid explained that the peasants have faced frequent harassment by the authorities since the protests. The cops have confis-

cated every motorcycle in Bojong Terong, claiming that they are not registered. Motorcycles are an essential means of transport along the rough roads and narrow paths of the countryside. The cops also patrol through the village late at night, banging on people's doors. Shelters that the farmers had built in their rice fields were burned down, and they had been stopped from grazing sheep and cows on plantation land.

The plantation management threatened to mobilize the plantation workers against them if they continued their fight, the peasants said. The plantation bosses have had some success in dividing the plantation workers from the peasant struggle by, for instance, promising retired employees the use of the land.

One of the difficulties they face is the physical isolation of these villages. No newspapers are available, we were told, and the nearest phone is two hours' drive away. Portable generators and car batteries power TV and radio sets. The only water available is drawn from wells. The peasants, like other working people in Indonesia, are moving to use the political space that has expanded after the resignation of the dictator Suharto last year. Maol explained how they took the district chief's April 29 letter to an official at the government agrarian institute. "We are determined to keep up the fight for our land," he said.

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

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

### UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA: Birmingham:** 111 21st St. South Zip 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 73712,3561

**CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles:** 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

**FLORIDA: Miami:** 4582 N.E. 2nd Ave. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 573-3355. Compuserve: 103171,1674

**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 230 Auburn Ave. N.E. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-7976. Compuserve: 104226,1245

**ILLINOIS: Chicago:** 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Compuserve: 104077,511

**IOWA: Des Moines:** 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. Compuserve: 104107,1412

**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** 683 Washington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 282-2254. Compuserve: 103426,3430

**MICHIGAN: Detroit:** 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 104127,3505 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

**MINNESOTA: St. Paul:** 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (651) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

**NEW JERSEY: Newark:** 87A Halsey. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. Compuserve: 104216,2703

**NEW YORK: New York City:** 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642; 167 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

**OHIO: Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Compuserve: 104502,1757 **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. Compuserve: 103122,720

**TEXAS: Houston:** 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 847-0704. Compuserve: 102527,2271

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185. Compuserve: 75407,3345.

**WASHINGTON: Seattle:** 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461,2544.

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. Compuserve: 106450,2216

### BRITAIN

**London:** 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 0171-928-7993. Compuserve: 101515,2702

**Manchester:** Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

### CANADA

**Montreal:** 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 104614,2606

**Toronto:** 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

**Vancouver:** 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343. Compuserve: 103430,1552

### FRANCE

**Paris:** Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

### ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klapparstig 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: milph@mmedia.is

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

**Christchurch:** 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

### SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Class Struggle in Iran on the 20th Anniversary of the 1979 Revolution.** Sat., July 31, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 1233 N. Milwaukee Ave. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Video Showing: 'The Panama Deception.'** Fri., Aug. 6, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

#### Christchurch

**Protests in Iran. Students Demand Democratic Rights.** Sat., Aug. 14, 7 p.m. 199 High St. donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

# Internationalization of working class and the vanguard role of Blacks

Below we print excerpts from "The vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 elections revealed," presented by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, four days after the 1992 presidential elections. It is one of the chapters of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. In this section, Barnes points to "five facts that put the working class today in a stronger position than ever before to point a way forward for humanity out of the crises and decay of capitalism." The facts he cites are: women in the labor force, growth of immigrant worker populations, the vanguard place of workers who are Black, the universalization of proletarian leadership, and the weakening of Stalinism. The book is copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

## from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

BY JACK BARNES

The second fact is the growing internationalization of the working class. It is not just that the industrial and urban working class is growing qualitatively larger and stronger in virtually every region of the world — Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, parts of Africa. That is true, and it creates prospects for a truly world communist workers movement in ways never before objectively attainable. In addition to that shift, however, the growing internationalization of the working class within the imperialist countries — as well as in a growing number of the most economically advanced semicolonial countries — is unprecedented.

More immigrants have come to the United States over the past decade than ever before in history, more even than during the decade prior to World War I. In fact, more immigrants came to the United States over the past ten years than to the rest of the countries of the imperialist world combined. And this is not because there has been little emigration to other countries; in fact, there has been a massive growth of immigrant populations throughout Western Europe in recent decades. Some two million immigrants are estimated to have come to North America or Europe in the last two years alone....

Like the employment of women, this immigration is being forced by economic necessity, by the laws of motion of capital itself. It is being forced by the dispossession of rural toilers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the

Middle East. It is being accelerated by the worsening economic and social conditions of the majority of peasants and workers in these countries, by the "successes" of the "market miracle" in the semicolonial world.

The Patrick Buchanans can talk all they want about building trenches and walls along the border with Mexico. They can talk all they want about massive roundups and deportations, and even about firing on unarmed workers trying to cross into the United States. Other Republican and Democratic politicians can make their slightly more genteel-sounding proposals. But nothing will stop the swelling immigration into the United States and other imperialist countries. In fact, the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the mouths of these politicians is not even primarily intended to stop the immigration. The central aim is to keep the level of fear and intimidation high enough so that the level of wages and working conditions can be kept low.

How do class-struggle-minded workers answer the trade union bureaucrats' demagogic cry that NAFTA will result in losing "American jobs" to Mexico? There is only one answer: There is no such thing as an "American job" or a "Mexican job," only workers' jobs. Workers in the United States have to get together with workers in Mexico and with workers in other countries and organize ourselves to defend our interests as a class, as part of the vast toiling majority of humanity. We must not support policies that strengthen our common class enemy. If workers give any other answer, the bureaucrats and the liberals and the reactionaries will win the argument. If workers give any national answer, our exploiters will only strengthen their power over all those who work for a living.

Class-conscious workers oppose NAFTA, as we oppose all economic and military pacts entered into by the imperialist government at home with other capitalist regimes. But we do so from an internationalist standpoint, rejecting any notion of common interests with the employing class in bolstering their competitiveness against their rivals or helping them reinforce the pariah status and superexploitation of immigrant workers. The only "we" we recognize is that of working people and our allies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico — and the rest of the Americas and the world. Not "we" Americans, "we" English speakers, "we" the white race, or anything else that chains us to the class that grows wealthy off the exploitation of our labor and that of our toiling brothers and sisters the world over.

The capitalist rulers in Europe cannot turn back the tide of immigration either. The German government can put people in boxcars and send them back to Romania. (The *Militant* should print the photos of those trains!) But that is not going to reverse the growing numbers of immigrants in Germany — the workers from Turkey, from Yugoslavia, from elsewhere in Eastern and Central Europe, and from other corners of the world. The German rulers have not even begun the battle to defeat the working class, west and east, and the immigrants are a growing part of that class who bring new experiences and give new power to struggles by workers throughout Germany.

The objective possibilities today to bring the weight of an international class to bear on unfolding fights are greater than at any other time in history, and nothing will reverse this trend.

### Vanguard role of workers who are Black

The third great change is the political weight and vanguard place of the oppressed Black nationality in the United States. This factor, one the communist movement has taken into account since our origins, has taken on qualitatively greater significance with the post-World War II urbanization and proletarianization of the Black population.

The greatest blow to the working class and working farmers in U.S. history was the defeat of Radical Reconstruction a little more than a decade following the U.S. Civil War. The defeat of Reconstruction by 1877 registered the crushing of efforts to forge a fighting land and labor alliance in this country, coming out of the victory of the second American revolution — the defeat of the slavocracy by the Union armies. That end of Reconstruction blocked prospects for toilers of all shades of skin color joining together to advance their common class interests against the rising industrial capitalist class. It set back the convergence in economic growth and social structure of the North and



Militant/Stu Singer

Unionists from SiemensAutomotive in Newport News joined march and rally for United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 on strike at the city's shipyard, April 28.

South. Blacks in the United States, overwhelmingly in the rural South at that time, emerged from this defeat as an oppressed nationality. Over the next decade, near-peonage conditions were reestablished in substantial parts of the territory of the former slavocracy, enforced by organized lynch-mob terror.

In the 1930s the majority of the Black nationality still lived and worked on the land, almost all in the South. The social and political weight of this still largely rural Black population was such, however, that the SWP already recognized at that time that workers who are Black would have disproportionate weight in the vanguard of the proletarian revolution in the United States. The Socialist Workers Party was helped in reaching this strategic conclusion by leadership discussions with Leon Trotsky. Trotsky drew on his experience as a leader of the Bolsheviks and Communist International in Lenin's time to help us understand the dynamics of struggles by toilers from oppressed nationalities in the imperialist epoch, to help us understand the revolutionary possibilities that grow as these nationalities become more and more proletarian in composition.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to World War II, the growing numbers of workers who were Black played an important role in tenant farmer and other rural struggles, as well as in the fighting vanguard of the battles that built the industrial

<sup>1</sup> See *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination* (New York: Pathfinder, 1967, 1978).

unions, the CIO movement. The urbanization, proletarianization, and migration northward and westward of the Black population increased as the U.S. government prepared to enter the imperialist slaughter, and then took on historic dimensions as the United States became the great industrial powerhouse that defeated Germany and Japan. The battles against racist discrimination during the war and its aftermath — struggles that picked up again, after a pause, in the mid-1950s — were fueled by these sweeping economic and social changes. They put the race question more than ever at the center of working-class politics in the United States and, by example, lent it added weight throughout the world. The post-World War II rise of the colonial revolution gave a powerful impulse to the Black struggle in the United States, just as the struggles and victories of the U.S. civil rights movement reverberated throughout the colonial world.

The struggles in the 1950s and 1960s that brought down Jim Crow segregation opened the road to forging working-class unity against the capitalist rulers. They laid the foundations for the emergence of Malcolm X, an outstanding leader not only of the oppressed Black nationality but also of revolutionary-minded working people and youth in the United States, whatever their skin color or national origins. Armed with the historical experience and political confidence conquered by those mass civil rights fights and their results, workers who are Black will comprise a much larger component of any fighting political vanguard of the working class than during the last labor radicalization in the United States.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS  
**THE MILITANT**  
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

August 16, 1974

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The FBI, hinting that it will balk at a subpoena, has announced that it must consult U.S. Attorney General William Saxbe before testifying about surveillance and harassment of the Minnesota Socialist Workers Party.

The Minnesota branch of the FBI was given a subpoena by an Ethics Commission official July 31 while demonstrators picketed outside the FBI's Minneapolis offices. The protesters were demanding that the FBI testify.

The next night, Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Palmer told commissioners that federal law required FBI agent Philip Enlow to get permission from the U.S. Attorney General before testifying. However, a spokesman for the FBI in Washington, D.C. told the St. Paul *Dispatch* Aug. 2 that he knew of no law requiring FBI agents to secure permission from the attorney general's office before testifying at hearings of a government agency. Jane Van Deusen, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Minnesota, said, "We don't want 'just anything,' but the sordid details of the FBI's criminal attack on our party. If the FBI refuses to testify it will only be a confirmation of our charges against them and another reason for the commission to grant our request for an exemption."

The FBI has already admitted, under the pressure of lawsuits, that it has conducted extensive surveillance of the SWP and has had a disruption program in effect designed to block the SWP's growth. But much of the detail of the FBI's illegal activity remains top secret.

**THE MILITANT**  
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

August 15, 1949

After giving over 4.5 billion dollars and considerable military aid to Chiang's Chinese National Government, Washington now reveals for the first time, through the "White Paper" issued by the State Department, that as far back as 1943 and 1944 it was already well aware of the "incompetence and corruption" of the Chinese ruling clique.

The White Paper seeks to justify the huge expenditure of funds wrung from the overtaxed American masses to bolster a hated regime. The chief claim is that aid was given in order to win the war as soon as possible and thereby save the lives of perhaps a million American soldiers. But the truth of the matter is that the great bulk of the financial and military aid, over 3 billion dollars, was given since the end of the war.

Even the friendly Chiang Kai-shek was not notified of the stab in the back he received at Yalta. There Stalin received the blessing of the imperialist powers to exploit Manchuria paving the way for the despoliation of its industries which were dismantled and shipped into the Soviet Union.

Again the State Department tried to suppress General Wedemeyer's report which called for the virtual partition of Manchuria among the U.S. Soviet Union, England and France, with the hope, undoubtedly, of getting the lion's share for American imperialism, as is the dismemberment of Germany. If Washington failed to follow Wedemeyer's recommendation it was because it knew the Chinese masses would never permit it.

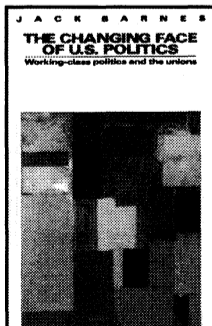
AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER

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

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

JACK BARNES

"This book grows out of the experience of the working class over the last twenty years. It reflects hard-earned lessons drawn from the activity of the organized class-conscious and revolutionary-minded section of that class." — from the introduction. Includes sections on the 1979 Newport News strike and the revolutions in Iran, Grenada, and Nicaragua that year. \$19.95 Also available in Spanish and French.



Available from bookstores listed on page 12

# Protest the bombing of Iraq

On July 17 Washington bombed two Iraqi neighborhoods, killing 33 civilians. Eleven days later U.S. warplanes bombed an Iraqi anti-aircraft installation and a communication facility. Working people around the world need to oppose this bombardment of Iraq, carried out under the arrogant pretext of enforcing "no-fly zones" over a sovereign nation. We should also condemn the draconian sanctions strangling the Iraqi people.

Since they launched the Gulf War against Iraq in 1990, the U.S. rulers have not come an inch closer to accomplishing their central aims in the Middle East. First, they have failed to bolster the position of U.S. capital in the region by installing a protectorate subservient to Washington in Baghdad. In fact, Washington is even further away from gaining a toehold in Iraq.

Washington has also failed to shut off public discussion on government policies during war. During the bombing of Yugoslavia, open and civil discussion was a feature of the day.

The assault on Iraq, as explained in the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* no. 7, was the "first war since the close of World War II that grew primarily out of the intensified competition and accelerating instability of the crises-ridden old imperialist world order."

At the start of the U.S.-led assault on Iraq, a brittle coalition of imperialist nations was formed. In *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* Jack

Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, explains, "The coalition assembled for the murderous assault on Iraq shattered the moment the fighting ended.... Washington will never be able to put such a coalition back together again."

In the battle for the right to plunder the world, military might is the main advantage left to the U.S. rulers over their imperialist rivals and other governments, especially in Paris. The French rulers had lucrative contracts with Baghdad before the 1990-91 U.S.-led Gulf War, which they would like to resume. Paris has therefore opposed U.S. military action in Iraq over the past year and a half, and pressed for lifting sanctions against that country.

Building solidarity with fellow toilers in Iraq and throughout the Middle East strengthens the struggles of working people in United States, from the Newport News shipyard unionists to the locked-out workers at Kaiser Aluminum. Linking protests against Washington's war moves with other working-class battles shows the road forward for humanity. Buying *New Internationalist* no. 7 and *Capitalism's World Disorder* for yourself and encouraging other workers and farmers to read and study them with you will help put these pieces together.

Working-class fighters should champion the demands: U.S. hands off Iraq! End the sanctions! Imperialist troops get out of the Middle East!

# Support Quebec nurses' fight

The Quebec nurses are back to work. Their 23-day strike ended when union officials capitulated at a time when the nurses' determination, their fighting spirit on the picket lines, and the support from other working people in the streets and in the plants were at their highest point.

Nothing has been settled, though. The nurses are back to work without any contract and with heavy fines on their back. The work load, bad working conditions, and low wages that spurred the strike remain. The rulers' attacks against all basic social services will continue. But the attempt by the Quebec government and the big-business media to convince the nurses and their supporters of the need to sacrifice the social programs and services working people fought for and won in the past for their profit drive has been inflicted a serious blow.

The fight in Quebec, and the wave of strikes by nurses in other provinces, is part of the increased working-class resistance that has been unfolding across Canada this year against the capitalist rulers' assault on the public health system. Their struggle confirms once again that with the growing working-class resistance worldwide, conditions are improving for the historic struggle to transform our unions from the dues collecting agencies of the entrenched, privileged officialdom they have become, into organizations that fight to defend the interests of workers and farmers and all those who feel the boot of capitalist exploitation and oppression. By defying the rulers' unjust laws, mobilizing on the picket lines, reaching out to other workers, and using all the space that existed in their union to decide democratically their tactics, the Quebec nurses pointed toward the kind of union we need to resist the onslaught of the capitalist rulers.

The Quebec nurses' lower wages and working conditions are an expression of the national oppression of the Quebecois. By opposing the cuts in social programs im-

posed by the government of the Parti Quebecois, the nurses and their supporters were the true defenders of Quebec's national rights. The experience and confidence gained over decades by workers in Quebec in their fight against national oppression helped give this struggle its particularly explosive character.

At the same time, their determination to fight was spurred by similar labor struggles earlier this year, especially the successful 10-day strike by the Saskatchewan nurses. These struggles help working-class fighters across Canada to link together in a common fight for our rights and overcome the national divisions imposed on our class by the rulers.

The nurses' fights in Canada this year — in Newfoundland, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia — also reflect the deepening confidence and militancy of workers who are women today.

Now is the time for all working-class fighters in Canada and our unions to demand the Quebec government lift every single sanction imposed on the nurses and their union.

Only by defending the social programs and services, which the working class conquered in past battles, will we be able to reinforce our unity as a class and our unions. This fight poses the need for the labor movement to decisively break with the arguments of the capitalist rulers that all Canadians — or Quebecois — have no choice than to cut social services because of the deepening economic crisis.

Our unions need a political perspective independent of the capitalist parties, a course of action that starts with human needs. This requires an intransigent defense of the universality of all social services and programs against the capitalists' search for profits and active solidarity with all those involved in that struggle.

# Genes aren't issue in food debate

The following statement was released by Annalucia Vermunt, the Communist League candidate in Christchurch Central in New Zealand.

The current debate on genetically modified foods boils down to a squalid conflict over markets and trade. The debate is a reflection of the deepening trade wars among the competing capitalist powers that are a feature of the world capitalist crisis; this is a conflict into which workers should avoid being drawn.

When big capitalist corporations like Monsanto and government agencies in the United States argue for the acceptance of genetically modified foods, their only concern is to win new markets. By the same token, when big capitalist corporations like Nestle, Unilever, and Tesco in Europe and the United Kingdom express opposition to genetically modified foods, they are motivated not by health or environmental concerns, but by the wish to protect their markets and fence them off from foreign competition.

In this country, too, the discussion on genetically modified food is largely focused on what best serves the trade interests of New Zealand capitalism, spiced by a bit of anti-foreign-control demagoguery.

Working people have a deep suspicion of the capitalists' assurances about the safety of these food products — and with good reason. Profit-hungry capitalists are constantly trying to foist untested, inadequately labeled, or unsafe foods

on us. They are constantly flouting environmental protection measures in pursuit of cheaper production costs. Genetically modified foods are new products, and the technology is not without risks. Such foods should be rigorously tested and labeled before being released on to the market. Any genetically engineered products or processes that pose a threat to health or the ecosystem should be banned. Capitalist governments are always reluctant to enforce such measures.

But my campaign opposes the call for a moratorium on genetic engineering.

Genetic engineering has been blamed for reducing the planet's biodiversity, for bringing farmers under the domination of agribusiness corporations, and for accelerating the impoverishment of Third World nations. These are real problems, but they began long before genetic modification technology was developed. They are the consequence, not of genetic engineering or any other aspect of technological development, but of the lawful development of capitalist social and economic relations in agriculture. Capitalism is the problem, not genetic modification.

Instead of a moratorium on genetic engineering, we need a moratorium on farm foreclosures, so that working farmers can make decisions on what seeds to plant or what stock to graze, free from the threat of losing their farms and livelihoods. Instead of a ban on imports of genetically modified foods, we should demand the cancellation of the Third World Debt, as an elementary step toward unity of the toilers of the world.

# W. Virginia steel union tops back ultrarightist Buchanan

BY CHRIS REMPLE

WEIRTON, West Virginia—Officials of the Independent Steelworkers Union (ISU) announced at a press conference here July 26 their endorsement of ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan's campaign for president of the United States. After ISU president Mark Glyptis made the announcement outside the union hall, Buchanan issued a short statement and took questions from the press. The ISU is the union at Weirton Steel, a local steelmaker and major employer in the area, which has been hit by the economic crisis. In addition to media and a half dozen cops, about 40 ISU officials, steelworkers, and their family members attended the event.

Several people carried signs saying "Pat for President" and "Welcome, Pat." Many wore "Buchanan" hats, which were also given to the Weirton chief of police and several cops present. A number of people wore T-shirts proclaiming "Stand Up for Steel, Stand Up for America," the slogan promoted by the steel bosses and union tops.

Buchanan, who is waging his third campaign in the Republican presidential primaries, pushes America First chauvinism, as well as anticapitalist demagoguery, to appeal to middle-class layers and some workers as a defender of "the little man" against corrupt politicians and big business. He represents the most prominent center for organizing an incipient fascist movement in the United States today. While keeping one foot in traditional bourgeois politics, he seeks to recruit cadres who can build a movement in the streets that will eventually attempt to violently roll back the gains of the working class, fighters for Black rights, and women's equality in the name of defending the "America" he defines.

Glyptis opened the news conference by thanking Weirton Steel's plant security, the chief of police, and the county sheriff for helping to organize the event. He stated, "Pat Buchanan has a long history of standing up for American workers and today we stand united for Pat Buchanan. Pat Buchanan has used his national platform to discuss the domestic steel crisis and the influx of foreign steel imports." Addressing Buchanan, Glyptis said, "Over 1,000 were laid off when you visited here in March. We appreciate you supporting steelworkers."

"The globalists in Washington who believe that all Americans are riding a wave of Wall Street prosperity don't like to talk about the Weirtons of America," said Buchanan, in comments typical of his increasingly anticapitalist and national socialist rhetoric. "But I have seen factories closed and towns destroyed by illegal steel dumping, and I believe this betrayal of American workers must come to an end." He claimed to represent workers "whose jobs are being shipped abroad." In addition to blaming "unpatriotic" companies and workers in other countries for the economic crisis, Buchanan targeted the banks. Steel imports are high because "the illegal dumping of foreign steel from Brazil, Russia, and Japan is only to get the money to pay back the New York banks," he argued. Thinly veiled anti-Semitic references to "New York bankers" have long been a trademark of Buchanan.

"American workers," he stated, "are being sacrificed on the altar of the global economy." Buchanan told a story of talking with a John Deere worker in Gastonia, North Carolina, who was laid off. He said, "They laid off 700 out of 800. That worker told me, 'Do you know where my neighbor is right now? He's in Chihuahua, Mexico, training my replacement for a dollar an hour.'"

A reporter at the news conference asked Buchanan if he would accept support from the rightist Reform Party of Ross Perot and Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura and run outside the Republican party. Buchanan sidestepped the issue, saying, "I appreciate support from the Reform Party, but right now I am running as a Republican looking to the caucuses and primaries." He added that Republican front-runner "George W. Bush is wrong on global free trade. There's not a dime's worth of difference between them. Mr. Bush will give you four more years of the past eight years."

Buchanan went from the news conference to a \$25-a-plate chicken roast at a park in Weirton to raise funds for his campaign.

## New Internationalist no. 10

- Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War  
*Jack Barnes*
- What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold  
*Mary-Alice Waters*
- Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution  
*Mary-Alice Waters*
- The Curve of Capitalist Development  
*Leon Trotsky* \$14.00



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

# Cannery workers face layoffs, demand entitlements in Australia

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

More than 150 people attended a community support meeting for the cannery workers July 7. Skein said the meeting included growers, the publican, postmaster, a local doctor

one of the few residential rehabilitation programs for women and children in Philadelphia."

Clements echoed the sentiments expressed by Maria Rosa, who spoke as a leader of the Latina Mo Mobile, a prenatal service. Temple's cuts "defeat everything we are trying to do. This is already a community in crisis. The infant mortality rate compares to a third world country."

Supporters at the rally came from a number of other unions. Donald Kirk, from Operating Engineers Local 835 at Temple Hospital, was there because, "This is only going to spread. Our jobs are just as much in jeopardy." Eight of the laid-off workers at Episcopal are members of Operating Engineers.

Nurses from a Lower Bucks hospital explained the Episcopal nurses had supported them in several one-day strikes they held last year to get their first contract. Nurses from several other hospitals run by Temple University Health Systems came to show solidarity. Temple's contact with 700 nurses at their main hospital expires September 30.

## Brick workers stand up to lockout, cop harassment

WILLIAMSPORT, Maryland — Workers at Redland Brick Co. near here have been picketing since June 18 after voting down a contract 88-4. The proposal had been endorsed by Teamsters officials, according to the *Hagerstown Herald-Mail*.

Members of Teamsters Local 992 describe what happened as a lock-out, because the company shut the plant and suspended negotiations when they heard that the contract offer had been voted down.

Across the road from the brick plant, workers in a large tannery organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees put signs of support for pickets in the windows, until their bosses made them take the signs down. Many motorists honk in support of the spirited picket line. The company and local law enforcement are literally working overtime to dampen this spirit, with no apparent success. Washington County Sheriff's Deputies patrol the picket line 24 hours a day to enforce an



Militant/Brian Williams

Teamsters picket Redland Brick Co. July 15 in Williamsport, Maryland.

injunction the company obtained July 1. The county cops are on duty to enforce the injunction in uniform and squad car, but are paid overtime rates by Redland.

Redland cooked up this agreement with the county sheriffs even before the lockout or injunction, according to the *Hagerstown Herald-Mail*. Sheriff Charles Mades told the newspaper that the company is paying the deputies time-and-a-half wages to "keep the peace" at the plant.

But it's clear company profits are what the cops are being paid to protect. The July 1 injunction restricts the picket line to 15, bars damage to company property, and warns pickets against "intimidating" scabs. The injunction also limits the number of chairs and coolers to two and forbids cook-out grills. On hearing of these restrictions, one neighbor of the plant volunteered her kitchen and yard facilities to the pickets. Company security cops video tape every move on the picket line from less than 20 feet away. This provocative behavior is protected by the sheriff's deputies, who stand beside the security cops.

In separate incidents deputies have cited three strikers for violating the injunction. The company is attempting to terminate all three workers. The county police were not on hand, however, to prevent three strikers from being injured by a truck crossing the picket line.

Retirement is the most important issue in the contract dispute, according to Teamsters member Bernard Henson. Currently, the retirement age is 62 no matter how many years of labor you have in at the brick plant. He introduced one worker on the picket line with more than 43 years' seniority who would receive just \$520 per month if he retired today.

Another issue is sick pay, or some way to take vacation a day at a time, so that workers don't risk losing their jobs when they are sick.

Ron Poulsen, member of the Maritime Union of Australia, and Joanne Kuniansky, member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, in Sydney; Connie Allen, member United Auto Workers Local 1076 in Philadelphia; and David Salner contributed to this column.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a 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 other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

BATLOW, Australia — Workers at the Mountain Maid cannery here set up picket lines July 7 after being escorted out of the plant by police.

The 46 workers are members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. The cannery processes peas, corn, asparagus, and apple juice. Batlow, a rural town of 1,700 people located five hours southwest of Sydney, is known for its apple orchards.

Suspecting the bosses were planning to close the cannery, workers had demanded a guarantee that their entitlements were protected. The company refused.

Cindy Skein, a union delegate at the cannery, and Michael Daley, who is in charge of the fitters (mechanics), spoke with *Militant* worker-correspondents visiting the picket line to offer solidarity.

Skein explained that for the last year things hadn't looked too good at the cannery, and over the last couple of months the situation had gotten worse. When the owner put the corn harvester up for sale, workers got worried the cannery was going to close. Two years ago the pea harvester had been sold, and no peas have been processed since, she said.

When growers contract with Mountain Maid, the company provides seed, pesticides, harvesting, and trucking to the plant. When they decided to sell the corn harvester, the owners sent a memo to growers saying they could continue to have their corn processed by Mountain Maid but they would have to buy their own seed and pesticides, as well as contract some other outfit to harvest and truck their crop. This is not a viable set up for the growers, Skein and Daley explained.

Mountain Maid bosses kept claiming they had no intention of closing. The owners claimed they just wanted to concentrate production on apples, but orchardists have their own modern processing plant in town. Mountain Maid only gets poorer quality apples for juicing.

After hearing about the Oakdale miners who lost all of their entitlements when the colliery closed, union members decided to take action before the same thing happened to them. So, beginning midnight July 5 they banned all stock and equipment from leaving the site. They estimated there was A\$6 million in stock at the plant.

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission ordered workers to lift the bans July 7. When they refused, police took them out of the cannery and the workers set up their picket line.

Although only 46 workers are employed year-round, the workforce swells to up to 300 during corn and asparagus seasons, Skein said. These seasonal workers often go back and forth between Mountain Maid and the growers cooperative.

and shopkeepers who closed to attend. While we were at the picket line a local supporter turned up with a big kettle of warm food and another dropped off a load of firewood. Temperatures on the picket line were below freezing at night.

The fight received coverage in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the local *Tumut and Adelong Times*, and Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television news.

On July 9 AMWU organizer Jenny Dowell reported at the picket line that Mountain Maid's owners had backed off. The bosses had agreed to meet with union officials and Staged Developments Australia (SDA) had agreed to underwrite workers' entitlements. SDA is Australia's largest pension fund and is half owned by the unions. SDA owns half of the investment company behind the Mountain Maid cannery.

Workers have kept picket lines up, saying progress was being made. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, they returned to work on July 15 after the SDA told union officials the company would "maintain long-term legal responsibility for entitlements regardless of who owned the company."

## Philadelphia: nurses demand hospital cuts end

PHILADELPHIA — Nurses and medical technicians at Episcopal Hospital held a spirited rally of more than 100 people July 12 to wrap up a two-day strike demanding Temple University Health Systems stop cutting services at the hospital and negotiate a union contract with Health Professionals and Allied Employees Local 5106. Temple, which acquired Episcopal in December, responded to the strike of about 250 nurses by laying off 140 union and nonunion workers.

Sue Clements, one of the striking nurses, told the *Militant*, "This strike is about saving Episcopal. I've worked here for 27 years. This hospital was a very vital part of the community. It provides jobs and the community organizations use the resources. Since Temple came in there has been a massive reduction in services. They haven't looked at the community's needs. Episcopal has

## — LETTERS —

### Justice for the Chattanooga 3

As a former member of the Black Panther Party, an organization that over thirty years ago brought the problem of police brutality to national attention, I am writing to ask your support of three African-American activists who face up to a year in prison for protesting against police brutality.

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, Damon McGhee, and Mikail Musa Muhammad (Ralph R. Mitchell) are scheduled to go on trial in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on Oct. 28, 1999, for violating the state's "disruption" law. The three activists were arrested on May 19, 1998, after a large rally against police brutality at Chattanooga City Hall. The rally was held to protest the April 27 and May 7, 1998, police killings of two

Black men, Montrail Collins and Kevin McCullough. Many people in the Black community did not accept accounts by police that they killed Collins and McCullough in self-defense.

Chattanooga has a long history of police brutality and racial discrimination. It ranked no. 1 for years among U.S. cities with populations under 200,000 for reported acts of police brutality. This unfortunate record is a primary reason why Lorenzo, who is a former member of the Black Panther Party, has led protests against police brutality in Chattanooga, his hometown, for many years and why he helped to create Black Autonomy Copwatch, which was part of the Coalition Against Police Brutality.

The prosecution of the Chattanooga 3, as Lorenzo, Damon and

Mikail are known, is an attack on free speech and Black political dissent. The case also has national implications. Disruption laws similar to that of Tennessee, which mandate prison sentences for political protests, exist in almost every state. These laws violate the First Amendment right of free speech.

Write or e-mail letters of protest to the district attorney and the mayor demanding that the charges against the Chattanooga 3 be dismissed: Bill Cox, Hamilton County District Attorney, City-County Courts Building, 601 Market Street, 3rd Floor, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402, e-mail BillCox@hcda.cps.k12.tn.us; Jon Kinsey, Mayor of Chattanooga, 101 E. 11th Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-1403, e-mail mayor@mail.chattanooga.gov

JoNina M. Abron  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

### U.S. gov't also responsible

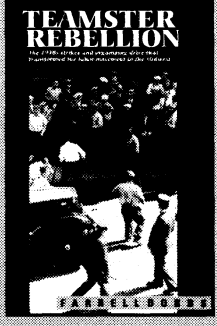
If tobacco companies can be made to pay damages, why can't the United States be sued for the brain tumors, cancer, neurological disease, and related hell this country has caused by its poison and destruction of the environment.

J.L.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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.

## Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs



**From the THE TEAMSTER series**

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

Also:

- Teamster Power \$17.95
- Teamster Politics \$17.95
- Teamster Bureaucracy \$18.95

FROM PATHFINDER

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

## Peasants fight for land in Indonesia

(Third in a three-part series)

BY BOBAIKEN  
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

BANDUNG, Indonesia — "We are landless people," Osid said. "We used to own the land, but it has been taken from us by the government." Today, peasants from six *kampung* [villages] have joined forces to regain their land from a state-owned coconut, cocoa, and cassava plantation located in the Agrabinta district of West Java, around 125 miles southwest of Bandung.

These reporters, accompanied by students from Bandung who are building solidarity with the fight, met with Osid and other peasants in Agrabinta June 21-22. The nine-hour trip by landrover, along roads that got rougher the further we went into the countryside, took us through miles of rice fields and then through huge plantations of tea, teak, mahogany, rubber, bananas, coconut, and cocoa, winding through many villages of peasants and plantation laborers.

On our arrival at *kampung* Bojong Terong, we were welcomed in a gathering of more than 20 people that quickly became a discussion on the peasants' fight and the harassment they face from the police. The next day we rose early to be given a guided tour of some of the disputed land, and to visit Ranca Gempol, a neighboring village involved in the struggle. The peasants spoke most fluently in the Sundanese language, native to millions in West Java, with translation to the official national language, Bahasa Indonesia, and English.

Disputes over the land go back to the early part of this century. Peasants clashed with "Dutch colonialism" in 1910, Osid explained, shortly after the plantation was established, and in 1946 the armed forces took some territory in the district. Then in 1982, Osid said, the state-owned plantation "seized the land that we were using as rice fields." Another peasant, Maol, said, "The plantation has robbed our land," expanding from 3,000 to 10,000 hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres) over the last 20 years.

This expropriation was backed up by the police and people hired by the plantation, who "burned our houses and poisoned our crops," Osid said, so that the peasants "became afraid to work the land." The plantation managers, who wear a military-style uniform like most public servants in Indonesia, "usually act like military officers," Maol added.

Some of the stolen land is rented back to the peasants to farm and, in the case of Ranca Gempol, for housing. Maol explained the land available for them to rent — surrounded by state-owned forestry and coconut plantations, and land taken by the military — is constantly shrinking. There are



Militant/Bob Aiken

Peasants from Ranca Gempol, West Java, Indonesia, on land seized by the government, which they have to rent back from the Air Force.

now about 100 hectares left that the peasant families "take turns renting," Osid said. They grow food crops, primarily rice and peanuts, for the market.

### Struggle to survive on the land

A sharp rise in rent over the last year helped to spur the peasants' protests, while other costs have soared over the last couple

of years as well, making it harder to break even on a harvest. Each family can farm between two and five *patoks* — a field of about 400 square meters — and even up to 10 depending on their ability to finance, with each *patok* producing about 200 kilograms of rice in the six-month growing season. Their rice is processed at a nearby mill, and they receive 120,000 rupiah per 100 kilos,

or about 100,000 Rp if the season is good, selling to local brokers. By contrast, the minimum wage for factory workers in West Java is 230,000 Rp a month, or about US\$35 at current exchange rates.

The peasants explained the care they have to take in allowing for the costs of hiring labor for tilling, planting, and weeding, including the costs of hiring a contractor with a mechanical cultivator to prepare the fields for planting. Many also work as wage laborers in the fields themselves for 7,000 Rp a day, including tending each other's crops, especially since rents have risen and the available land has shrunk.

In late April and early May, their land struggle burst into wider view with protests of more than 3,000 people. They were organized, we were told, into "17 groups of 100 men," along with the women, who played "a strong part in the actions."

The events began on April 29 with a protest in the major town of Cianjur, coinciding with a visit there by a delegation of peasants to the district chief, Rachman Santoso. On four occasions since August 1997, Maol said, Santoso had promised to visit and investigate the land dispute, but he had never appeared. To make the six-hour trip from Agrabinta to Cianjur, the peasants demanded, and got, the use of vehicles from the government-appointed village chief, the local police, and a neighboring state-owned forestry company. The local police escorted them to Cianjur, where they were met by more police, sent to

Continued on Page 12

## S. Africa: tens of thousands strike over wages

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa — Tens of thousands of workers and other government employees brought the city center here to a standstill July 23 in a massive protest by public sector unions affiliated with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The one-day national strike, which saw tens of thousands more marching in the cities of Bisho, Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, and Kimberley, was one of the largest street actions since the demise of the apartheid regime in 1994.

Unions called the action to press demands for a 10 percent wage increase from the African National Congress (ANC) government, which has offered an increase averaging 6 percent — a figure identical to the estimated inflation rate.

Leaders of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), and the Police and Prisons Civil

Rights Union (POPCRU) have said that unless their demands are met they will launch a national strike beginning July 29.

Africans made up the overwhelming majority of the marchers. Most white government employees belong to other unions and staff associations that were not part of the march. These associations are less working-class in composition — many of their members formed part of the racist bureaucracy that workers want to dismantle.

Hospital and health workers, teachers, office workers, and laborers from all over northern South Africa danced and chanted as they filled the streets of this country's administrative capital with a sea of union banners and handmade signs.

"Yonke indawo, umzabalazo u ya sivumela" (All over the land, the struggle allows us to be strong) sang marchers in Zulu.

"The main issue is a living wage," said Joe Mpsi, NEHAWU Johannesburg branch chairperson. "But it's also to transform the public sector, which is still dominated by people who served in the apartheid regime. We don't want to reward those who can't serve the new South Africa."

Echoing sentiments expressed by many others, Mpsi emphasized that "our action does not mean that we are against this government, which supports workers."

George Herbst, a teacher at Witbank Primary School, said, "The government could spend 47 million rands (about \$7.8 million) in one hour for the president's inauguration but doesn't have the money for teachers or students." Herbst said his classes average 45 students; some go up to 60. "There's only chalk and a blackboard. We have no heat and the kids are freezing in winter."

"For some time the wage they have been providing has been less than inflation," said teacher Fama Khuele of Soweto, who teaches a class of 50 high school students and brings home, like many other teachers, 1,500 rands a month — about \$245. "The government has been changing a lot of things, a lot of delivery of water and housing and that's good. But we are not satisfied. A lot of teachers are hungry."

Acting COSATU secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi presented union demands to three ANC members of the cabinet: Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, and Public

Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. They said they would consider the demands.

The ANC government has said that it does not have the money to pay government employees more and that by doing so it would jeopardize its ability to deliver social services to poor South Africans. The total number of public service employees has declined by about 10 percent since 1994 but the wage bill has risen.

### Plans for massive layoffs

During the first two weeks of July the bosses and several government-run entities announced plans or intentions to lay off up to 50,000 workers. As the price of gold fell to 20-year lows, six gold mines announced plans to lay off 11,700 miners. The Chamber of Mines threatened that if there were no recovery up to 80,000 miners' jobs could be eliminated this year alone.

Telkom, the partially privatized state telephone company, is threatening 12,000 layoffs. Spoomet, the state-run railroad, says it is losing money and wants to slash up to 27,000 workers out of a workforce of 41,000.

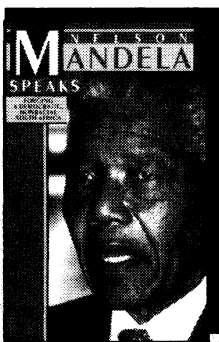
COSATU affiliates have launched rolling mass actions that have included lunchtime and other demonstrations by thousands of rail workers, garment and textile workers, and others. Workers in the shoe industry struck for two days demanding a pay increase.

Members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa downed tools at Columbus Stainless Steel on July 12 in a demand for higher wages.

Four thousand miners organized by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) struck July 15 at the Oryx gold mine in the Free State in response to the company announcing it would lay off 900 people. The workers pressed for larger severance packages than those offered by the bosses. Miners also demanded six months notice of pending layoffs. Thousands of workers at the nearby Beatrix mine warned Gold Fields, which owns both mines, of a solidarity strike.

On July 23, following talks with NUM leaders, the company announced it would suspend layoffs for a month and ask that the strike be ended. NUM leaders urged the miners to call off the strike. At press time the walkout continued.

### FROM PATHFINDER



#### Nelson Mandela Speaks

Forging a Democratic, Nonracial South Africa

Mandela's speeches from 1990 through 1993 recount the course of struggle that put an end to apartheid and opened the fight for a deep-going political, economic, and social transformation in South Africa. \$18.95

#### The Coming Revolution in South Africa

JACK BARNES

The one-person, one-vote elections in 1994, and the sweeping victory of the African National Congress, were historic steps in the democratic revolution in South Africa. This article explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of social and economic inequality. Only among the most committed cadres of this ANC-led struggle, Barnes writes, can the working class begin forging a communist leadership.

In *New International* no. 5. Also includes "Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola": 2 speeches by Fidel Castro. \$9.00

Available from bookstores listed on page 12

