

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Coverage of
Active Workers Conference

— PAGES 8-11

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Drought accelerates crisis for farmers

BY MIKE GALATI
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

NORWICH, New York — Farmers in the northeastern United States are faced with drought conditions and a crisis described by many farmers as the worst since the 1930s depression. The current drought is officially in its 14th month, but drought conditions have existed in many parts of the east since 1997.

In the rolling hills and valleys of New York's dairy country, the effects of the drought are plain to see. Crops planted on the flatlands by the rivers are lush and green, but those planted on the hillsides — away from the rivers — are stunted and parched. Farmers in the area explain that the fields are so dry hay yields have been dramatically reduced.

Farmers here store most of this summer hay to use as part of the winter feed for their animals. One small cattle farmer from this area told the *Militant*, "I'm into my win-
Continued on Page 12

Rising toll in Turkey is a social disaster

BY BRIANTAYLOR

The death toll in Turkey — officially 18,000 people as the *Militant* goes to press — continues to rise after a ruinous earthquake rocked that country August 17. The number of residents dead could reach as high as 40,000. Tens of thousands of people were reported injured and thousands more are missing. Many people were killed as buildings where they live came crashing down on top of them.

Turkey's National Security Council calculates that 200,000 people have been left homeless. Many of them are forced to stay in parks and vacant lots in the midst of heavy rains. The biggest post-quake danger is the heightened possibility of diseases spreading, from typhoid fever and cholera, to diarrhea and other illnesses.

Turkey is a semicolonial country with a per capita income of \$5,617, barely half that of Greece. More than half of all the country's buildings are in violation of construction regulations and are prone to collapse in an earthquake. The capitalist government there, which the big-business press focuses on, turns a blind eye toward construction bosses who skimp on materials and cut corners to reduce their costs.

Most factories and villas owned by the wealthy in the towns of Golcuk and Izmit — at the quake's epicenter — remained intact. "There is not a single crack in any of them," said Ishak Alaton, a construction boss in Turkey. "This proves that if you use the right equipment, materials, and techniques, nothing happens even in a quake this bad." Meanwhile, apartments for working people as far as 60 miles away collapsed like a house of cards.

Washington has been of little help, proposing to send 3,500 all-weather tents. Many people may not see this emergency housing until late November, according to an Associated Press report. The U.S. government has, however, sped 3,100 sailors and marines to Turkey aboard three war vessels.

W. Virginia strikers are 'tired of how we're treated'

One-day walkout protests firing at Century Aluminum

BY SALM KOLIS
AND TONY LANE

RAVENSWOOD, West Virginia — "When 1,600 workers walk out that tells you something. It tells you something is wrong in there. We're tired of how we are being treated," said Brad Warner, who works in the reduction plant at Century Aluminum's Ravenswood West Virginia plant. Steelworkers here struck the plant August 23 after the company fired Eric Rhodes, a worker in the reduction plant.

Warner went on to explain, "They say the new guys have no backbone, but we showed them — the younger guys led this strike."

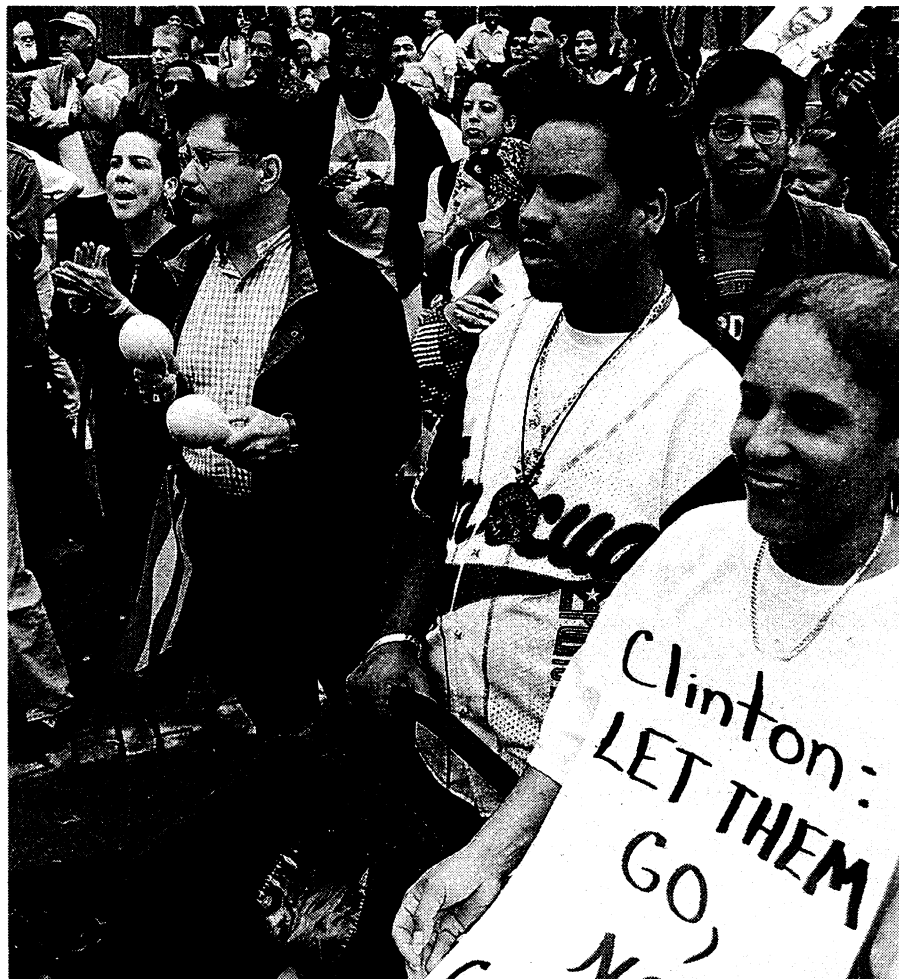
The company fired Rhodes alleging he was responsible for damage to an aluminum-making pot two weeks ago. According to the *Charleston Gazette*, United Steelworkers of America (USWA) local president Jerry Schoonover said that the pot had gotten too hot and two management employees tried to cool it down with an air hose. They cooled it down too quickly and the air blew a hole in the pot.

After Rhodes was fired, Warner reported, workers gathered at the union hall. While no official strike was called by the USWA, 400 members put up a picket line around the plant. State police troopers from four detachments were called into the county the night of August 23.

U.S. marshals joined the state troopers outside the plant the next day. Inside the plant, the company sought to force the swing shift to double over, but Warner explained "they got together and walked out."

The *Charleston Gazette* reported that "lawyers for Century Aluminum called [Chief U.S. District Judge Charles] Haden to the courthouse at 4 a.m." to hear their complaint against the union. It reported that the judge ordered the union members back to work and the pickets to be taken down. After an all-afternoon meeting, and under company threats to close down pot lines, workers voted to return to
Continued on Page 14

Free Puerto Rican prisoners now!

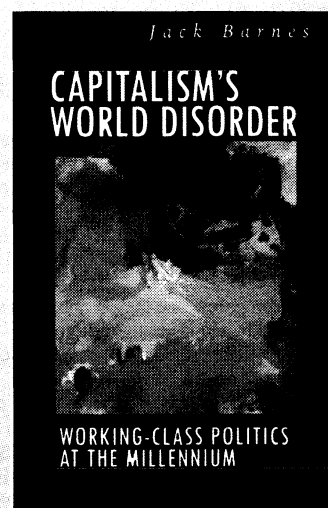


Militant/Rose Ana Berbeo

August 21 rally in New York calls for immediate release of Puerto Rican political prisoners. Next week's *Militant* will feature firsthand coverage by reporters Martín Koppel and Migdalia Jiménez on an August 29 demonstration in San Juan, Puerto Rico, demanding unconditional release of all the prisoners. Actions on behalf of the jailed *independentistas* are also planned in several U.S. cities that day.

Socialist workers launch campaign to sell 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

**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."

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BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

"We got our first placement of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at a bookstore so far — a store in Hampton bought two copies of the book," reported Nan Bailey from Virginia's Tidewater region.

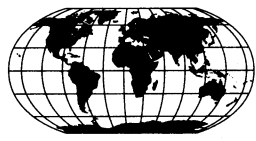
Bailey is heading up a four-day team of socialist workers and a young socialist who have been taking this and other Pathfinder titles to several bookstores and libraries in the area together with selling the *Militant* and other revolutionary literature to working people at a number of worksites and elsewhere.

The team has met with Steelworkers at the giant Newport News shipyard.

The militant four-month strike there, which ended in early August, has had a big impact on other workers and farmers in the region who are inspired by their example of labor power and solidarity.

Also in the team's plans are sales and discussions at two meat-packing plants, a visit to another shipyard, and a table at a college campus.

Bailey reports, "Some of our most produc-
Continued on Page 9



15,000 farmers protest in Brazil

Some 15,000 farmers from throughout Brazil traveled in tractors and other vehicles to converge on the capital city, Brasilia, August 18 demanding the government take measures to reduce their debts by up to 60 percent. The farmers' protest followed a four-day national strike by truckers that ended July 29 with major concessions by the government. In late July 1,500 auto workers at the Ford Motor Co. truck plant in São Paulo walked out for several days to protest the company's plans to shut down the plant and transfer production to another facility. Meanwhile, militants of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil began a 75-day march to the capital July 23 to denounce the government's economic policies, including plans to sell the state-owned oil company Petrobras to private investors.

The Brazilian economy has hobbled along during the first half of 1999, shrinking 4.2 percent compared with the same period last year. Also during the first half of this year several state governments defaulted and stopped paying debts. The real, Brazil's currency, has plunged 31 percent against the U.S. dollar this year, including a 10 percent drop since the beginning of June.

Thousands demand jobs in Peru

Thousands of people protested in the streets of Huaraz, Peru, August 20 demanding jobs and a share of the profits from the Canadian-owned Antamina copper-zinc mine and Barrick Gold Corporation's gold mine. The Peruvian government responded with a military takeover of the city. Soldiers armed with automatic weapons guarded bridges, gas stations, and public buildings. Schools, public buildings, and most businesses were closed and public transportation paralyzed. Unemployment in the country has soared, with half of the workforce jobless or underemployed amid an economy that has been crippled by recession for the past two years.

Infant mortality rising in Iraq

The United Nations Children's Fund released a survey August 12 reporting that children in Iraq are dying at more than twice the rate they did before the U.S.-led economic sanctions imposed on the country in 1990.

The mortality rate for babies younger than one year rose from 47 per 1,000 before the embargo to 108 per 1,000. Children under five years are now dying at a rate of 131 per 1,000, up from 56 per 1,000.

Meanwhile, U.S. and British warplanes have fired more than 1,100 missiles against Iraq over the past eight months. The Clinton administration is debating whether to step up its military assault on the country with an arsenal that includes 200 aircraft, 19 warships, and 22,000 U.S. troops. Paris, which has raised the volume of its complaints against the bombing raids and sanctions, is pressing for a new "weapons inspection" plan that would allow French and other foreign oil companies to resume investment and production in Iraq.

Yeltsin dumps another premier, faces armed revolt in Dagestan

Reflecting a regime of permanent crisis, Russian president Boris Yeltsin fired Sergei Stepashin August 9, his fourth prime minister in 17 months. Stepashin replaced Yevgeny Primakov in May. Yeltsin named Vladimir Putin, who vowed to crush a separatist rebellion in the Russian province of Dagestan, to serve as the next premier.

Eighteen Russian soldiers were killed August 18 in an attempt to storm Tando, a Dagestani mountain village occupied by the rebels. Some of the fighters are Chechens who participated in defeating an invasion force of 30,000 Russian troops launched by the Kremlin in 1994 to crush the independence movement in Chechnya, which borders on Dagestan.

Palestinian fights jailing based on 'secret evidence'

Hany Kiardeeen, a Palestinian native, filed a lawsuit in a U.S. federal court August 19 against being jailed based on "secret evi-



Peasants from Movement of Landless Rural Workers protest in Brasilia July 19 against sales of state enterprises.

dence" supposedly linking him to "terrorism." The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has detained Kiardeeen for 17 months in the Hudson County jail in New Jersey, and is trying to deport him. The government has not produced any witnesses nor has Kiardeeen been allowed to see the "evidence" used against him, violating his constitutional rights.

Last April INS judge Daniel Meisner ordered Kiardeeen released on bond, saying no reasonable person could believe the "allegations of [Kiardeeen's] involvement in terrorist activities were true." In July the Board of Immigration Appeals overturned Meisner's decision. Some 20 people of Arab descent facing deportation have been imprisoned on so-called secret evidence. Another detainee, Nasser Ahmed, who has been jailed for nearly three years, recently filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in New York.

Racist killer indicted

A federal grand jury indicted August 19 Buford Furrow, a member of the Aryan Nations, on charges of shooting Filipino mail carrier Joseph Ileto because he was

not white. On August 10, Furrow fired more than 70 shots from an Uzi submachine gun, wounding five people at a Jewish community center in California. Later that day he shot Ileto who was delivering mail. The cops say last year Furrow had told Seattle authorities who had arrested him for assault that he was a racist and wanted to carry out mass killing.

Furrow's violent assault came one month after Benjamin Smith went on a racist rampage in Illinois and Indiana, killing two men, one Black and one Korean, before shooting himself in the head. Smith was a member of the World Church of the Creator, an ultrarightist organization based in East Peoria, Illinois.

Kansas school board votes to drop evolution from curriculum

More than a decade after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled state school systems could not impose the teaching of creationism in schools, the Kansas Board of Education voted August 11 to remove mention of Charles Darwin's well established theory of evolution from the science curriculum. No questions on evolution will be included on standardized state tests in Kansas, although teaching the subject is not prohibited.

Creationism teaches that a divine being created humans and other species, while evolution is based on scientific investigation of fossils, anatomy, and genetic evidence. Other challenges to evolution in school curriculum have occurred in Texas, where the state school board deleted references to evolution from a standard biology textbook. In Washington, Ohio, Tennessee, and New Hampshire legislation opposing evolution has been voted down.

— BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Support farmers' fight for gov't aid

Around the globe, working farmers are bearing the brunt of the capitalist economic crisis, from drought conditions to low commodity prices. The 'Militant' covers the struggles of rural toilers, from Saskatchewan to Georgia, who are organizing to defend their right to farm. Don't miss a single issue!



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Imperialist powers in Europe debate dependence on U.S.

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The selection of British defense secretary George Robertson August 4 as the next secretary general of NATO reflected the further strengthening of Washington's military dominance and its grip on the NATO command structure in Europe through the U.S.-NATO assault on Yugoslavia. All of the major powers in Europe are now moving to try to expand their ability to use military force on the continent.

During the U.S.-led war, British prime minister Anthony Blair had increasingly relied on London's "special relationship" as a junior partner with Washington to strengthen his military hand in Europe. Paris, meanwhile, is further away from challenging Washington over NATO's Southern Command now and does not even voice the matter.

London is planning to deploy the biggest contingent in the NATO occupation force in Kosova, 13,000 troops; while Bonn is coming in second with 8,000 troops. This is a shift from the peripheral role the German government played in the occupation of Bosnia, where far fewer troops were deployed after a heated national debate. The central role Bonn is taking in Kosova was quickly approved by the Bundestag. NATO in fact gave the first offer for the post of secretary general to German defense minister Rudolf Scharping, but he declined the nomination.

Dependence on Washington's might

Proportionally, the imperialist governments in Europe spend about two-thirds of what Washington does on their military budgets. But their military capabilities are nowhere close. Apart from Washington, only London can fire cruise missiles, and even the few held by the Royal Navy are made and loaded in the United States. Only the U.S. government has satellite-guided bombs, airborne battlefield reconnaissance, and

other such sophisticated weaponry. Of the 2,000 targets chosen by NATO in Yugoslavia, all but one were selected by U.S. intelligence.

Of the planes used to bombard Yugoslavia, 776 were fielded by Washington compared to 320 by the European powers combined. Additionally, the European aircraft lack "standoff weapons" that enable them to fire at targets from a distance, so they have to fly over the target, exposing them to much more risk at getting shot down. The European powers lack combat search and rescue capability to save pilots who have crashed. The slow deployment of forces by the European powers showed that more transport aircraft are required.

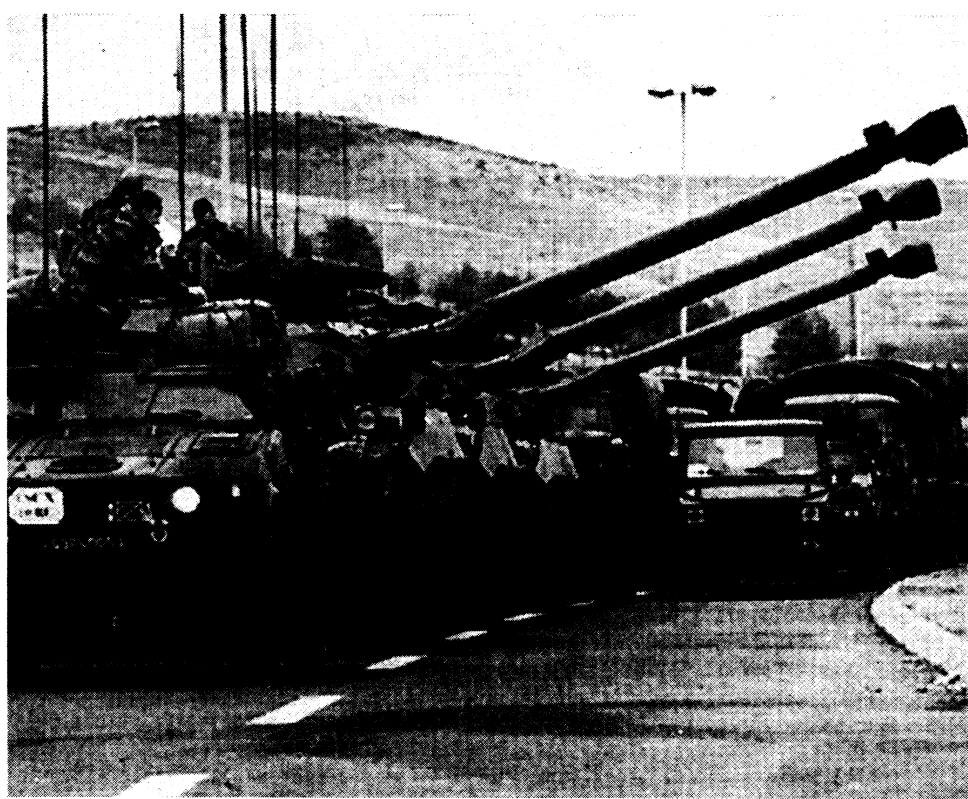
Some steps have been taken lately by the European Union member states to strengthen their military hand, such as Blair's signing last December of the St. Malo agreement between Paris and London on military cooperation.

This agreement paved the way for the decision at the top EU summit in early June to merge the West European Union, a largely defunct military formation, with the European Union itself and appoint NATO's current secretary general, Javier Solana of Spain, as its first high representative for foreign and defense policy. But these steps are merely symbolic, as rivalry is the real mark of the relations between the imperialist powers in Europe when it comes to military and foreign policy.

To really challenge Washington, the European powers would have to increase their military spending considerably. The fact that the U.S. rulers spend \$36 billion a year on military research and the rest of NATO only \$10 billion illustrates the gap in military power.

Contrary to the United States, where the Clinton administration is increasing military spending, the debate in Europe is mostly about restructuring the military forces within the existing budgets.

There is a drive in nearly every capital to



French military detachment on its way to join NATO forces in Macedonia one month before Washington launched bombing raids on Yugoslavia. Paris, Bonn, and London are all taking steps to expand their ability to use military force in Europe.

increase funding for the military firepower the imperialists here need the most — rapid deployment forces with equipment such as transport capabilities — and cutting down on the standing armies built during the "Cold War." They aim to reduce their dependence on Washington on when and where to deploy troops and at the same time take advantage of the U.S. rulers' reluctance to deploy ground troops.

Paris is pushing for revitalizing the Eurocorps — 60,000 troops that mainly Paris and Bonn committed for a common European army in 1993 — and turning it into a rapid reaction force.

German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has said, "We want and must have a rapid reaction corps." But it is obvious, after Bonn's hesitation on ground troops in Kosova, that the German government is not yet ready for the political battle it will take to engage in a European rapid reaction force meant to operate outside the framework of "self-defense."

Helsinki, which is chairing the European Union in the last half of 1999, is pushing for a European "crisis management" army involving soldiers from both NATO and "neutral" countries, such as Sweden and Finland. Stockholm and Helsinki have put this

on the agenda in the EU since the Amsterdam summit in 1997. The Swedish government's rapid reaction force of 850 soldiers, Swerap, will be stationed in Kosova beginning in September.

No common European policy

Although London has publicly promoted a common European military policy since the St. Malo agreement, in practice it has pulled out of a three-nation military satellite project and the troubled Horizon frigate project. British Aerospace acquisition of General Electric's military production has blocked cross-border mergers of military industries in Europe, as Britain is already too dominant for other capitalist powers to accept. A European transport aircraft remains in gestation after years of discussion. France has scaled down its order for a new European armored personnel carrier, and is preparing to order its own vehicle.

So their is really not any common European foreign and military policy.

The imperialist powers in Europe are all trying to strengthen their military power in a world increasingly marked by wars. Military power is what really counts in these times in the relations among them, and between them and U.S. imperialism. The common currency, the euro, and the common market within the European Union will be put under enormous strain as each of the main imperialist powers in Europe tries to take as big a share as they can of the surplus value produced by workers and farmers in Europe to strengthen its own military power. Political polarization will grow as workers and farmers resist these attacks and the ultraright gets more of a hearing within the ruling classes in Europe.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

Supporters of immigrant rights protest frame-up of antiracist activist in Greece

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — "David Fazlul, president of the Bangladesh Cultural Association in Greece and member of the executive committee of the Network for the Social Support of Refugees and Immigrants, has been in custody on frame-up charges since July 20, 1999," said Samsideen Iddrisu, president of the Greek branch of the Migrants Forum of the European Union and vice-president of SOS Racism in Greece.

"On June 28 Fazlul was called in to meet with the immigration police. Fazlul was asked to provide information implicating compatriots on arranged marriages between illegal immigrants and Greeks. In exchange he would be guaranteed permanent residence," explained Iddrisu. "Fazlul refused and asked for his lawyer. He was verbally abused and then slapped around. The cop said that he could have him vanish from Greece.

"We held a meeting with the minister of public order, Mr. Michalis Chrisohoidis, and reported the events to him. He said he would investigate and subsequently Nanis [the cop] was put on suspension," continued Iddrisu. "On July 12 Fazlul was arrested in front of the offices of the Immigrants Network, and on July 20 he was put in preventive custody pending a trial.

He has since been transferred to a prison in Trikala [central Greece] far away from Athens. The charges against Fazlul are conspiracy to arrange illegal marriages and being the middle man in arranging the marriages of 23 people. The only evidence is the signed statement in Greek of another Bangladeshi detainee who could not even read what he signed.

"At his first hearing before the magistrate

the political character of the case became more clear," Iddrisu added. "The magistrate's comments centered on David's activities, claiming that there is no racism in Greece and therefore how could anyone claim to be involved in antiracist activities."

At a press conference on Fazlul's case held on August 6, one of his attorneys, Yianna Kourtovic, stated, "This whole case is really about the criminalization of migrants and the antiracism movement that David represents." Kourtovic is a well known political rights lawyer. Among those present at the press conference were Iddrisu; Sati Lila Hues, a member of the Bangladesh Cultural Association; Stella Alfieri, a member of parliament from the Coalition of the Left; and Leon Avdis, the Communist Party candidate for mayor of Athens in the last elections.

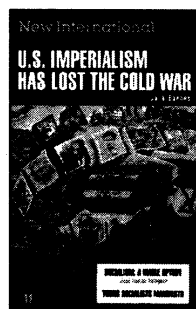
"The government is currently carrying out a massive campaign of arrests and deportations of immigrants," Iddrisu told this correspondent. "Migrants are being rounded up and detained even in stadiums. Cops dressed in commando outfits are boarding public buses and trains and asking you if you are Greek. If not you must disembark and you are detained in the barren sun until you can prove your legality. They have announced that by the end of the summer they will deport upwards of 200,000 people."

Several organizations have launched a campaign to win Fazlul's release. According to Iddrisu, 18 immigrant rights organizations signed a letter to the minister of justice demanding that the charges be dropped. The press conference publicizing the case was covered by at least three daily papers. The organizers are also asking members of parliament and political parties and organizations to write letters of protest, demanding his im-

mediate release with all charges being dropped.

The letters should be addressed to Evangelos Yannopoulos, Minister of Justice. They should be faxed to The Network for the Social Support of Refugees and Immigrants, fax #30 1 38 40 390.

for further reading

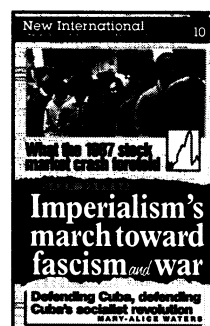


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Guevara's 'Episodes of the Congo revolutionary war' is in print for first time

BY MIKE TABER

A previously unpublished book by Ernesto Che Guevara, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo* (Episodes of the Congo revolutionary war), is now available from Pathfinder. Produced by Grijalbo-Mondadori, a publishing house based in Italy, the Spanish-language book was launched in Havana at the end of April, with 4,000 copies set aside for distribution in Cuba.

A Cuban edition is also in preparation. It will be included in a new multivolume collection of speeches and writings of Ernesto Che Guevara, to be published later this year.

This book appears 33 years after it was written by the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution.

From April to November 1965, Guevara headed what grew to a contingent of more than one hundred Cuban volunteer fighters, supporting liberation forces in the Congo who belonged to the movement founded by Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba, the founding leader of the independence movement in the former Belgian colony of the Congo and its first prime minister, was the most intransigent of the leaders resisting the efforts to keep the new nation under the thumb of imperialism. He was ousted in September 1960 in a U.S.-backed coup led by army chief of staff Joseph Mobutu, who later changed his name to Mobutu Sese Seko. Lumumba, who had been under the "protection" of United Nations troops, was captured and then murdered in January 1961 by imperialist-backed forces loyal to rightist figure Moïse Tshombe.

In mid-1964 a new revolt broke out in the Congo led by pro-Lumumba forces. The rebels were able to gain control of Stanleyville (today Kisangani), the country's second-largest city. They were defeated in November 1964, however, with the help of Belgian and South African mercenary armies — politically and militarily backed by Washington — whose assignment was to prevent the vast mineral wealth of the Congo from escaping imperialist control. Thousands were massacred as the imperialist forces retook Stanleyville.

Nevertheless, large numbers of rebel fighters remained in several areas of the country. These were the forces whom the Cubans assisted.

The effort to topple the country's pro-

imperialist regime was unsuccessful. The Cuban forces withdrew as the Congolese resistance crumbled under the combined assault of mercenary forces from South Africa and troops of the U.S.-backed Congolese regime. A dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko was consolidated that lasted until 1997.

At the end of 1965 and the beginning of 1966 Guevara spent several months in Tanzania, where he wrote this book, using as a reference the campaign diary he had kept.

Guevara narrates the war's events, seeking "to extract the experiences that can be of use to other revolutionary movements" and "so that the experience begun by us should not be wasted, and the initiative of the International Proletarian Army should not die in face of the first failure." With a critical eye, he examines the strength and weaknesses of the Cuban volunteer contingent, as well as those of the leadership of the Congolese struggle. The book concludes with an epilogue, where Guevara reviews the central lessons of the effort, and outlines his view of the prospects of the Congolese revolution.

Extensive unauthorized excerpts from Guevara's manuscript have appeared in several books since 1994. In all cases, however, the original text was chopped up, excerpted, and reordered. Moreover, quotes from Gue-



Tricontinental

Che Guevara, far right, with Cuban fighters in the Congo around 1965. Guevara headed a contingent of Cuban volunteers who supported the revolutionary forces of Patrice Lumumba, assassinated leader of the liberation movement in the Congo.

vara appear interspersed with commentary explaining the authors' agreement or disagreement with various evaluations of his.

Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo, on the other hand, contains the complete text of Guevara's book, in the order and with the title he intended. It also incorporates handwritten edits made by him to the original text.

The book has a prologue by Aleida Guevara March, daughter of the revolutionary leader and a veteran of internationalist missions during the 1980s in Angola and Nicaragua, where she served as a doctor. In it, she quotes from previously unpublished letters written to Guevara by Fidel Castro, in-

cluding one written in June 1966, while Guevara was in Prague, Czechoslovakia. In it Castro urges Guevara to return to Cuba to help facilitate preparations for his next undertaking, which was to open a revolutionary front in the Southern Cone of Latin America, centered in Bolivia. Guevara returned to Cuba within months.

The publication of *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo* is a major contribution to the history of the revolutionary struggle in Africa and of Cuba's internationalist efforts. It adds an important new chapter to the legacy of the modern working-class movement from which conscious revolutionary fighters everywhere can draw.

Machinists to Boeing: 'No seven days!'

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE — Five hundred Boeing workers, their families, and supporters marched down Pacific Highway here August 22 chanting "Union power!" and "No way, seven day!" The march was organized by the International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 751.

The machinists oppose Boeing's proposal to institute "alternative work schedules" which would allow it to run its plants seven days a week, without paying premium pay on Saturdays and Sundays. José Martínez, who has worked two and a half years on the 767 airplane assembly line in Everett, said, "This is the biggest issue to me. It would take away the only time I have to spend with my wife, the weekends. I'll strike over it."

At a pre-march rally IAM international

president Thomas Buffenbarger, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka, and other union officials pledged their support.

The contract between the largest aerospace company in the world and the IAM, which represents 49,000 Boeing production workers, expires September 2. Machinists are to vote on a contract offer September 1.

The contract covers IAM-represented production workers in the Puget Sound region and Spokane in Washington State; Portland, Oregon; and in Wichita, Kansas.

Union officials have assured Boeing that they want to avoid a repeat of 1995, when the IAM successfully struck for 69 days, twice rejecting contract offers backed by the union negotiators. Dick Schneider, lead negotiator for the IAM, told a joint news conference, "We are here to negotiate the best contract we can and not negotiate a strike."

Aside from the workweek schedule, the major issues in the negotiations are job security, wages, benefits, and retirement. Boeing also wants its workforce to pay more of the medical benefits. It unilaterally forced this on its nonunion salaried employees at the first of this year. This was a major issue in the 1995 walkout.

The union wants a substantial increase in retirement benefits — much more than the \$7-per-year raise Boeing is reportedly offering — or to allow Boeing workers to join the IAM National Pension Fund. The IAM also wants cost-of-living adjustments for retirees, to keep up with inflation. Currently, Boeing's monthly retirement benefits are only \$40 per year of service.

The union is demanding a 5 percent general wage increase for each of the three years of the new contract, plus a 14 percent signing bonus. In addition, it wants to shorten the time of progression from starting pay to full pay to four years from the current seven and a half years. The machinists also want to end subcontracting and to set a guaranteed employment level.

Many workers think they are in a good position to win some big gains in this contract, arguing that Boeing can't afford to take a strike right now. Boeing is just emerging from production and financial problems that have beset it since 1997, when it suffered its first loss in 50 years. In the first six months of this year, Boeing tripled its profits over last year, earning \$1.17 billion on delivery of 313 new commercial airplanes. Its goal is a record of 620 plane deliveries this year.

Boeing's owners have been demanding

increased profitability from the aerospace giant, and management has begun severe cost-cutting measures and a drive to increase productivity. Phil Condit, Boeing Chairman and CEO, explained in a letter to employees prior to the negotiations that he will run the business "in order to take action that maximizes value" — profits, that is.

Boeing has also been hit hard by the Asian economic crisis, which caused Asian airlines to cancel or postpone orders on Boeing's largest and most profitable jets, the 747, 777, and 767.

Boeing is in a bitter dogfight with Airbus, the European consortium that is Boeing's only major competitor today. Their competition for orders has driven down prices 20 percent in the last two years, squeezing both companies' profit margins. It recently sold its 777 model to Singapore Airlines in exchange for buying back that company's Airbus planes, which it must now resell. Airbus has captured 66 percent of the commercial airplane orders this year.

Boeing is attempting to use this rivalry to convince workers to accept their proposals. Boeing's chief negotiator Jerry Calhoun recently told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* that if there is a strike, "We will severely destroy our competitive posture. I am not sure we will ever recover if we lose it."

The increased production rates of Boeing jets are being achieved at the same time that the company is cutting thousands of jobs. Its goal is to reduce employment by 53,000. Since February 1998, employment levels have fallen from 238,600 to 210,700 by July 1 of this year. This has been the secret of Boeing's profit turnaround. This speedup in work will accelerate in the next few months as thousands more workers are laid off.

A glimpse of some of the anger workers have towards Boeing occurred July 21. Thousands of workers at Boeing's factories in Everett, Renton, Seattle, and Auburn downed tools to attend a meeting at Seattle's Kingdome stadium that Tuesday morning. The 15,000 who attended voted 98 percent to authorize the negotiating committee to call a strike if necessary. "It's time to put Boeing's feet to the fire," said Dave Young, an inspector from the Renton factory.

While Boeing has professed a collaborative attitude, many workers would agree with Rick Beldon, a lead mechanic in Renton, who said, "We're being cut to the bone and they don't want to listen."

Scott Breen is a member of IAM District 751A.

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Published for the FIRST TIME

Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo
(Episodes of the Congo revolutionary war)

Ernesto Che Guevara

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

PASAJES DE LA GUERRA REVOLUCIONARIA: CONGO

With a critical eye, Guevara examines the strengths and weaknesses of the Cuban volunteer contingent, as well as those of the leadership of the Congolese struggle. In his writing, Guevara reviews the central lessons of the effort, and outlines his view of the prospects of the Congolese revolution. In Spanish. \$23.95

Red Week was 'great chance to share experiences'

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 SAMANTHA KERN

NEW YORK — Some 100 members of the Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists, and workers and youth interested in joining the communist movement participated for one or more days in a week-long volunteer brigade at the Pathfinder Building, August 9-16. Twenty-one members of the Young Socialists from all over the world volunteered their time and labor. Workers who had taken part in previous projects and had some of the needed skills took extra time off work or vacation to join the crew, for the whole week or even a day. Brigadistas hailed from Australia, France, Iceland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Canada, and all over the United States.

Almost all of the volunteers had just participated in the Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, the previous weekend (see article on page 8), and many had signed up there to join the brigade and then hopped on a bus to New York City where the Pathfinder Building is located. Some of them had participated in the socialist summer schools organized by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists around the United States, and decided to join the caravans that met and picked up young fighters, vanguard workers and farmers across the country, participate in the Active Workers Conference, and then head for New York for the Red Week.

Maya Anderson, a student at the University of California-Santa Cruz, had heard about the Red Week last spring when she met members of the YS at a baseball game in Baltimore, Maryland, between the Cuban National Team and the Baltimore Orioles. Anderson participated in the socialist summer school in San



Militant photos by Stu Singer

The week-long brigade to paint and spruce up the Pathfinder Building following the Active Workers Conference "was a great wrap-up where we could share all our experiences during the socialist summer schools." Above, brigadistas work together to learn the necessary skills to paint trim. At right, YS leader Samantha Kern speaks in meeting to discuss next steps in project.

Francisco and joined the West Coast caravan, during which she sold the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at a meat-packing plant in Nebraska and a steel mill in Indiana for the first time. She then participated in her first Active Workers Conference, and went on to the Red Week. "I really liked having the chance to discuss politics with people from all over the world while we worked," said Anderson. "It was a great wrap-up where we could share all our experiences during the summer schools."

The brigade's goal was to repaint the walls, ceilings and trim on the fourth, fifth, and sixth floors of the Pathfinder Building, which include



the editorial offices of Pathfinder Press, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial*. With hard work and discipline, the brigadistas were able to meet this goal by the end of the week, and take on other projects to improve and maintain the building. These include repairing and painting damaged areas on the front of the building, the bathrooms in the bindery, the roof, a meeting room and hallway on the third floor, and the

outside of Pathfinder's Charles Street bookstore.

Most of the brigade members had little or no experience painting at the beginning of the week, but with training from more experienced crew members, everyone gained new skills such as scraping, masonry and caulking, using paint rollers, and brushes for detailed trim. Developing these skills were all necessary in order to complete the project, and to make sure the work met professional standards. Brigadistas came out of the week with more confidence, ready to lead future renovation projects.

"I definitely learned how to paint" said a member of the Young Socialists from Vancouver

who spent the last couple of months in Birmingham for the socialist summer school there, and volunteered for the entire Red Week. "All of these skills will be a big help when we begin painting the new Pathfinder Bookstore in Vancouver."

The crew met every morning at eight to discuss the goals and assignments for the day and safety, and ended the work day at six with a wrap-up meeting to discuss what the brigade had accomplished.

Romina Green, the newest member of the Young Socialists on the brigade, said, "Young Socialists on the brigade learned a lot about discipline. It was important to be there on time and not take longer breaks. It relates a lot to the class we had about voluntary work brigades in Cuba. By improving the Pathfinder Building, we benefited the Party, the YS, and got to meet comrades assigned to work in the printshop, and see how the books and the *Militant* are produced."

Green and two other brigadistas who helped lead with their disciplined work and punctuality were added to the steering committee for the project midway through the week.

Members and supporters of the communist movement in the New York area housed all the volunteers and organized a couple of dinners. Many brigade participants took part in classes sponsored by the New York and Newark SWP and YS after work, and a Militant Labor Forum on Friday night on the Irish freedom struggle. "I really liked the forum on the Irish struggle" said Maya Anderson. "It put us all in a good fighting spirit, then we went out to see the city, and were ready to work again at eight the next morning."

Many of the brigadistas agreed that the Red Week wasn't only a success because of all the work done on the building. It was also an opportunity for members of the YS from around the world to get a chance to work together politically and get to know each other. Migdalia Jiménez, a member of the Young Socialists in Chicago who spent the summer in Los Angeles and a caravanista on the West Coast caravan, said, "The YS gained cohesiveness. Normally we only get to see each other at conferences, maybe a couple of times a year. Working together during the Red Week gave us a chance to discuss politics, how we're building YS chapters in our cities, and we had fun too."

The Red Week ended with a well-deserved party, sponsored by the Newark and New York branches and chapters, which was a real celebration of all the work the brigade accomplished. "We all felt a certain amount of satisfaction accomplishing this task because it helps strengthen the movement," said Nefta Pereda, a YS member from Los Angeles and caravanista. "At the end of the week, we wanted to celebrate because it couldn't have been done without us."

'We must unite through consciousness to change world,' says Castro at youth seminar

BY CAROL VILLANUEVA AND MANUEL GONZÁLEZ

HAVANA — Nearly 600 students and youth from 66 countries around the world gathered here August 15-18 to participate in the International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism. The last day of the gathering conference participants and invited guests filled the National Theater for a closing session addressed by Fidel Castro.

The Cuban president was given an enthusiastic greeting by those who waited to hear him speak. The crowded theater was full of flags that represented the international character of the conference, including those of oppressed nations such as the Basque Country and Puerto Rico. Revolutionary chants echoed throughout the theater.

Castro thanked the organizers of the gathering, especially the Cuban youth who were the hosts. The conference was called by a number of student and youth organizations in Cuba, including the Union of Young Communists, the Federation of University Students, the Federation of High School Students, and the Center for Studies on Youth. Two international youth organizations also sponsored the conference — the Continental Latin American and Caribbean Student Organization (OCLAE) and the regional coordinating committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

Commenting on the important themes discussed in various workshops of the conference and their relevance for fighters today, Castro explained the necessity for young fighters to study and work to develop political ideology — ideas that can be strengthened in combat.

The political ideas that guide the Cuban revolution, Castro said, are very strong. The Cuban people have demonstrated the truth of that by surviving the last 10 years of U.S. imperialism's economic war against them. For years, the imperialists have been expecting and hoping the revolution would fall, Castro noted, but the Cuban people know the revolution will not go away, that it works for the

interests of the Cuban people, and tries to work on behalf of all humanity.

This fact was exemplified by the presence of a couple hundred youth from the Latin American School of Medicine who were invited to the closing session of the conference. The school was opened last September and currently enrolls 1,658 students from 15 countries throughout Latin America. The students pay no fees and receive materials like books for free. This is true for all Cuban youth as well. The right to an education is one of the fundamental conquests of the Cuban revolution.

The school is a true example of the internationalist tradition of Cuba's Socialist Revolution. "In these students we have great hopes," Castro said. "In Cuba there is always a congress of youth." The medical school "shows the world what can be done without many resources but with a lot of will," he added. The director of the school, Dr. Juan Carrizo, explained that after a hurricane hit Honduras last year the first volunteers to land were students from the Latin American School of Medicine.

Castro mentioned that in two years 6,000 students from other countries will have passed through schools in Cuba and will have had the chance to be a part of Cuban society. He referred to the thousands of African students from countries like Angola, Namibia, and South Africa who have studied in Cuba over the last decades.

Some of the themes Castro touched on throughout his talk were the status of Puerto Rico and its fight for independence, and struggles unfolding in the Dominican Republic and Panama. There is a "great effervescence of youth fighting for the sovereignty of their country and demanding the release of the Panama canal," Castro noted.

He spent some time describing capitalism's deep crisis and tremendous instability, which is felt around the world. Castro explained that the capitalist system has its own laws that the capitalists themselves can't control — even less so in a "globalized world" where whatever happens in one place effects another part of the world. Castro pointed to

the example of the economic crisis that swept southeast Asia, which had immediate effects in all of the world.

"A group of politicians who wanted to adopt some changes in order to avoid a catastrophic crisis would not be able to do it," Castro noted. "The crisis is congenital and no remedy has been invented. There is no medicine or vaccination against it."

Castro reiterated the challenges that fighting workers and youth face as capitalism sinks deeper into crisis, but also painted a picture of the fighting power and potential of revolutionary struggle. To much laughter and applause, he used the analogy of an army of ants. "This world must be reinterpreted starting from the best of human thought, including ideas from the bourgeois revolution and those that arose 2,000 years ago with the rise of Christian teachings, as well as modern ideas from the society we currently have," Castro said. This century got to know the working class and its struggles. It got to know the most extraordinary attempts — not always successful — of transforming human society and truly establishing the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which the great majority of the planet's inhabitants demand like oxygen.

This powerful force, said Castro, is meant for war, not for killing ants. And the world is a swarm of ants. Millions of ants can carry away an elephant, and that elephant is going to fall. Like all systems throughout history, capitalism has the genes that will lead to its death, and it also has the ones who will carry it away and eliminate it.

Ants possess more of a social instinct than does man, who possesses intelligence. Man, Castro commented, must create his own organization and unity through this intelligence. This gigantic swarm of ants must unite through consciousness. "I have no doubt that in the next century, this unsustainable world will change."

The *Militant* will feature further coverage of the International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism in an upcoming issue.

Thousands protest regime in Belgrade as NATO oversees partition of Kosova

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS, Greece — Chanting for Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic to resign, a crowd of between 100,000 and 150,000 people gathered in front of the parliament building in Belgrade August 19. Buses could be seen from Uzice, Cacak, Sabac, Pancevo, Valjevo, and other parts of Serbia. A group of protesters marched six miles from the industrial town of Pancevo, which was hard hit in the 78-day U.S.-led bombing campaign earlier this year.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-led NATO forces are overseeing the process of a de facto partition of Kosova and exacerbating the ethnic division promoted by the Milosevic regime.

"The rally was in support of the Stability Pact for Serbia and the idea for a transitional government of experts," said student activist Martina Vukasovic from Belgrade. She was referring to a plan of economic measures proposed by professional economists that aims to break Belgrade out of its current isolation and integrate its economy with that of capitalist Europe.

Zoran Djindjic, head of the Alliance for Change and a leader of the Democratic Party, was among the opposition politicians who addressed the rally. He threatened to continue street protests if the Milosevic government does not step down in 15 days.

Vuk Draskovic, head of the other major pro-capitalist opposition party, the Serbian Renewal Movement, spoke despite earlier announcements that he would not participate. Draskovic, until recently vice president in Milosevic's government, charged Milosevic with isolating Serbia and accused the United Nations of annexing "our Kosovo to a greater Albania." He called for elections by November.

The platform also included various smaller parties opposed to Milosevic, a representative of the Orthodox church, and greetings from Aleksandar Karadjordjevic, son of the deposed monarch of Serbia.

The day before the rally the Belgrade government announced its willingness to hold elections, and continued to blast the opposition as traitors and NATO stooges who want to topple the government by force.

Rally organizers offer no alternative

"We need new elections," said Zorica Trufonovic, a leader of Women in Black, "but ones where there is freedom to campaign and all citizens can clearly learn what these parties offer us."

"The only thing that came out of [the rally] is the boasting of politicians," she continued, disappointed by the lack of any real alternative to the policies of the current regime. "Who cares about Milosevic, if he resigns but nothing changes?" Women in Black has fought against the national chauvinist policies and "ethnic cleansing" carried out by the Belgrade regime throughout the 10 years of war that have fueled the

breakup of Yugoslavia.

"People who participate in the protests don't necessarily support the politicians involved," was the opinion of Dusan, a student activist from Novi Sad who asked that his last name not be used. He explained that many people hope that "once Milosevic goes the economic sanctions will be lifted and then maybe we could get through the winter." There will also be "greater democratic space to deal with these other politicians," he added.

A series of rallies broke out with the end of the U.S.-NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia and the lifting of martial law in June, as working people expressed their anger at the government and the policies that led to the prolonged war. These mobilizations have been more sparse in recent weeks.

"There are still rallies in Kragujevac," said Christina Ranic, a worker at the Zastava auto plant devastated by NATO bombs, in a phone interview. "The Alliance for Change calls them, and they have less participation than in the beginning. They have let the movement grow cold, and people are more and more staying home," she said. Ranic is a member of Nezavisnost, the independent union outside government control. She pointed out that the union did not participate in the Belgrade rally and members who attended did so as individuals. "We are not supporting any of the opposition politicians at the moment. They have nothing to offer."

Devastation from bombings

Working people are continuing to face every day the effects of the massive destruction of industry and infrastructure caused by the imperialist bombing raids. There has been no motion to begin rebuilding the Zastava complex that once employed 38,000 workers. Ranic reports that the only money workers there have seen in the last month is 20 German marks (\$11) that they were given in two installments. The government is offering workers 2,000 marks to resign from the plant, according to Ranic. "People who have families in the villages are taking it. But those of us in the city have nowhere else we could possibly find a job," she said.

According to Zorica Trufonovic, "Only a few workers are being paid. People are only surviving because of the social security and public health care system."

Refugees from Kosova bring the total number of Serbs who have fled to Serbia from other parts of the formerly federated Yugoslavia to nearly 700,000. Their presence is being used to fan the flames of nationalism among Serb working people. "Raising an anti-nationalist perspective is very difficult now, despite the end of the bombing," Trufonovic said, due to the influx of refugees.

Taking the moral high ground, organizations that have steadily campaigned in re-



Thousands of people demonstrate in the city of Uzice against the Milosevic government

cent years in favor of the ability of Yugoslavs of different nationalities to live together and who have organized against "ethnic cleansing" are speaking out for these displaced farmers and workers.

Refugees from Kosova are getting only one meal per day, cannot get jobs, and their children are not allowed to attend school, according to Yugoslav Action — an umbrella group that includes Nezavisnost and 50 other organizations — because the government wants these refugees to return to Kosova.

"The latest figures regarding the humanitarian situation in Serbia are shocking, especially the fact that the regime is preventing the distribution of aid to people who need [it] the most," said Branislav Canak, president of Nezavisnost and chairman of Yugoslav Action, referring to the Serbian refugees in a recent press conference.

NATO oversees partition of Kosova

Most of Kosova's 200,000 ethnic Serbs have now been pushed out as NATO consolidates its hold. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Serb population of Pristina, Kosova's capital, has shrunk from 40,000 to 2,000. Serbian residents report that attacks and intimidation are being carried out against them by the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), a charge that the UCK and representatives of the US-led NATO occupation forces in Kosova, called KFOR, deny. "Relatives of mine in Kosovo say that if you speak Serbian in Pristina right now you are likely to get beaten or killed," said Dusan. "Killings take place every day. People can't go out to shop for necessities."

The UCK — which at one time organized those resisting Belgrade's attacks on the Albanian population in Kosova — has developed into a tool of the imperialist armies intervening in Yugoslavia through this spring's devastating bombing campaign against the working people of the region, Serb and Albanian.

Throughout the NATO assault, forces loyal to the Belgrade regime expelled 800,000 Albanians out of an estimated 1.8 million from their homes. As a result of repressive measures and attacks by the Milosevic regime, most Albanian working people had come to support independence for Kosova. Most of those Albanian refugees have now returned and face the devastation of their

towns and villages, and occupying armies from 19 countries under U.S.-NATO leadership, stationed in the region to allegedly protect Albanians.

Further fostering ethnic divisions, UNHCR representative Dennis McNamara stated last week that "the conditions for return" of an estimated 180,000 Serbs and also Gypsies and other non-Albanians "do not exist right now and the UNHCR cannot support the return of displaced people to Kosova."

Seven hundred policemen from several countries, including Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Russia, and the United States, are now in Kosova as part of the planned 3,100-strong international police force to be built up there by mid-September under the United Nations banner. They are to be supplemented by 3,500 local police into which KFOR is considering incorporating UCK forces.

Displaced Serbs have been concentrating in the north end of the town of Mitrovica, in an area that extends to the border with Serbia. At stake here is the possible partition of the northern section of Kosova, which includes a major coal and silver mining complex.

Since August, scuffles have been taking place at the bridge over the Ibar river, which is guarded by French forces and provides passage between the two parts of Mitrovica. Albanians living in the north are being chased out.

Their homes and apartments are taken over by Serbs fleeing from other parts of Kosova. Rexhep Azemi stated to the *Los Angeles Times* that when a group of Serbs confronted him last week, the French forces who came to the scene told him, "It's not safe for you, you can't stay here any more. You have to go to the other side."

"There are not a lot of Kosovar Albanians living in the northern villages.... Everybody is talking about partition. This is not a real partition," asserted Bertrand Bonneau, spokesman for the French forces in Mitrovica.

Further demonstrations by Albanians at the bridge were called off when an agreement was reached with UN officials last week to allow 25 Albanian families to return each day to their homes on the northern side.

Bobbis Misailides contributed to this article.

400 protest Klan rally in Ohio

BY EVA BRAIMAN

CLEVELAND — Despite the urging of local city officials, editors of the daily *Plain Dealer*, church leaders, and politicians to stay away, approximately 400 opponents of racism assembled in downtown Cleveland August 21 to protest a rally by about 40 white-hooded members of the Ku Klux Klan and a few dozen of their supporters. "If we don't publicly repudiate them, they will only become bolder," noted Mohammed, a 42-year-old machinist from Nigeria. He was one of hundreds who attempted to get within view of the Klansmen, but were prevented from doing so by police in riot gear.

Cleveland mayor Michael White organized the cops to pen off four city blocks around the Klan rally with chain link fences, preventing opponents of the Klan from entering the area with anything more than one key and one form of ID. Many were subjected to full-body frisks and videotaping.

Reporters, including this one, were not allowed to enter the pen carrying notebooks, pens, or cameras.

At the same time, members of the KKK were given the downtown Justice Center to change into their robes and were escorted by police to the rally site. "So much for the police being neutral," complained one young protester from Columbus who was turned away by police.

In addition to the downtown rally, there were various "alternative" events around the area, including Unity Day Cultural Fest '99 at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, which 4,000 attended; a teach-in at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea; and an anti-hate parade that drew more than 800 people, organized by students at Cleveland Heights High School.

Eva Braiman is a member of United Auto Workers Local 2400.

from *Pathfinder*

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Atlanta protesters defend affirmative action

BY FLOYD FOWLER

ATLANTA — More than 200 people turned out to defend affirmative action here August 23 at a rally at the Ebenezer Baptist Church sponsored by the Georgia Black Chamber of Commerce, the Atlanta Labor Council, and other organizations. The crowd, most of whom were Black, included groups of union members from the Carpenters Union and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), and a number of small business people. This rally was in response to a threatened suit against the city of Atlanta's affirmative action programs.

"The trade unions must fight discrimination in the community and in the workplace," said Benita West, an official from the ATU who addressed the rally. "We must fight for the rights of the most oppressed workers."

The Southeastern Legal Foundation (SLF) is spearheading legal attacks on affirmative action across the south. In a letter delivered to Atlanta Mayor William Campbell June 14, the group demanded the city end affirmative action provisions in contracts for city construction work within 30 days. Under this city program, businesses awarded city contracts must subcontract between 35 and 40 percent of the work to firms owned by members of oppressed nationalities or women. Before this program was established in 1975, less than 1 percent of this work went to such firms. The population of Atlanta is nearly 70 percent Black.

What is at stake is not just one city program that benefits a small layer of Black business people. On June 16 Matt Glavin, president of the SLF, declared, "We're ready to go to trial. When Atlanta's program falls — and it will — that will be the final nail in the coffin of affirmative action." Working people have the most to gain in defending the conquests of the civil rights movement. The struggle against Jim Crow segregation opened the road for working people to forge unity in the fight against racism and discrimination. Affirmative action programs that exist today reflect what was gained by that movement.

"It has to do with health, education, human rights, the whole nine yards," said Sharon Turner, a carpenter and president of the Atlanta Tradeswomen's Network, a 300-member organization that fights to help women get into the construction trades. "The minority-owned businesses are just small potatoes to me. We've had to take some of these same companies to the Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission over the last several years. We've been fighting for affirmative action, sometimes against the city too, long before this fight came along. In trying to eliminate this program, the Southeastern Legal Foundation is representing the Association of General Contractors, not the workers."

The SLF is generously funded by developers, construction firms, and national corporations like Atlanta-based Flowers Industries,



Militant/John Sarge

More than 250 people demonstrated at the University of Michigan in January this year in defense of affirmative action, which is under attack at schools throughout the country.

one of the nation's largest producers of baked goods. One of those drawn into the current fight is Edwin Rosemond, who worked for Flowers for 24 years. "I've been fighting Flowers a long time," he related. "They closed their Atlanta plant in 1996, but then it reopened the next year under another name but still running their products. I think it was all to get rid of the union we had. I'm still learning about affirmative action, but I'll participate in anything that will help to get the union back in that plant."

Over the last several years the SLF has successfully challenged affirmative action

programs in Richmond, Virginia, and Jacksonville, Florida. In Atlanta, this outfit won a suit against the Fulton County Minority/Female Business Enterprise Plan, which was declared unconstitutional. The DeKalb County School Board, facing an SLF lawsuit, gave up without a fight and on its own ended a voluntary school busing program aimed at combating segregation in the schools. Grady Memorial Hospital was forced to suspend an affirmative action program in construction bidding similar to the city of Atlanta's in 1997. Attorney Robert Proctor, after winning the case against Grady, crowed, "I'm not going to stop filing

U.S., Japanese governments escalate provocations against north Korea

BY HILDA CUZCO

Washington and Tokyo signed an agreement August 16 to embark on a joint Theater Missile Defense project, with the Japanese government paying up to half the costs. This scheme to stretch a ring of missiles across the Pacific — from Japan to south Korea to Taiwan, is directed against the workers states in China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

To justify this step and others in its militarization drive, the Japanese government cites what it claims was the testing of a medium-range Taepodong missile by Pyongyang in August 1998. The north Korean government insists this was a satellite launching. To present the DPRK as the ag-

gressor in the region, Tokyo has also been playing up allegations by U.S. officials that Pyongyang is planning a missile test soon.

This propaganda turns reality on its head. An August 10 statement issued by the DPRK government reviewed the history of Japanese imperialist aggression against the Korean people, including the occupation of the peninsula from 1905 through World War II. Today, "under the signboard of a 'peace-loving state,'" Tokyo is making "the military, operational, legal, and ideological and moral preparations for direct participation in a war of aggression overseas."

Pyongyang maintains that the Korean people have the right to defend themselves from imperialist provocations. Washington —

lawsuits until I dismantle all the affirmative action programs in the state."

The SLF's legal attacks on affirmative action have up to now confronted only half-hearted resistance, and have almost invariably resulted in sympathetic court rulings, even when the program in question is technically upheld. A recent suit aimed at the admissions policies of the University of Georgia was dismissed on a technicality, but the judge used the bulk of his decision to declare that the admissions program amounted to "reverse discrimination."

At a rally of more than 1,000 people at city hall in July, Mayor Campbell declared he was ready to "fight to the death" for affirmative action. But after prominent press, political, and big-business figures urged compromise, Campbell said he was "going to have a different approach." The Georgia Black Chamber of Commerce used the August 23 rally to promote a boycott campaign against Flowers Industries and another company with connections to the SLF as the way to pressure the group.

Thousands of people are ready for actions that mobilize the broad support that exists for affirmative action. Every meeting, picket line, and rally draws fighters looking for a way forward. Up to now, the SLF has not accepted any compromise that did not effectively gut the affirmative action program targeted. Many aren't in a mood to accept that. "Whether there is a compromise or not," said Sharon Turner, "we're going to go on fighting for affirmative action."

Floyd Fowler is a member of the United Steelworkers of America in McDonough, Georgia. Dan Fein and Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

Saskatchewan farmers mobilize

Continued from Page 16

McDougal, who farms in Francis. "Over half my land is mortgaged, I have large machinery payments, and the grain prices are so low I can't meet my costs. Canola prices have dropped about one-third over the last two years."

The current Agriculture Income Disaster Assistance (AIDA) program only kicks in after a farmer suffers a 30 percent drop in income, and bases any aid on the average income of the last five years. Many farmers said incomes have been very low for several years already, and for their income to drop another 30 percent to qualify is ridiculous. Furthermore, it costs Can\$1,000 to apply for the program.

Jean and Alain Tremel, farmers from Bruno, argued that the federal government spent "more than \$1 billion for the war against Kosovo and only a fraction of that for agriculture in this country. It's wrong."

"The federal government has added over 50 cents a bushel expenses for transportation by taking away the Crow Rate," added Alain Tremel.

Danny Luciuk, who farms in the Wakaw area, said, "For a lot of us farmers it's going to be too late after the next couple of months. I'm going to lose \$25,000 this year. I've been farming for 25 years and probably for 20 of those I've worked off the farm, but it's still not enough this year." Luciuk said his wife

and their children bear the major responsibility for the farm while he works another job.

Rally participants often booed and heckled politicians from the governing New Democratic Party, as well as the Liberal, Saskatchewan, and Reform parties, who addressed the crowd. "Take the politics out of farming," yelled the farmers. NDP Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan Dwaine Lingenfeller blamed Ottawa for the crisis, and asserted that subsidies farmers receive in the United States and Europe were a major problem. While Lingenfeller was speaking, farmers yelled, "Don't pass the buck to the States."

Many speakers blamed taxes as the major problem. This was a major point of the Reform Party. Lee Cook, who farms in the United States, addressed the rally. He commended the protests and declared, "Agriculture in Canada is in deep deep trouble. Agriculture in the United States is in deep deep trouble."

A University of Saskatchewan student was cheered as he encouraged the farmers to maintain the protests, as this was the only way to get action from the government. He noted that 40 percent of the students at the university come from the farm. As soon as school resumed he promised that students would organize a rally in support of farmers' right to a decent standard of living.

Bob Thomas, president of the Bengough Group, said, "What farmers want to see is a program that guarantees their cost of produc-

tion. That's what I think is possible."

In an interview at his farm outside Regina near Belcarres, Bengough Rally Group leader Lloyd Pletz explained that 40 percent of the land in the area was rented to other farmers by farmers who don't have the means to work the land. But those who are renting also can't continue. Pletz added, "Farmers in the U.S. and Europe are not the problem," and even though "half the world is starving, the poor countries don't have the money to pay for it."

"I'm going to lose my farm," he said. "The prices don't meet my costs, I'm at the end of my credit and have been for some time, no one wants to buy the land, and I couldn't buy pesticides because I have no credit left. The government is waging war on us. It seems they want to increase their general revenues on the backs of family farmers while driving them off their land."

On August 19, Saskatchewan premier Roy Romanow called a provincial election for September 16, the first time an election will be held in the province in the middle of harvest season. The Bengough Rally Group explained that the election will not stop the organization of caravans and rallies. After the rally people lined up to sign up to help organize town meetings, more rallies, and help get people to Ottawa.

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of the IAM Local 11 in Delta, British Columbia.

'A new proletarian movement is beginning'

Active Workers Conference registers advances of socialist workers, youth

BY NAOMI CRAINE
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

OBERLIN, Ohio — "A new proletarian movement is beginning to rise," Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, said at an August 9 meeting of the party's National Committee. This movement is broader than labor struggles; it includes rural toilers fighting to keep their land. It is based in the city and in the countryside, in the factories and in the fields, Barnes explained.

There is a new mood and growing confidence among groups of vanguard workers and farmers who increasingly are realizing that though they are from different classes, they have a common future and face common conditions as proletarians, as well as a common enemy — the capitalist class and its agents.

This fact, stated Barnes, gives renewed urgency to building a party that is more proletarian and disciplined, one whose membership and leadership act in a more timely way as part of the vanguard of working people. The just-completed Active Workers Conference, Barnes said, registered initial advances of worker-bolsheviks in transforming the party through fusing our activity with the struggles of these fighters, and discovering in the process the greater and greater need — and possibility — to become competent at mass work.

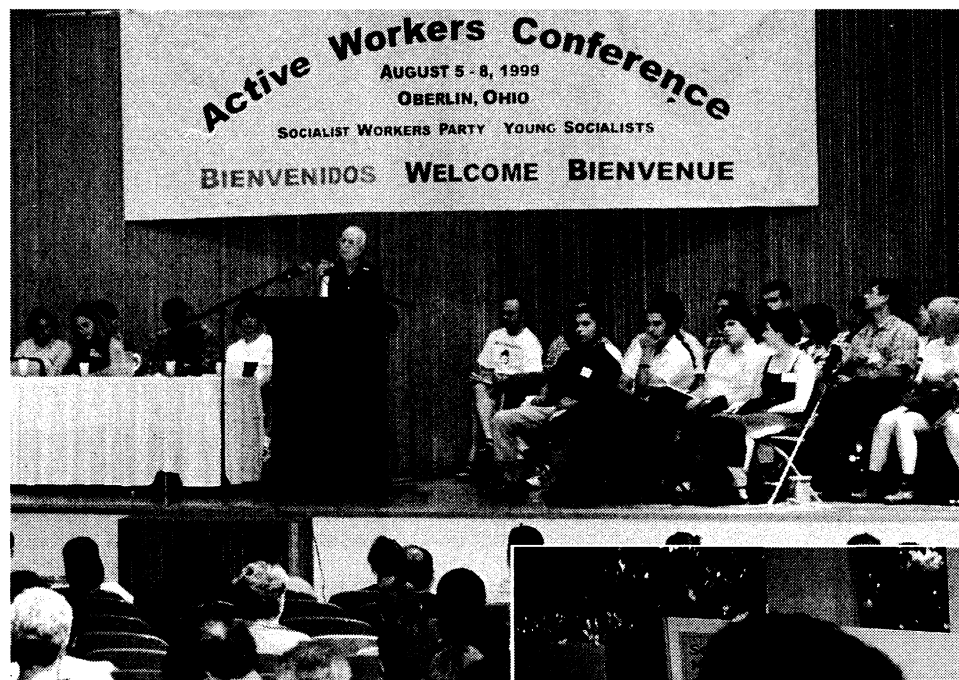
The National Committee meeting followed an Active Workers Conference held at the Oberlin College campus here August 5-7. It also came after a day of meetings of leaders of the SWP's trade union work, Young Socialists members and interested youth, and supporters of the communist movement involved in helping to keep Pathfinder books in print.

We can increasingly see two armies — of working people and of the capitalist exploiters — beginning to take shape and face each other, in a way that wasn't as visible before, Barnes said.

One example is the recent 17-week strike by thousands of shipyard workers in Newport News, Virginia. The shipyard struggle was impacted by battles that came before it in that region, particularly fights led by farmers who are Black to hold onto their land. As a result, the Newport News struggle became more than a union battle; it took on a social character throughout the region and beyond, becoming a source of confidence to working people both in the city and the countryside who were attracted to this example of working-class power, solidarity, and militancy.

The existence of this proletarian movement in becoming was registered at the Active Workers Conference. It was a working meeting in which fighters from the factories and the land exchanged experiences and worked toward a common political language through three days of panel discussions, presentations, and classes.

More than 460 people attended the con-



Militant photos by Megan Arney (top),
Dave Wulp (right)

Above, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes speaks on second day of conference. On stage are volunteers for Red Week brigade in New York (see article on page 5). Right, participants browse exhibits outside conference hall.

ference, including members of the Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists, and communist leagues in several countries; vanguard working people involved in struggles; supporters of the communist movement; and young people interested in socialism. Participants came from across the United States as well as from Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and other countries.

Many Young Socialists members, and other trade unionists and farmers, converged on the conference in car caravans from the West Coast, Minnesota, Texas and Alabama, Georgia, and other points. The caravans stopped along the way to pick up conference participants, join strike picket lines, and sell the *Militant* at plant gates and mine portals.

Participants headed out of the conference into a range of political activities. A carload of active workers joined the picket lines of locked-out Steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum in Newark, Ohio, on their way home to Mississippi and Texas. Others headed to Newport News to continue discussions with workers at the giant shipyard there.

Thirty people set out for New York to take part in a week-long volunteer brigade to paint and spruce up the Pathfinder Building, where the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books are edited and printed. They were joined by another 70 volunteers over the course of the week, with the biggest concentration coming on the final two days of the project (see article on page 5).

The Active Workers Conference kicked off a new campaign to sell the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* to bookstores and libraries in areas where workers and farmers are in the forefront of the resistance to the attacks by the capitalist rulers (see front-page article).

The conference also served as the send-off for delegations from the Young Socialists in the United States, Canada, and Sweden who participated in the August 15-19 International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism in Havana, hosted by Cuban student and youth organizations.

Fernando Pérez, first secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., accepted an invitation to attend the conference, but was denied permission to travel by the U.S. State Department.

Structuring party through mass work

"Structuring party units and union fractions through mass work," read the banners in English and Spanish at the front of the main conference hall. This had been the theme of the Active Workers Conference held in Pittsburgh in July 1998. The Ohio conference registered how the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists have advanced over the 13 months since the Pittsburgh gathering in fusing their activity with other fighting workers and farmers.

The meeting was marked by the leadership priority and hard work the party has put into



collaborating with its two auxiliary organizations — the Young Socialists and the party's supporters. As a result of these efforts, YS cadres have been setting the pace in carrying out decisions of the communist movement in response to new political openings in a timely way. The meeting registered the growing ability and confidence of party supporters and their role in helping sustain the movement's publishing apparatus.

A rolling panel discussion, held each of the three days, pulled together the threads of work of the party, Young Socialists, supporters, and fellow fighters over the last year, helping conference participants generalize from these experiences. Norton Sandler and Jack Willey, members of the SWP's Trade Union Committee, chaired the panels.

Following the first day's panel and discussion, Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, spoke on "The place of the party's auxiliary organizations — the Young Socialists and party supporters — in building the communist movement." Following the second day's panel, Jack Barnes spoke on "Structuring party units and trade union fractions through mass work." A discussion period followed this presentation. These talks generalized and reinforced the lessons of the experiences described on the panels and in discussion from the floor.

On the final day, Barnes gave a summary talk on "Organizing to carry out the perspectives of the Active Workers Conference." His presentation was part of a windup rally launching a campaign to raise funds among working people for the continued publication of Pathfinder books.

Several panelists spoke about steps taken to rebuild fractions — concentrations — of socialist workers in garment, textile, meatpacking, and coal mining. This effort, known as the third campaign for the turn to the industrial unions, was launched following the 1998 Pittsburgh Active Workers Conference with the aim of politically revitalizing all seven of the party's national trade union fractions. Since the SWP's original turn to industry more than two decades ago, the big majority of the membership and leadership of the party have been rooted in the industrial unions.

Since last October, the fractions of socialist workers in the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) have grown from just a handful of members in a few cities to about the same size as most of the SWP's industrial fractions spread across the United States. On the first panel,

Lisa Potash, a member of UNITE in Chicago, described how the party branch in Chicago has prioritized getting another member or two into the large garment shop where she works.

In recent months the party has established organizing committees in coalfields in the West and Midwest with the aim of getting jobs in mines that are hiring — union or nonunion — as a step toward rebuilding a fraction in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Members of these two organizing committees described the increased hiring of young workers, including women, especially at nonunion mines.

"We're early in the area, anticipating the struggles that will erupt," noted Elyse Hathaway, a member of the party organizing committee in the Midwest.

Another organizing committee was formed to deepen the party's work with meatpackers in the upper Midwest. These are also areas where working farmers have been hard hit by the crisis in agriculture, Holly Wilson stressed. "Getting to know more farmers is one of the priorities we've set," she said.

Socialist workers in the region are also prioritizing steps to reach meatpackers at Hormel plants in August, leading up to their contract expiration. Participants traveling to the Active Workers Conference from the West Coast and from Minnesota sold the *Militant* at Hormel plants in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Nebraska on their way to Ohio.

Land and labor struggles

Some of the panelists described fights by militant unionists and farmers and how socialist workers have been joining in their activities and discussions, such as the 10-month battle by unionists locked out by Kaiser Aluminum and the recent Steelworkers strike against Newport News Shipbuilding Co.

Mary Martin, an airline worker and member of the Machinists union in Washington, D.C., spoke about the stakes in that strike and the teams of socialist workers and Young Socialists who met strikers on the picket lines, at the union hall, and in working-class communities where many shipyard workers live, as well as other workers in the region. They have gotten to know a number of the battle-tested ranks, who approved a new contract July 30.

Willie Evans, a member of Steelworkers Local 303L, which is on strike against Titan Tire Co. in Natchez, Mississippi, urged other conference participants to build and take part in a September 11 labor rally marking the one-year anniversary of their battle. "We're inviting people from all over, to make it a glorious occasion for mobilizing working-class solidarity," he said. Evans noted he met a number of conference participants on the picket lines, not only in Natchez but in Houston, where oil workers have been confronting a lockout at Crown Petroleum.

One of those sharing the platform with Evans, who is also a wheat and soybean farmer, was Willie Head, a tobacco and vegetable farmer in Pavo, Georgia, who has been leading struggles by farmers to defend their land from foreclosures. "We're traveling to cities to make workers aware that losing our farms doesn't affect just us — it affects you, too" through jacked-up food prices charged by big supermarket chains,

Continued on Page 9

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Thurs., September 2, 7 p.m.

Rally for Justice: Second Anniversary of Murder of Willie James Williams while in the custody of the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department.

Valdosta, Georgia. St. James Baptist Church. For more information, call (912) 241 0705 or www.peopletribunal.org

Mon., September 6

Labor Day Parade

Charlotte, North Carolina — Sponsored by United Steelworkers Local 850 on strike against Continental General Tire and other area unions. For more information call Local 850, (803) 548-7272.

Sat., September 11

One Year of Struggle at Titan Tire

Natchez, Mississippi — Join the Titan Tire strike rally. For more information, contact USWA, Local 303L, Fax: (601) 445-5175.

'Capitalism's World Disorder' campaign

Continued from front page

five results have been at book outlets that were recommended by militant workers and others we met in the area, including *Militant* subscribers."

The Virginia team was one of the initial efforts in a new campaign, launched by the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee following the August 5-7 Active Workers Conference in Ohio, to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* to a broad range of bookstores, libraries, and other outlets where working people acquire books.

Capitalism's World Disorder contains five talks by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes. The book serves as a guide to action for working-class fighters, presenting a class approach to understanding the vast changes that have swept world politics since the October 1987 near-meltdown of the world stock markets and the initial consequences of imperialism's march toward fascism and war.

The campaign to sell this book, which will last through the end of the year, is centered in regions around the country where working people are engaged in resistance to the assaults of the ruling rich, as well as areas where socialist workers are organized in local and factory units. The ability to carry out this concerted effort is based on the objective political situation today — the new mood of combativity and growing confidence among groups of vanguard workers and farmers who increasingly see that we face a common class enemy as well as a common future.

Advancing course of proletarianization

The SWP National Committee decided to organize the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* in such a way that every book sale to a store or library will be part of involving socialist workers more deeply in the actions of the new proletarian movement emerging today in city and countryside — above all through extending the reach of the communist movement in coal-mining areas and among farmers, meatpackers, and garment and textile workers. The campaign — integrated into the daily political work on the job, in working-class neighborhoods, at plant gates, and on picket lines — will be led through the national and local leaderships of the units of

communist workers in the industrial unions.

The party's National Committee affirmed that it is the responsibility of the SWP leadership bodies on every level to demonstrate in practice that every member of the party can be fully integrated into these efforts, as part of acting in a politically centralized way. Key to success will be the participation of the Young Socialists in this campaign, from plant-gate sales to every single regional team.

One initiative along these lines is a team that headed to eastern Pennsylvania in late August, fielded by socialist workers — including a member of the Young Socialists — from New York, Philadelphia, and Newark, New Jersey. The team went to a livestock auction near the Pennsylvania border in Hackettstown, New Jersey, where they met several young farmers and others who engaged in discussions on the program of action proposed by the New Jersey Socialist Workers candidates in response to the devastating social consequences of the drought in the eastern United States. Six people purchased copies of the *Militant*.

The team also sold at the entrance of the Jeddo Coal Co. mine near Hazleton, Pennsylvania, where union miners waged a hard-fought strike that ended earlier this year. In Wilkes-Barre, a worker who had earlier purchased *Capitalism's World Disorder* arranged to meet them to suggest which retail outlets in the area could be approached to place Pathfinder books. The team also planned to sell at the entrance to a garment shop and at a community college where workers take classes to obtain mine safety certification papers.

The new campaign builds on gains of the March-June sales drive in which socialist workers sold 940 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, especially the final weeks of that effort, which developed some real campaign momentum.

More recently, the Communist League in the United Kingdom embarked on a drive to sell an extra 200 copies of the book before the end of the year by involving the entire membership of the party in the effort to place this Pathfinder title in a large array of bookshops, libraries, and other stores. Their initial successes — almost 40 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* placed in London and Manchester bookshops in the first



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Selling *Capitalism's World Disorder* on the streets of New York. Campaign to get this book into bookstores and libraries is part of involving socialist workers more deeply in the actions of the new proletarian movement emerging today in city and countryside.

three days alone, as well as boosted sales on the job — underscore the fact that this campaign and how it is being organized will be key to beginning to reverse the decline of Pathfinder sales of the last two years, a decline that does not correspond to the objective political openings today.

The Active Workers Conference registered the growing receptivity to Pathfinder books, *New International* magazine, and the communist press among proletarian fighters, who increasingly find this literature essential to their effective participation in class-struggle activity.

Help from fellow farmers and workers

Recent experience indicates that fellow farmers and workers will be glad to recommend where to place Pathfinder titles in commercial outlets and libraries where others like themselves seek books, from rural cooperatives to bookstores, department stores, and record/video stores.

A team in central Illinois began a successful weekend of work by following up a tip from a steelworker in St. Louis, who cited the case of a co-worker who had purchased *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, by Jack Barnes, at a campus bookstore in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. The bookstore buyer remarked that four

copies of that book had been purchased in recent months, adding her observation that "books by Jack Barnes sell." A copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* was featured on a "New Titles" shelf near the front, and she indicated the bookstore would place an order with Pathfinder that week.

The team ended up visiting five bookstores and one library, selling the *Militant* to nine workers at the Bridgestone-Firestone tire plant in Decatur, and taking some time for political discussion with a politically active coal miner in the area.

Another team in the coalfields spent four days in southern Illinois and western Kentucky in mid-August. "We took *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other Pathfinder titles to 20 bookstores and libraries in the tri-state area, and sold the *Militant* to more than 90 miners and other workers and farmers," reported Ted Leonard, a textile worker from Boston.

An important aspect of this campaign is to organize training sessions to equip all participants to answer the basic questions bookstore buyers ask, and to ensure the professional standards expected of promoters of Pathfinder literature. The team in Virginia, for example, got off to a good start with a short orientation for all team members by a rail worker who is experienced both in communist work on the job and in placing books in stores and libraries.

Conference

Continued from Page 8

he said. "These problems will continue unless workers and farmers come together and stay together."

Gladys Williams, from Quitman, Georgia, spoke on the final evening of the conference. Williams is a member of the South Georgia Vegetable Producers Cooperative, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, and the People's Tribunal of Valdosta, an antipolice brutality organization. She explained that in March she and other farmers hosted two youth leaders from revolutionary Cuba who were on a U.S. speaking tour.

"They impressed me very much when they told us Cuban farmers didn't have to worry about losing their land" because through their socialist revolution they have won the right to work the land free from foreclosures, Williams recounted. In contrast, she pointed out, in the United States "they are trying to take farmers' land."

Because of this reality and the fact that Cubans have wiped out illiteracy, "I'm curious and I want to learn more about Cuba," Williams said. She will be part of a fact-finding reporting team of small farmers who are planning to visit Cuba later this year, hosted by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) of Cuba.

In his final talk on organizing to carry out the perspectives of the conference, Barnes said that communist workers should also help farmers from the United States forge ties with farmers in the United Kingdom and other imperialist countries — to begin to see themselves as part of the international proletarian army against the efforts of capitalist governments to keep them divided.

Summer schools, caravan to conference

Several speakers explained how over the past couple months the Young Socialists had concentrated their numbers in several cities — particularly Los Angeles, San Francisco, Birmingham, and Atlanta — to organize a summer school to study books containing the lessons of 150 years of the modern workers movement. One was Migdalia Jiménez, a YS member from Chicago who moved to Los Angeles to join the socialist summer school program and also quickly got a job in a nonunion textile distribution center.

Another YS member, Manuel González, moved from California to Atlanta. Like other YS members in different cities, "I not only studied Marxism but got a job in industry in Atlanta, and we deepened our participation in the class struggle," he said, including through a team that went to Kannapolis, North Carolina, to meet textile workers who had just won an important union organizing victory. The YS and SWP members there col-

Continued on Page 10

The Socialist Summer Schools Aren't Over

September 4 - 5

Labor Day Weekend Socialist Educational Conferences

CHICAGO

Saturday, September 4, 7 p.m.

40 Years of the Cuban Revolution

Speakers: Brian Taylor, staff writer for *The Militant* who participated in events in Cuba commemorating the 40th anniversary of the 1959 agrarian reform law; Manuel González, Young Socialist leader recently returned from International Youth Conference in Cuba.

Dinner 5:30 p.m. Party: 10:30 p.m.

Donation: Dinner \$5. Program \$5.

Sunday, September 5, 10:30 a.m.

Class: Lenin's pamphlet, To the Rural Poor: Uniting workers, peasants and farm workers

Speaker: Heather Wood, Young Socialist National Committee and Minnesota Socialist Workers Party.

Lunch 12:30 p.m.

Class: "Independence Is a Necessity": Recent Developments in the Class Struggle in Puerto Rico, 1:30 p.m.

Speakers: Migdalia Jiménez, Young Socialists and participant in August 29 demonstration in Puerto Rico to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners; Harvey McArthur, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 100-A.

Pathfinder Bookstore, 1223 Milwaukee Ave. (Corner of Ashland & Milwaukee. Division stop on the Blue Line). Donation: \$2 per class. Lunch: \$4. Entire conference: \$15. For more information, call (773) 342-1780.

Sponsored by the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, September 4, 3:00 p.m.

Class: "Teamster Rebellion" by Farrell Dobbs.

Speaker: Nefta Pereda, member of the Young Socialists.

Panel—Report from International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism in Havana, Cuba, 7:30 p.m.

Speakers: Cecilia Ortega, member of the Young Socialists National Committee; others to be announced.

Party: 9:30 p.m. Dinner 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 5, 10:00 a.m.

Class on Lenin's pamphlet To the Rural Poor — Uniting workers, peasants, and farm workers.

Speaker: Norton Sandler, member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee.

Lunch 12:30 p.m.

Class on "Independence is a Necessity" — recent developments in the class struggle in Puerto Rico, 1:30 p.m.

Speakers: Samantha Kern, California state organizer of the Young Socialists, and Autumn Knowlton.

Meeting of the Young Socialists 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd. For more information, call (213) 380-9460 or (415) 824-1429.

Sponsored by the California Socialist Workers Party and California Young Socialists

Active workers meet

Continued from Page 9

lectively studied books such as *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, and *Revolutionary Continuity* by Farrell Dobbs.

Jiménez and González both joined caravans from their respective cities to the Active Workers Conference. Samantha Kern, organizer of the Young Socialists National Executive Committee and California State YS organizer, described how a caravan kicked off in Los Angeles, stopped in Fresno to pick up a youth who joined the Young Socialists at the conference, and traveled 2,500 miles across the country to Ohio, joining up with more Young Socialists and others from San Francisco, Denver, Seattle, Vancouver, and Chicago along the way.

The 17 *caravanistas*, as they and other caravaners became known, organized a number of plant-gate sales, including at a mine portal near Rock Springs, Wyoming, and two sales at packinghouses in Fremont, Nebraska. In the Chicago area some of the caravanistas showed their solidarity on a Steelworkers strike picket line, while others sold 36 copies of the *Militant* at the gates of two giant steel mills, and attended a class given by Jiménez on a section of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

When Mary-Alice Waters spoke following the first day's panel discussion, some 35 participants who had come in caravans — not only from California but from Minnesota, Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, Colorado, Illinois, Washington, and New Jersey — were seated on the platform behind her.

It's important to absorb the strengthening of the Young Socialists as seen in the summer schools, in their whole range of activity, Waters said. Without the effort led by the party to deepen work in garment, meatpacking, and coal, it is impossible to advance in building the Young Socialists. And it would not be possible for the party to carry out this revitalization of the turn to industry without the Young Socialists.

In the cities where the Young Socialists concentrated their forces for the summer, it posed a necessary crisis for the party, Waters said, forcing the party to confront the habits of retreat and procrastination that have grown up over years. When the party branch in Los Angeles voted to organize to get jobs in meatpacking, the Young Socialists didn't just sit and talk about it. Two YS members got hired in a packinghouse along with the one party member who had gotten in.

The Young Socialists is becoming a more proletarian organization, Waters noted. YS cadres have taken big steps to clarify the character of the organization and its membership through the living tests they have been through in the last year.

She reviewed some of the key turning

points in the strengthening of the YS and the party since the Pittsburgh Active Workers Conference and last year's summer school in California, which became the prototype for those organized across the country this summer. Shortly after the 1998 conference, the majority of the elected leadership of the YS was graduated from the organization in order to concentrate on leadership responsibilities as members of the party. A new generation took on leadership in the Young Socialists, a fact registered at the YS convention in Los Angeles last December.

Speaking on the second day of the conference, Jack Barnes stressed the importance of the fact the YS leadership had decided, based on their own criteria, where to deploy their cadres who are not party members among the summer school centers. The party — even more than the YS — needs the Young Socialists to act as an organizationally independent youth group. They often make decisions that are slightly different from those party leaders would make, often strengthening both organizations in the process.

Selling 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

The panel presentations also registered the efforts by socialists to increase the sales of Pathfinder books, which have been declining over the past few years despite the growing objective opportunities to get these political weapons into the hands of working people and youth. Toby Smith, a leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom, reported that at a recent conference in London the members of the Communist League had decided to launch a campaign to sell 200 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* through the end of 1999, building on the 200 they had sold so far since the book was published earlier this year.

They decided to organize teams immediately to begin visiting bookstores on a systematic basis. To make it possible to get rapid results they decided that, rather than wait for appointments with book buyers that might be scheduled for several weeks later, they would show up directly at bookstores, armed with Pathfinder catalogs and books.

The result was that within the first three days, these teams had already placed 39 books in commercial bookshops in London and Manchester, and, through their boosted confidence, sold a few more to coworkers at industrial jobs.

The SWP National Committee decided at its August 9 meeting to launch a campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* to bookstores and libraries through the end of the year. Through this drive, the communist movement can begin to organize on a systematic basis to sell the whole array of Pathfinder books to commercial outlets — where most workers buy books — an effort that had virtually collapsed over the past couple



Coal miners in Russia block the Siberian Railway, May 1998, during strike demanding back wages. Capitalist relations cannot be reimposed on these workers states short of a bloody defeat of the working class by imperialist military might.

of years. The campaign will be led by communist workers in the trade unions.

During one of the discussion periods in the Active Workers Conference, Kitty Loepker, a steelworker in Granite City, Illinois, gave a vivid account of how she has been using *Capitalism's World Disorder* on the job to discuss a range of political questions with coworkers, from the nature of Bonapartism to why wage increases do not cause inflation.

She was pleasantly surprised to discover that a coworker she visited had a copy of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* on her living room coffee table; she had purchased it at a campus bookstore. Barnes, in his presentation later that day, remarked that there was no better argument than Loepker's story for the need to get Pathfinder books in bookstores and libraries as an integral part of becoming more deeply involved in the emerging proletarian movement.

Similarly, Ellie García, a rail worker and member of the United Transportation Union in northern New Jersey, related some recent experiences in selling the *Militant* and Pathfinder books to coworkers, taking advantage of the interest in the Newport News shipyard strike. "In the last three weeks I started showing the *Militant* to everyone I could on the job," she reported. As a result of her work, García sold 10 copies of the *Militant* and three books to coworkers, one coworker attended a Militant Labor Forum with her, and another went to the Pathfinder bookstore in New York for a broad-ranging discussion of politics. She also went with a team to Newport News to deepen political relationships with workers there.

Dean Cook, a leader of the fight by locked-out Crown refinery workers in Pasadena, Texas, spoke of the value of Pathfinder books he has read, including *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

In her talk Waters underscored the objective place of Pathfinder in the world by pointing to the recent protests by students in Iran, the largest protest actions there since the 1979 revolution, in which workers and peasants overthrew the U.S.-backed monarchy.

In five days of protests against the closing of a newspaper and murderous police attacks, students demonstrated in Tehran, Tabriz, Mashhad, Urmia, Kermanshah, Isfahan, Shiraz Hamadan, Gilan, Zanjan, Ardabil, and other cities.

"You've heard many of these names before," Waters told the audience. "They are cities where Pathfinder supporters and sales representatives have taken part in book fairs over the past months," getting a broad range of books into the hands of young people and others — from titles by Ernesto Che Guevara to pamphlets on the fight for women's rights and writings of Marx and Engels. The same conditions that sparked the student protests have led to greater interest in the books Pathfinder distributes.

She pointed to the importance of Pathfinder literature for building communist parties. As working people are propelled into action, these books are the only way they can find a political way forward. There is no other way to cross the bridge from rebellion, no matter how just, to becoming an effective, disciplined part of the communist movement, Waters stressed.

Waters added that if a political upsurge comparable to that in Iran broke out in the United States, "all our books would go out of print within days." This makes the work of party supporters who are converting all 350 Pathfinder books into electronic form crucial

to the building of a revolutionary party and maintaining a publishing apparatus.

Keeping Pathfinder books in print

Tom Tomasko, a member of the steering committee of the Pathfinder reprint project, explained the task that some 100 party supporters have taken on of putting all Pathfinder books in digital form. This allows the workers in Pathfinder's printshop to produce the books using computer-to-plate equipment, allowing great savings in labor and costs over the old methods.

"We put a lot of pride and effort into meeting our goals," he stated. "We know that what we accomplish in August determines what books the printshop will produce in September." This pride came through in the extensive display supporters put together to show each stage of how the books are produced.

Tomasko pointed out how far this effort has come over the last year. At the time of the Active Workers Conference in Pittsburgh in July 1998, the supporters had finished digitizing two books. By now the number is 40, and the supporters are working to increase the pace from the current average of 4-5 books each month to 10.

Thirteen months ago "we did not expect to be doing the graphics," Tomasko said. Now, volunteers are digitizing all of the graphics for every book — from the covers to the photographs — greatly improving the quality over earlier editions. The challenges of organizing the work flow to fully utilize everyone who offers to help have also been conquered, using a website database to transfer work in progress from one volunteer to the next.

Reprint project volunteers have also instituted a monthly pledge of \$10-25 each to raise the \$1,000 per month needed to finance the entire project. At the closing session, Tomasko reported that over the course of the conference the monthly pledges rose from \$675 to \$1,077. More than a dozen conference participants signed up to be part of the project. "We know the act of getting one of the books Pathfinder produces can change the course of a person's life — and that's our motivation for doing this," he declared.

The reprint effort is not simply a project but "part of a course of action for every member of the communist movement," Waters said in her talk on the first day of the conference. It is the work of organized supporters of party. Only those who have a political interest in not only producing the books but helping distribute and use them in various ways — whether by staffing Pathfinder bookstores, helping organize Militant Labor Forums, or other ways — can sustain the consistent effort needed.

The impressive rallying of support for the party over the past couple of years has pressed the party to organize the broader spectrum of its supporters. Delegates to the April 1-3 SWP convention earlier this year recognized that the explosion of support for the party went far beyond the structure of a national group of active supporters that had been organized for many years. The desire by growing numbers of supporters to be organized into more work for the party forces every SWP branch to function in a more disciplined and centralized fashion.

Speaking from the floor the second day of the conference, Michele Smith, a supporter from the San Francisco Bay Area, asked how supporters could start selling *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other books to bookstores, if the party branch in their area hadn't started doing it.

Waters replied by explaining that this situ-

Pathfinder Fund will help produce new titles, reprints

BY LUIS MADRID

The work to translate *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* into Spanish is now in full gear. A successful campaign to meet in full and on time the \$125,000 international Pathfinder Fund launched at the Active Workers Conference will be essential to making the politics presented by Jack Barnes in this book available to fight-minded workers, farmers, and youth whose first language is Spanish.

The three-month fund drive runs through November 15. At the end of the second week of the fund-raising effort, \$2,762 had been received and pledges added up to half of the goal. Local supporters need to turn their attention to rapidly securing pledges to meet and surpass the goal, and begin collecting payments on other pledges already made. This effort implies reaching out with the fund in the broadest way possible among those who are coming to appreciate the importance of Pathfinder's literature in their own political work: trade unionists, fellow activists in the fight for Puerto Rican independence, and co-fighters against police brutality, among others.

At the same time, payments to the fund are needed to continue advancing Pathfinder's reprint program. In August, newly typeset titles currently in production include: *Speeches to the Party* by James P. Cannon, *Problems of Everyday Life* by Leon

Trotsky, *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*, and *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*.

New titles in Pathfinder's publishing program, whose production will be facilitated by the fund, include *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. Its Spanish-language version will be issued simultaneously by Havana-based Editora Política. A joint launching of these titles is projected at the end of November during the Guadalajara International Book Fair in Mexico.

The kind of response backers of the fund should expect is illustrated by the way 19 people across the United States — garment and meatpacking workers, students, and others — have embraced the call and are volunteering collectively hundreds of their "off hours" to complete the first round of translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder* — a 500-page book — by mid-September. Several of them offered their help after Pathfinder's president Mary-Alice Waters announced at the recent Active Workers Conference the goal of producing this title by the end of the year, and making it available at the Havana Book Fair next February.

To help with the effort or to contribute to the fund, visit the Pathfinder bookstore nearest you. Please make checks or money orders payable to Pathfinder, and send to **Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014**.

ation had begun to be turned around in the Bay Area because of the persistence of Smith and others who pressed the party to get organized. Party branches now have to begin this process everywhere to more systematically involve supporters in a range of activity organized by party units.

Transformation of printshop

A computer-to-plate machine installed last October — made possible by capital contributions by supporters of Pathfinder since the Pittsburgh conference totaling \$840,000 — has made possible the initial steps in the transformation of the Pathfinder printshop. Workers in the shop have been able to greatly increase their productivity and reprint books quickly without tying up resources in extra stock, while freeing up nearly one-third of the staff for party-building work around the country.

Phyllis O'Connor, the shop production manager, pointed out that when Washington launched its assault on Yugoslavia earlier this year, Pathfinder quickly ran out of *The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*. The reprint project volunteers put it at the top of their priority list and prepared a digital file of the book in only three weeks. The shop was able to deliver the book within four days of receiving the digital file.

At the conference, a new capital fund appeal was launched to raise \$300,000 by the end of October. This will cover the costs of renovating the press room to remove the wall separating the sheet-fed and web presses, installing better dust and climate controls, and upgrading the lighting.

"We need a clean, well-lit factory with clear aisles," said lead press operator Nell Wheeler, explaining how the money will be used. "We will see gains in productivity," as well as improved working conditions for the press operators, she said. At the conference \$80,000 was raised to kick off the new stage in the capital fund.

Doug Nelson, a member of the Young Socialists who works in the printshop bindery, pointed to the "challenge to improve the productivity of our labor and efficiency" to sustain the shop. He reviewed several recent steps that will help do this. These include using computers at each machine on the factory floor to punch in and out each day, for breaks, and on each job. This makes it possible to use objective statistics to track efficiency and productivity. The conference display on the reprint project and the shop included a computer showing how this time clock works, as well as architects' sketches of the new floor plan for the press room.

The shop has also begun to implement policies on attendance, probation for new volunteers in the shop, and a shift structure with fixed breaks to organize the shop as a factory with strict lines of responsibility. In making these changes, the workers in the printshop drew from the actions and writings of Ernesto Che Guevara and Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin on the organization of production under workers' control in Cuba and Russia.

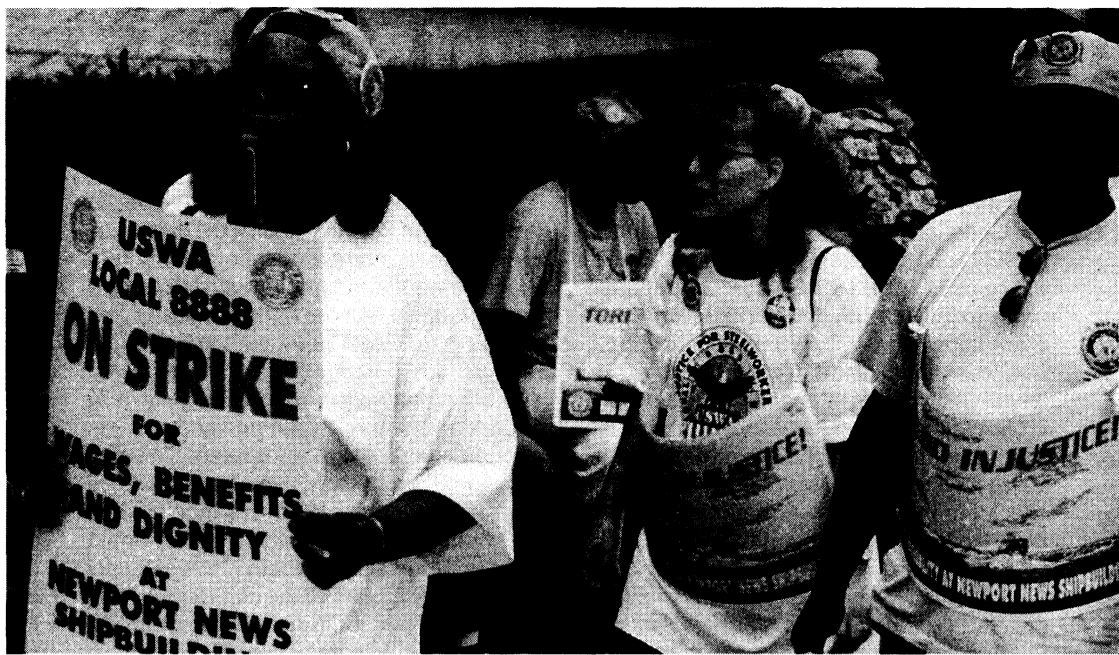
Financing a proletarian party

At the end of May, the SWP's National Committee discussed steps necessary to reconquer proletarian norms of finances. The decisions of this meeting were available to all conference participants in a new Education for Socialists publication titled *In Defense of Revolutionary Centralism*. Norton Sandler reported on the initial progress in lowering the debts of branches to the SWP National Office, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder from \$19,000 in May to \$14,700 by the end of the Active Workers Conference.

Meeting after the conference, the National Committee adopted the goal of lowering the back debt to \$10,000 by the end of September — with half of the branches becoming debt-free by that time — and cutting this debt to \$5,000 by the end of the year.

Another key piece of the financial campaign is to increase the sustainer pledged by branches to the National Office — which has fallen since the start of the year — to an average of \$10 per member per week, from \$9.26 in July. "Our goal is to stabilize both national and branch finances," Sandler said.

The May National Committee meeting also decided that all branches would submit three-month budgets, plans to reduce their debts, and a review of the size and cost of their current headquarters. During the second day's panel, Angel Lariscy, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Miami, explained that just before the conference the Miami branch had moved to a smaller headquarters



Picket line at Newport News Shipbuilding during 17-week strike. The shipyard struggle was impacted by battles that came before it in that region, particularly fights led by farmers who are Black to hold onto their land. As a result, the Newport News struggle became more than a union battle; it took on a social character throughout the region and beyond.

that better meets their needs and financial resources. "Until now, we were giving 30 percent of our sustainer income to the landlord, and only 15 percent to the party's National Office" in a weekly per-member sustainer pledge. The new place "is the size we need," and more money can go to the party's political priorities. Lariscy described the work the party is carrying out in Florida reaching out to working farmers and others in struggle.

Sara Gates, a party supporter from Seattle, reported on the campaign by supporters of the party to increase their monthly contributions to the party from \$139,000 per year to \$175,000. "These funds go directly to the party. They can be counted on and budgeted nationally," Gates explained. "Supporters are excited about politics today, and about the increasing striking power of the party. The financial campaign organizes a means to express that support."

Midway through the conference, Gates announced that the \$175,000 goal had been surpassed, and proposed a new goal of \$190,000.

This too proved conservative. As of the closing rally August 7, monthly pledges from party supporters added up to \$201,100 per year. The number of supporters pledging a monthly contribution had jumped from 181 at the start of the campaign to 245. "Now we have to translate this into a flow of \$16,770 every month to the party's national office," she said at the closing rally, to loud applause.

Many panelists referred to displays just outside the main meeting hall, which were a central attraction before and after every session. They included a photographic display showing how the socialist summer schools combined study of Marxism and party history with participation in labor and farm struggles and other social protests.

An extensive display showed the careful work of the supporters of the communist movement who are preparing Pathfinder books in digital form, and the steps the worker-bolsheviks who staff Pathfinder's printshop are taking to more efficiently produce these books. Participants could preview the new *Militant* website that will be launched in September. And a thermometer showing progress in the campaign to increase the financial contributions of supporters of the SWP kept going up every day — through the final evening.

U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War

In his talk, Jack Barnes reviewed the analy-

sis of world politics that the course of conduct of the SWP has been based on over the last decade. At a time when bourgeois spokespeople were proclaiming the "end of history" following the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the party adopted a resolution in 1990 declaring that "U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War."

Capitalist relations cannot be reimposed on these workers states, the resolution explained, short of a bloody defeat of the working class by imperialist military might. Moreover, the counterrevolutionary obstacle represented by the bureaucratic regimes, which for decades had kept workers in Eastern Europe and the USSR out of politics, had been removed. Far from an expansion of liberal democracy, peace, and prosperity, the approaching world capitalist depression would increase conflicts and contradictions, and increase the use of military threats and force by Washington and the other imperialist powers. Almost a decade later, there is nothing to take back from this analysis, Barnes said.

A growing number among those who speak for the U.S. ruling class now acknowledge that to achieve their goals they must use force. Barnes pointed to an article by Thomas Friedman, a senior *New York Times* columnist and prospective editor, featured in that paper's Sunday magazine in its March 28 issue. The cover bore the image of a red, white, and blue fist with the headline, "What The World Needs Now — For globalism to work, America can't be afraid to act like the almighty superpower that it is." The article argued that capital investment alone will not bring stable, profitable capitalist relations to the semicolonial countries, Russia, and the other workers states. "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist — McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps," Friedman wrote.

A couple of the panelists gave illustrations of the big openings for socialist workers to function in the world today. Addie McClellan described the *Militant* reporting team to Yugoslavia she participated in last April and May. Building on previous trips since 1992, the worker-correspondents on the team were able to talk to workers and students of all nationalities in different republics of the former Yu-

goslavia, including putting some of them in touch with each other.

"As we sent in our articles, we were getting reports such as the 55 miners in Kentucky who bought the issue of the *Militant* headlined 'Working class is target of U.S.-NATO assault on Yugoslavia,'" she said. "That didn't just give us a boost; we related that story to workers at the Rekor shoe factory in Albania." McClellan also described the response of workers back in Britain when she returned. One lunchtime meeting at a plant in London sparked a lot of discussion that led to socialist workers in the plant selling two subscriptions to the *Militant* and three copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Workers and students in Indonesia also welcomed a working-class explanation of the developments in Yugoslavia, said John O'Neill, who spoke about the *Militant* reporting team there he took part in last June.

The biggest challenge for socialist workers today in staying on the course that led to the Active Workers Conference, Barnes said, is to be timely. Party

members, and especially party leaders, must cultivate the habit of rapidly internalizing decisions and acting on them. Instead of being disappointed when the top Steelworkers officials called off a July 23 "Stop Navy strike-breaking" rally the union had planned for Washington, D.C., to support the Newport News strike, socialist workers should have responded right away to the fact that thousands of strikers and other workers would be gathering in Newport News that day to discuss the contract. A pause of a couple of days lessened the participation of socialist workers in the wide-ranging discussions that took place that day and limited their knowledge of what the ranks were going through.

In the discussion, Alyson Kennedy from St. Louis spoke about the 21st national conference called by the Coal Employment Project (CEP), a group formed by women miners to help get and keep jobs in the mines. At the June 25-27 conference, the CEP board proposed the organization be dissolved, saying there is no hiring in the mines today. In fact, there is more hiring today than in many years, which gives more value to an organization like the CEP.

But the socialist workers who attended the CEP conference had not been prepared to discuss this clearly with others who were at the gathering. One-third of the participants were working miners, a larger proportion than in recent years. While the outcome of the vote was not likely to change, advocating the need for the CEP would have strengthened those who wanted to fight for getting women into the mines.

At the closing event of the conference, Barnes pointed out that the biggest problem had been the lack of decisiveness and timeliness by the party's national trade union leadership in working with the party members attending the CEP conference to prepare them ahead of time for the meeting.

A party of worker-bolsheviks

One of the main themes Barnes took up was the character of the revolutionary party, which assumes increased importance today with the beginnings of a new proletarian movement.

In times of mass working-class upsurge, he noted, such a party can grow rapidly, as the Bolsheviks did in the months leading up to the October 1917 revolution. But the Bolsheviks

Continued on Page 14

Conference participants give \$82,000 boost to \$300,000 capital fund to improve printshop

BY DAVE PRINCE

OBERLIN, Ohio — Participants at the August 5-7 Active Workers Conference here heard reports on the steps being taken by Pathfinder's printshop to further advance the most cost-effective and timely, high-quality Pathfinder book production at the printing stage of producing the books. (see coverage beginning on page 8).

This follows the revolution over the last half year at the prepress stage of producing Pathfinder books. Since December all Pathfinder books have been produced using advanced computer-to-plate technology, eliminating the need for a large highly skilled and labor intensive prepress department, making it possible to reduce the size of the printshop from 47 in July of last year to 32 today.

The entire Pathfinder list is being put into digital form by more than 100 Pathfinder

volunteers around the world.

Twenty-two participants in the conference contributed \$82,000, in contributions ranging from \$1,000 to \$30,000, toward the \$300,000 needed for the next stage. The first goal is to raise the \$175,000 needed to carry out, by the end of the year, the long postponed capital project to create a single press room.

This will advance productivity on the presses by eliminating the wall which separates the two Heidelberg sheetfed presses — used to print the text and covers for Pathfinder books — and Web press, used to print the *Militant*. They will be integrated into a single press room with the necessary air conditioning, humidity, and dust control. This will result in dramatically improved working conditions.

With that completed, the printshop will schedule an overdue upgrade of the lighting

with new fixtures and factory windows, an industrial cleaning and painting of the pressroom, and repair the floor.

This appeal follows the tremendous response over the last 12 months by 151 contributors who gave \$848,000, with contributions ranging from \$1,000 to \$91,000, to purchase the computer-to-plate equipment, the infrastructure needed for a digital workflow, and a computer network on the production floor with computers at each machine to help advance productivity and quality through accurate and timely information.

As well, a part of the capital has been deferred to operating expenses as the shop increases sales and margins needed going through the transition, and then regenerate the capital.

For more information on how you can help, write the Capital Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Georgia farmers face fight to stay on the land

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA — Georgia farmers are not facing "dust bowl" conditions like their counterparts in Maryland, Virginia, New York, and elsewhere at this moment. "That happened to us last year," according to Willie Adams, a poultry farmer from Greensboro, Georgia, when all but four of the state's 159 counties were declared agricultural disasters. "This year I'd say we're basically at 40 percent loss in this county — better than last year when we couldn't grow a thing," said Adams, who lost 6,000 chickens due to the heat this year.

While weeks of no rain and relentless heat affect all farmers, the heaviest toll is on working farmers. Driving in the Georgia countryside, you can see fields that are parched for water, next to farms where the plants are green and healthy. Whether or not a farmer has the capital for an irrigation system and enough money to pay the high fuel costs determines this summer's yield.

According to Steve Brown, a cotton specialist with the University of Georgia, two-thirds of the 600,000 acres of unirrigated cotton in Georgia are in danger of going under this summer. Even before the drought, the drop in cotton prices to about 48 cents per pound, 17 cents below the cost of production, had left many cotton farmers on the brink of bankruptcy. Cotton seed companies have also laid off workers in rural areas.

In two counties in Georgia and one in Arkansas, Black farmers have filed complaints that they were denied disaster assistance by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) due to racist discrimination. "I got a phone call from a South African TV reporter trying to find out the names of these farmers. I don't know who they are but I'd like to find out," continued Adams, who was a part of the recent two-year battle by farmers against the USDA to defend their land and against racist discrimination. The U.S. government was compelled to make some concessions to the Black farmers in a consent decree, with the hope that this would cut off their deepening radicalization and fighting capacity.

Since Judge Paul Friedman's decision approving a settlement to the farmers' lawsuit in April, government discrimination has continued. "Black farmers get less disaster relief from the USDA," stated Adams, "because they generally have smaller farms. That's the case because Black farmers often have trouble getting loans to expand in the first place. Then when the disasters hit they don't get enough to resume their previous level of farming, which

causes them to qualify for even less assistance the next time around."

Melvin Bishop is one of the two Black cattle farmers left in Putnam County, the dairy center of Georgia, and president of the Georgia Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association. He stated that the bulk of disaster aid, such as agricultural loans, goes to rich white farmers. These are the farmers who make up the county committee, and their first aim is to maintain their wealth and power at the expense of poor and working farmers. "When it comes to Black farmers, they aren't contacted until the money has already run out," Bishop had warned that county commissioners would go after farmers they deemed "troublemakers" in the aftermath of the class action suit.

Although the USDA sets up programs on a national level, a county committee system with broad powers administers policy on the local level. "You have to understand, a good 'ole boy system is already in place. These people are in the bank, they're in the feedhouse, they're in the loan offices downtown, they're in the loan offices uptown. This is still Georgia — rural Georgia. When you leave Atlanta,

you're in a for a rude awakening," declared Alvin Walker, who is in a fight to get his dairy farm back in Putnam County.

Willie Head of the South Georgia Vegetable Producers' Cooperative reports that between 15 and 20 farmers from Brooks, Lowndes, and Thomas counties met with USDA lawyers in May to document continued racist discrimination by the Farm Service Agency office in Moultrie. "Discrimination continues, so we are going to have protest as hard or harder than we did before to stay on our farms." He referred to an article from the Aug. 11, 1999, *Macon Telegraph*, quoting John Boyd, president of the National Black Farmers Organization concerning complaints from Black farmers who have been told by their county offices that they do not need loans or disaster aid because they are already benefiting from the consent decree.

Gladys Williams, also a member of the cooperative, added, "Although white farmers have more resources, small white farmers are going through the same thing. We have to organize some meetings and see what our problems are and what we can do together."

Drought accelerates crisis in eastern states

Continued from front page

ter hay already. Usually I don't touch it until around mid-November." This means farmers here and throughout the East will be faced with having to buy large amounts of feed this winter.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has declared all of New Jersey, West Virginia, and Connecticut as agriculture disaster areas, as well as parts of Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio. The USDA responded the crisis by offering emergency loans, which cover part of farmers' losses. To be eligible farmers must prove they have lost at least 30 percent of normal production, prove they can repay the loan, have collateral deemed "adequate" by USDA officials, and prove they cannot obtain credit elsewhere.

"Everybody is up to their ears in loans already," said Linden Smith, a 71-year-old dairy farmer in Sussex County, New Jersey. "One more loan isn't going to help. Agriculture is being affected by low prices, meanwhile everything we buy keeps going up. We need better prices."

Smith, the last dairy farmer in Franklin Township, is one of 39 dairy farmers in Sussex County. He said during the 1950s there were 1,200 dairy farmers in the county.

"I sure don't need any more loans," Vaughn

Harshman, a corn farmer in Frederick, Maryland, told reporters in response to the remedy offered by the USDA. Harshman hosted a news conference August 2 for USDA secretary Daniel Glickman at his farm, which was attended by 40 other farmers.

Farmers' resistance to plunging deeper into debt has pressed some capitalist politicians, including U.S. Sen. Robert Torricelli, to promise to call for government grants instead of loans. Speaking to a gathering of more than 80 farmers and others at the Warren County Farmers Fair in Harmony, New Jersey, Torricelli also sought to pit farmers there against those in other regions, claiming federal agricultural policy favors Midwestern farmers.

Drought exacerbates social crisis

The drought adds to the social crisis farmers are already facing because of the collapse of farm commodity prices. Farm income in the United States has dropped by almost 17 percent in the past three years and thousands of farmers have been driven into bankruptcy.

Between 1996 and 1999 prices have declined 42 percent for wheat, 39 percent for corn, and 20 percent for soybeans.

The milk price farmers in New York received in June averaged \$12.70 per hundred-weight of milk sold, a drop of \$1.30 from last year.

In Pennsylvania, the fourth-largest dairy state, milk production has dropped by 20 percent, and estimated losses from crops like corn, soybeans, feed hay, and garden vegetables are between 30 and 100 percent, according to the Pennsylvania Agriculture Department.

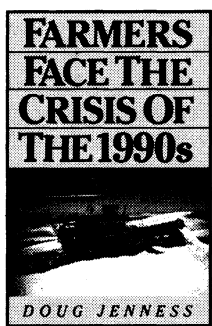
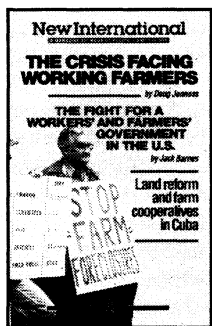
Many farmers with crop insurance will still get wiped out. They are forced to buy insurance in order to qualify for loans or other USDA programs. The premiums are very high, while payments cover only a small fraction of farmers' losses.

"Insurance doesn't pay. Really it's next to nothing," Bob Puskas, a farmer in Somerset County, New Jersey, told the *Star Ledger*. Facing a total loss, Puskas said his insurance company told him he would be lucky to get back \$10,000 of the \$75,000 he spent to raise his corn crop.

Meteorologists forecast dry conditions lasting into October. Even if their calculations are wrong, however, no amount of rain can save this year's crops.

Officials in West Virginia estimate that a third of the state's water wells have failed. They predict as many as 10 percent of the state's 21,000 farms will fail this year.

Mike Galati is member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 174 in New York City.



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Why do Bonapartist figures like Perot and Ventura get a hearing?

The development of the Reform Party reflects the polarization and growing panic among middle class layers as social conditions of millions get worse. Rightist demagogues like Ross Perot and Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura seek to tap into this insecurity to salvage the decaying capitalist system.

Below is an excerpt from a talk by Jack Barnes titled "Youth and the Communist Movement" that helps explain the stakes involved for working people in the emergence of these Bonapartist figures, which portends massive class battles. The talk was given at a meeting of the communist movement in Sheffield, England, in 1992. It is included in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The book is copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

BY JACK BARNES

The United States today is gripped by what bourgeois commentators consider a most peculiar phenomenon. Newspaper columnists, TV talk-show pundits, and academic "experts" talk about it more and more these days. They do not know what words to use to describe it — "a peculiar unease," "a mini-panic." Why, they ask, is unrest and insecurity mounting unevenly but seeming inexorably among so many millions of people?

But there is no mystery. For some fifteen years even before U.S. capitalism entered its current depression conditions, the experience of a growing majority of working people, and increasingly of worse-off middle-class layers as well, has been that economic and social conditions keep getting worse and worse. The conviction is deepening among millions that no one knows where it is all heading. Under these circumstances, small but significant sections of the population do feel panic. Many of them for the first time start looking for radical answers to the problems they face, problems they are convinced the two big-business parties have neither the will nor the capacity to resolve.

The most perceptive comment on the Perot candidacy in the major U.S. press was in the *Wall Street Journal* about ten days ago. You did not even need to read the article; the headline said it all. "Ross's Army: Meet Perot's Fans: They Crave Change, Not Specific Proposals." That was the main headline. The subhead continued: "They Span Political Spectrum, Shrug Off His Positions." That is, before Perot's backers began supporting him, they may have called themselves either a Democrat or a Republican, a liberal or a conservative or a moderate. But now they simply crave change, and they glory in his lack of specific proposals.

This is a mass psychology most of us have not seen in our political lifetimes — a wide-

spread belief among layers of people that what is needed is not this or that particular solution, but a charismatic individual in high office who also has *the will to impose change*, whatever it may be. The conflicting class interests that underlie the rising social crisis get covered up in capitalist society; the fact that the mounting economic and social problems faced by millions are class questions is kept hidden. Nothing that happens in U.S. politics today openly takes the form of class politics.

Politically, fighting workers are the last remaining liberals in the United States today. As the bipartisan axis of social policy has kept shifting to the right over the past twenty years, most self-proclaimed liberals have become less and less liberals of the New Deal/Fair Deal variety. But fighting workers still *talk like* liberals, because it is the only politics they know. There is no politics except bourgeois politics in the United States on any mass level, and there has not been for decades.

We should never be fooled by this political reality into concluding that workers in the United States are somehow committed to bourgeois liberalism, however; they are not. Any more than we should be fooled into thinking that the working class here in Britain has moved to the right because many workers vote Conservative when the Tories promise lower taxes. No, it is just that as the Labour Party acts more and more openly as a bourgeois party, workers — if they go to the polls at all — vote under normal conditions for what they hope may at least improve their immediate situation. Both examples underline the absence of any genuinely independent political voice of the working class, either in the United States or the United Kingdom.

Nowhere in the world today, in fact, does the working class have a political voice powerful enough to be heard on any mass scale (with the exception of revolutionary Cuba, that is). Many organizations speak in the *name* of the working class — social democratic and Stalinist parties, centrist formations, union officialdoms. But none of them speaks for the *interests* of the working class. These voices *pretending* to speak for labor, pretending to speak for the traditions of socialism, actually speak as lieutenants of the capitalist rulers in decline, who are squeezing the working class.

This political misleadership, this lack of any clear working-class political alternative or program, tosses layers of workers into the same pot with hundreds of thousands, and eventually millions, from the middle classes who find the radical solutions they are looking for among demagogic voices on the far right of bourgeois politics.

Space for politics in working class

Although workers place no independent class stamp on the initial manifestations of this radicalization, opportunities do start growing under these conditions for the working class to begin to act in its own interests. These changes are virtually invisible to those outside the working class, however. Only from within the factories and the unions are these changing opportunities evident. But this increasing space to practice politics in the working class and labor movement is the most important single political fact for the communist movement today.

In the United States, this lesson was driven home to us once again recently by the explosion in the streets of Los Angeles after the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King. What was most striking, especially in the Los Angeles area itself, was that among workers on the job, there were no physical confrontations. The rulers were not able to whip up those kinds of divisions. Instead, in workplace after workplace, working people talked about these events, argued about them, and sometimes had heated disagreements. But workers with different viewpoints could say what they thought. This is the last thing anyone could have learned about from reading the race-baiting big-business press, however. Communist workers had simi-



Unemployed workers line up to apply for jobs in Detroit, Michigan, in 1993.

lar experiences during the Gulf War, as I mentioned earlier. But it is not just under these kinds of pressure-cooker conditions that we find space for politics in the working class. That is simply one of the payoffs for the work we do, day in and day out, talking socialism on the job with fellow workers and seeking to draw them into political discussions and activity.

The communist workers movement today has only one way to test whether our assessment of the political situation and what we are doing is right or wrong. It is not by polls or election results. The test for us is whether or not the space on the job and in the unions to discuss politics, to take initiatives, and to gain a hearing for the communist point of view stays open or begins to narrow in face of today's rising class tensions and polarization. If we are right, then that space will not close down, but will instead open up, with whatever ebbs and flows.

As workers begin finding ways to fight back against the capitalist offensive, as waves of strikes and other struggles begin to accelerate, this political space will expand. The bourgeoisie cannot simply take back this space, nor can the liberals, the Stalinists, the social democrats, or the union officialdom. This space within the working class and unions can only be taken back by the bosses and their labor lieutenants through class battles in which big defeats are inflicted on the working class. Each advance and victory by workers in these battles, on the other hand, will expand that space and strengthen the prospects for independent working-class political action and organization.

Cop brutality, racist assaults, frame-ups, attacks on workers' social wage and conditions on and off the job — these attacks go on here in the United Kingdom, in the United States, and across the capitalist world. But

the resistance against these attacks and the politicization of working people through our collective efforts to push them back — this too grows. But anybody trying to follow politics just by reading the bourgeois press, or to engage in politics outside the branch and union fraction structures of a proletarian party, will never know what is happening in the working class.

Reaction cannot succeed without a fight

Given the shape world capitalism is in, the ruling propertied families no longer have the option of postponing the deepening conflicts engendered by their system with social policies and concessions to broad layers of the working class. They cannot adopt new legislation that significantly expands the social wage and buffers class tensions for an extended period of time. Their declining profit rates and intensifying competition drive them in exactly the opposite direction. There is only one way the rulers can try to resolve the crisis of their social system — by taking on the working class and labor movement in battle and defeating us.

In periods of a great expansion of the world capitalist economy, such as the quarter century from the late 1940s through the early 1970s, the rulers promote a particular kind of social differentiation in the working class, economically and socially. On the basis of a real, even if modest, rise in the living standards of tens of millions of workers, the rulers maintain their domination short of a decisive fight. Wide disparities continue to exist in the working class, but the class-collaborationist labor officialdom is able to keep resistance in check by appealing to a broad enough layer whose conditions are slowing improving. That alternative is not open to the capitalists today, however, so the labor officialdom is less able than at any time in several decades to beg crumbs from the bosses' table.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

September 6, 1974

James P. Cannon died of a heart attack August 21 at his home in Los Angeles at the age of 84.

Cannon was the foremost leader of the American revolutionary socialist movement and was at the time of his death National Chairman Emeritus of the Socialist Workers Party. His experience spanned more than six decades of participation in the class struggle. Cannon was also a central leader of the world Trotskyist movement.

Jim Cannon's death came as 1,250 socialists were participating in the 1974 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference, a week-long gathering held in Oberlin, Ohio. The conference, consisting of more than 80 different lectures, panel discussions, and workshops, was sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance with the participation of the Socialist Workers Party.

The response by the conference to Cannon's death was in the revolutionary tradition. The "Political Tribute to Jim Cannon" held August 23 launched a major campaign to move forward the struggle to build the revolutionary party to which Cannon devoted his life. Participants contributed or pledged more than \$50,000 for this effort. This was by far the largest outpouring of financial support at one meeting in the history of the revolutionary socialist movement.

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

August 29, 1949

DETROIT, Aug. 22 — The largest and longest unauthorized strike to hit the auto plants here in a long time ended this morning with the return to work of 18,000 Chrysler workers at the Kercheval and Jefferson plants after a five-day walkout. The order to return to work came without any apparent settlement of the discharge dispute which had precipitated the walkout.

The incident which precipitated the strike climaxed many months of increasingly bitter relations between the company and the union. A probationary worker on the night shift was fired for "refusing to work assigned." The torch-solderer group informed the chief steward that if the fired worker was not reinstated by 6:30 p.m. they would refuse to work. At 6:30 p.m. with no progress reported, they quit work. Immediately the line steward was fired for "instigating the work stoppage." As the workers could not be prevailed upon to resume work the entire shift was sent home.

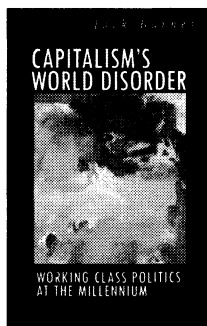
Several thousand day-shift workers voted unanimously to remain home indefinitely until the fired men were back on the job. Sharp warnings to the local leadership not to capitulate to the pressure of the international union were voiced at the meeting. The general mood seemed to prevail that "we have been pushed around by the company long enough. It is time we make a stand."

from Pathfinder

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

Jack Barnes

The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable forces unleashed by capitalism. But what the future capitalism has in store for us is not inevitable. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. \$23.95



Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

Cash relief for farmers now!

The following statement was issued by Kari Sachs, the Socialist Workers candidate for New Jersey State Assembly in the 29th District.

Farmers along the East Coast have been hammered by drought conditions. This drought comes at a time of a drop in commodity prices worldwide. All 21 counties in New Jersey have been declared agricultural disaster areas.

Even before the current crisis, farm income nationally had plunged by nearly 17 percent in the last three years and thousands of farmers have been forced into bankruptcy and driven off their land. Many farmers describe these conditions as the worst since the Great Depression.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has responded by offering "relief" in the form of emergency loans under onerous conditions. The loans will only partially cover actual losses; farmers must prove they have lost at least 30 percent of production; and farmers must show they can repay the loan and any other loan they may have outstanding. They also have to prove they can't get credit anywhere else.

These loans will only worsen the conditions for working farmers who face an ever widening gap between their costs of production and the price they receive for their commodities, high interest on mortgages, exorbitant rents, and taxes. They are debt slaves with no prospect of getting clear until they have been squeezed dry by big business and banks, and their farms foreclosed on.

The crisis provoked by the drought is part of the normal workings of capitalism. "Capitalist domination of the distribution and sale of agricultural products turns natural disasters such as drought into social catastrophes that ruin many exploited farmers and raise food prices for working people. Meanwhile, enormous profits are reaped by the handful of capitalists who own the giant food processing and marketing monopolies and speculated on the commodities futures markets." That's what the article "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold" — a resolution of

the Socialist Workers Party published in issue no. 10 of the Marxist magazine *New International* — explains.

The mounting difficulties that farmers face are very similar from one part of the world to another. But there is growing resistance that can be looked to as an example. From the 1,200 protesting farmers who organized convoys of farm vehicles along Saskatchewan highways in Canada demanding government action to the thousands of farmers who converged on the Brazilian capital city of Brasilia demanding reduction of their debts.

The Socialist Workers Campaign calls for forging a fighting alliance of workers and farmers who face a common exploiter and an economic system in crisis. Our campaign offers the following demands as the basis for this alliance:

- Immediate cash relief for losses farmers face due to the drought;
- A moratorium on all bank foreclosures on farms;
- A guaranteed market for farmers' crops and livestock with an income adequate to meet production costs and provide a decent living;
- Cheap credit to working farmers who need it with special preference to those most in need. No discrimination against Black, Chicano, or Asian farmers;
- Guaranteed government-funded crop and livestock insurance with 100 percent protection against floods, drought, hailstorms, and other natural disasters;
- End to property taxes and a sharply graduated income tax that places the burden on the rich rather than workers and working farmers;
- Create committees of workers and farmers chosen by unions, farm organizations, and consumer groups to police the price and profits of supermarkets and agribusiness.

This program of action can help unite workers and farmers in a struggle for better living conditions while pointing the road forward to developing a revolutionary movement capable of overturning big-business rule and establishing a government of workers and farmers.

Aid for Turkey, cancel the debt

"Massive material aid to Turkey now — not U.S. troops! Cancel Turkey's foreign debt!" That must be the banner of solidarity carried by working people everywhere.

Earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, droughts, and heat waves are acts of nature. But the social devastation that usually accompanies them are not. The horror visited on the people of Turkey — with an earthquake toll of tens of thousands killed, 200,000 left homeless, and millions exposed to disease — is a class question.

No government public relations or media blather could hide the naked reality of life under capitalism in this situation: working people living in shoddily built apartment complexes were killed. The rich and well-heeled were secure in their fine houses. All governments have revealed by their response what social class they look after. Washington, the richest state in the world, responded not with generous material aid (a measly 3,500 tents) but by sending in its military: three warships and 3,100 U.S. marines and Navy troops! One need not be a military strategist to know the U.S. government will use this armed deployment to further its own interests in the region — to try to keep rebellious working people in check, and as leverage against its imperialist rivals in Europe and elsewhere.

Likewise, the capitalist government in Ankara responded by quarantining the quake-ravaged area, gave virtually no emergency assistance for several days, and beefed up army

troops in that region. Meanwhile, it continues plans to gut pensions and social security in order to make payments on Turkey's foreign debt to imperialist bankers and meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund to receive further multibillion dollar loans.

Rickety apartment buildings collapsed not due to a conspiracy or because Turkish government officials are particularly corrupt, but because of the normal workings of capitalism. The construction bosses simply acted like all capitalists do everywhere — they used cheap materials and cut corners on safety to maximize their profits. Workers' lives, unlike their own, do not weigh much in their monetary calculations.

As Fredrick Engels wrote in *The Housing Question*, "It is perfectly clear that the [capitalist] state as it exists today is neither able nor willing to do anything to remedy the housing calamity. The state is nothing but the organized collective power of the possessing classes, landowners, and the capitalists, as against the exploited classes, the peasants and workers.... As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist it is folly to hope for an isolated settlement of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the lot of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of subsistence and instruments of labour by the working class itself."

Aluminum workers walk out

Continued from front page
work. The firing of Rhodes will go to arbitration and the company agreed to set up a committee with the union to look into workers complaints.

Union officials say that this was the 10th firing in the past few months. Jim Lewis, who works in the fabrication plant, told the *Militant*, "We've proved our point. We're not going to stand for how we've been treated anymore, especially in the pot room. The company needed to know how they were treating us wasn't right. I worked mid-night shift Tuesday night [August 24]. They had got the message. They weren't near as pushy."

As well as the firings, other issues behind the walkout are the forced overtime and lack of progress with union grievances. Brad Warner told the *Militant* that "newer guys in the reduction plant are forced over twice a week. Especially in this heat it's too much."

The walkout took place less than two months after union members approved a new four-year contract by a vote of 1068 to 352. The workers had, by a 3 to 1 vote, rejected an earlier contract that cut benefits.

In 1990-92, this facility, then operated by the Ravenswood Aluminum Corp., was the scene of a 20-month lockout where the company failed in their effort to break the union. Many of those who had come in as replacement workers joined the picket line Monday night. Doug Wilson, who works in the fab plant, said it was "good

to see people who scabbed during the 1990 lockout on the line, only a handful stayed in. I understand that there's bad feelings toward them. But they are here in the plant now and you have to educate them. I think they've learned a lot since then."

At the union hall, Richard Carter, a retiree, told us he "was glad to see the young workers come alive. They showed the company they're dealing with a sleeping tiger. I was wondering about the replacement workers, but they stood up this time."

The Ravenswood facility is also in the middle of the growing consolidation in the aluminum industry, a consolidation driven by falling profits. The fabrication plant at Ravenswood is being sold to French aluminum manufacturer Pechiney. Since the announcement of this deal, Pechiney and other aluminum manufacturers are being bought out by Canadian manufacturer Alcan, which would have made this combination the world's largest aluminum company. U.S. aluminum giant Alcoa, currently the world's largest, responded by carrying out a merger with the third-largest aluminum company, U.S.-based Reynolds.

Doug Wilson explained to us one of the outcomes of the sale of the fab plant. "It will split the local. Separating the two plants into different locals is something the company has wanted to do for years."

Salm Kolis is a member of the USWA.

Conference

Continued from Page 11

were able to lead the vanguard of workers and peasants in Russia then because of the decades of prior work in building a party of disciplined, proletarian cadres.

Because it was serious about leading millions to take state power, the Bolshevik party was distinguished from other currents by the fact that from its working-class base it worked among all classes and sections of society — peasants, students, and others.

At decisive moments in the class struggle, Barnes pointed out, class-conscious working people will turn to the revolutionary party. But they will trust the party only if they have learned through experience that party members with whom their struggles are intertwined will act as the party says they will. At that point, they will trust the organization even if they find themselves in the trenches alongside party members they don't know.

In replying to a longtime supporter of the communist movement in Canada who asked how the party could guide him in his attempts to carry out work in the trade unions, Barnes explained that no one can be a bolshevik alone. A worker-bolshevik has no meaning as an individual — only as a disciplined, organized part of the proletarian vanguard.

Individuals who have left the revolutionary party and attempt to carry out communist work in the labor movement will invariably act as centrists, coming under alien class pressures. The party cannot counsel such individuals on a course of conduct, because it cannot take responsibility for such conduct outside its organized membership without corrupting the trust it asks of fellow fighters who look to the party.

The Socialist Workers Party's revolutionary centralist character is stated at the opening of its constitution: "Every person who accepts the program of the party and agrees to submit to its discipline and engage actively in its work shall be eligible to membership."

This section of the SWP constitution expresses the essential difference that existed between the Bolsheviks and centrist currents within the Russian workers movement in the early part of the century. These centrists stated their agreement with this membership requirement except for the crucial part "...agrees to submit to its discipline" — that was the divide between Bolshevism and Menshevism. While the Mensheviks acted as individuals — each carrying out their own line — and therefore could not be counted on, working people learned they could count on the Bolshevik party and its members.

Hunger for politics and theory

As the party revitalizes its turn to industry and the Young Socialists become a stronger, more proletarian organization, the hunger for working at politics and theory will grow, Barnes said in his presentation on the second day of the conference. The lifetime effort of learning to think in broad class terms and as citizens of time is essential to a worker-bolshevik.

Combined political activity and study in the socialist summer schools strengthened a whole layer of young socialists who are beginning to develop this hunger for theory. And it had a big impact on party branches where the summer schools were held.

Throughout the Active Workers Conference, it was evident that many of the young people who had gone through the summer schools had gained a greater appreciation of the need to read and study together. Two sessions of classes were held continuing many of the themes of discussion from the other conference sessions. They were based on questions that had come up in the summer schools, posed again to draw out the broadest Marxist discussion of them.

The class titled "For a workers and farmers government in the United States," given by Steve Clark, answered the question "Why did the SWP return to this governmental slogan in the early 1980s, following the turn to industry," which had come up in one of the California classes. Another popular class was on "What Is to be Done?: Why Marxism must be brought to the working class from outside the direct experiences in trade union and economic struggles," based on Lenin's 1903 pamphlet *What is to be done?*, which argued for the political course of what became the Bolshevik party.

Classes were also given on "The Russian revolution: birth of the worker-bolshevik," "Struggle for a proletarian party: Organizational Norms of the SWP," "The increased weight of Black leadership in labor battles and struggles of working farmers," "The right of nations to self-determination," "The threat of Bonapartism and the social conditions that breed it," and "Socialist revolutions occur in nation-states; the class struggle in each country shows the dialectic of world revolution."

The closing rally of the Active Workers Conference launched the 1999 Pathfinder Fund. The \$125,000 fund drive, which will run through November 15, will help finance Pathfinder's continuing reprint program and several new books (see article on page 10).

The following day, August 8, many conference participants took part in further meetings to build on the work of the conference. Members of the steering committees of the SWP's national trade union fractions met to discuss how to be more effective and timely in leading the fractions' participation in the incipient proletarian movement. The Young Socialists National Committee met to plan their priorities for the coming months, followed by a meeting of all YS members and interested youth. And some 60 party supporters working on the Pathfinder reprint project held workshops to hone their skills — scanning, proof-reading, preparing graphics — in producing the political books working people need.

Vancouver port drivers win hourly pay

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN
AND BRIAN HAUK

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — After one month off the job truckers here voted overwhelmingly August 21 to accept a contract from the bosses that includes an hourly rate for the first time. Truckers will get Can\$46 (Can\$1=US\$0.67) to begin in one month. The rate will increase to Can\$48 on June 1, 2000 and to \$50 on March 1, 2001.

During the first month there will be a bonus of Can\$50 per trip and an additional Can\$30 per trip drawn from a Can\$250,000

fund paid by the terminal operators. The shutdown cost the industry Can\$50 million and tied up 7,500 containers or 50 percent of the load

For several weeks some 450 independent owner/operator truckers had maintained information pickets, effectively tying up all container traffic in the Vancouver area. Vancouver Port Authority president Norman Stark, as quoted in the August 6 *Vancouver Sun*, said the protest by truckers had cost the transportation industry about Can\$43.5 million. The Vancouver port is the largest

in Canada.

"We're dealing with 28 companies that have been cutting corners by pushing us to speed up our 'pulls' (deliveries) while cutting our rates," said trucker Ernie Dervalics while staffing the picket line.

"What we've done is basically withdrawn our services as independent owner-operators," added trucker Roy Vezina.

"We want one contract for all, an hourly negotiated rate, and we're not going back till we get this," declared Marcel Larouche. The truckers are either members of the Teamsters Local 31 or the Canadian Owner Operator Workers' Association Local 2001.

"With a flat rate that we get for a container — plus waiting for one, two, or more hours, plus often there is not enough qualified staff to service the containers or a ship is in port and we get bumped as priority — we're lucky to get \$10 an hour after paying fuel, insurance, and other fees," he pointed out. "What it comes down to is that we're hauling more for less and this has got to stop. "Another important thing is safety,"

Larouche added. "With the push by the employers to make money on our backs through lower round-trip rates and to do this faster, safety is compromised. There's great pressure to do things fast."

At the picket line, a member of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 500 dropped in before his shift to bring solidarity and explain that the longshoremen are "with you."

A mediator was appointed earlier in the dispute. His proposal to accept the employers' offer of Can\$50 more per load was unanimously rejected by the truckers, as it did not include a switch to hourly wages from the per-delivery system. During the work stoppage, truckers noted that big-business press reporters had attended all of their meetings, but no pertinent information was published, and that they were extremely one-sided and against their fight.

Ned Dmytryshyn and Brian Hauk are members of the International Association of Machinists.

Victory spurs union drive by Seattle port truckers

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

SEATTLE — Truck drivers who are owner-operators are engaged in an intensifying battle for union recognition and an hourly wage on the waterfront here and in the neighboring city of Tacoma. For some 15 months an effort has been under way to win port drivers to Teamsters Local 174. The stepped-up fight follows the example by drivers at the Port of Vancouver, British Columbia, who walked off the job on July 22.

Owner-operators at the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma voted to shut down on August 17 to demand union recognition. Drivers gathered in front of various trucking firms to talk with other workers about the need for a union. Many other drivers were convinced to "turn off their rigs." This effort has continued.

Seattle and Tacoma together constitute the third largest port system on the West Coast as measured by container volume. The port drivers transport containers between ships at berth and railroad yards and warehouses. They are considered self-employed independent owner-operators. In fact they have little independence. Their situation is similar in some ways to that of working farmers who must bear all the costs of production, while getting whatever price the market assigns to their products. Drivers bear all the expense of purchasing, maintaining, repairing, and running their trucks. They sign leases that bind them to specific companies which tightly direct their work. Only 3 percent have employer-provided health insurance. An AFL-CIO information sheet on the truckers' fight, in fact, describes these workers as "sharecroppers on wheels."

The drivers are paid for each container they transport. Delays caused by long lines at marine terminals and rail yards, traffic jams, equipment breakdown or most any other problem cut into the amount of money each driver can make. The union estimates that drivers average \$8.50 an hour once they pay their expenses. Many drivers — who include immigrant workers from Russia, Eritrea, India, Latin America, the Pacific Islands and elsewhere — work long hours to

try to make a living.

On August 19 drivers and some supporters gathered across from the Port of Seattle's Terminal 18 for a barbecue and discussion. They then drove to Seattle Freight, a trucking company, where more than 200 people gathered for a rally.

Seattle Freight was chosen as a target because it fired two drivers that week in retaliation for union organizing efforts. Both workers, Diane Hulse and Eugene Pindes, addressed the crowd and captured the fighting determination of the truckers. "I've been down here a long time on the waterfront," said Hulse and now, "I've been asked to go some place else." But, "good things are happening," she said referring to the drivers' fight. "This is just the beginning."

"My story is coming from my heart," said the Russian-born Pindes to cheers from fellow workers. "I'm offering everything that I have," for the union recognition fight.

Also speaking at the rally were national AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and King County Labor Council Executive Secretary Ron Judd. Sweeny reported that Vancouver port drivers who planned to join the Seattle rally were stopped and turned back by U.S. Customs officials at the border.

Drivers discussed the next steps at a gathering August 20 across from Terminal 18. The union has decided to establish "primary pickets" against four trucking companies: United Motor Freight, MacMillan Piper, West Coast Trucking, and Western Ports Trucking. These primary pickets are sanctioned by Teamster Local 174 and are a step beyond the informational picketing that began the week. A majority of workers at these four companies have signed union cards and stopped work.

"The pickets for union recognition will be ambulatory, following trucks," said the newsletter *Teamster Port Power*. The list of targeted companies "will continue to spread as owner operators build momentum for our campaign for union recognition."

Geoff Mirelowitz is a member of United Transportation Union Local 845.

Pickets say: 'No Kaiser Aluminum at Boeing!'



Militant/Dean Peoples

Kaiser Aluminum workers and supporters rally at Boeing offices August 5

BY DEAN PEOPLES

SEATTLE — Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) fighting a union-busting drive by Kaiser Aluminum marched about 250 strong to Boeing corporate offices here for a Steelworker Solidarity Rally and March August 5. Workers from the Kaiser plant in Tacoma, Washington, were joined by three busloads of strikers and their supporters from two struck Kaiser plants near Spokane. They have been locked out since January, following a strike that began Sept. 30, 1998.

Representatives of the USWA explained that as part of their fight against the attempt of Kaiser to break the union, they have been campaigning to get

Kaiser's main corporate customers to quit buying aluminum from the struck plants.

Also speaking were Washington State AFL-CIO representative Bob Gorman, Washington State Labor Council representative Robbie Stern, King County Labor Council President Ron Judd, and others.

Following the rally the strikers and their supporters then boarded buses and headed down to the Kaiser plant in Tacoma where an expanded picket line was held to greet scabs and company security thugs coming in for the afternoon shift.

Dean Peoples is a member of International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 751 in Seattle.

LETTERS

Philadelphia cops

The City of Philadelphia agreed to settle out of court in a federal lawsuit filed by Cynthia Dawson for the shooting death of her son, Donta Dawson, by police officer, Christopher DiPasquale. The award totaled \$712,500.

Dawson, 19, was approached by DiPasquale and his partner as he sat in his car on October 1, 1998. When Dawson didn't respond to their demands to identify himself and show them his hands, they called for backup. With some three patrol cars and six cops present, Dawson is supposed to have made a sudden movement. DiPasquale then fired two shots hitting Dawson in the face. The young man died later that day.

Twice the District Attorney filed criminal charges against DiPasquale and twice the charges were dropped following court hearings. The NAACP and city and state officials are asking for a Municipal Court review of the District Attorney's decision to decline to press charges a third time. DiPasquale was fired

from the police force but is campaigning for reinstatement.

After Dawson's murder, family members and others held picket lines demanding that DiPasquale be prosecuted.

*Candace Wagner
Philadelphia*

Campaigned for socialism

It is my sad duty to inform readers of the *Militant* of the death after a lengthy illness of Glenn White in Washington, D.C. on August 9, 1999. Glenn will be remembered by many as a activist and campaigner for working people and against racism.

Glenn was won to the communist movement in St. Louis, Missouri, in the early 1970s where he had been a natural fighter. In the mid 1970s, he moved to Washington, D.C., as a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance. Throughout the next decade he represented the Socialist Workers Party in many campaigns, gaining respect and support for the party in both the community and in the workplace. His early

80s campaign for mayor of Washington, D.C., was particularly successful in gaining a hearing for socialist ideas. In the mean time, he was organizer of a large and active chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance, and a militant in the Amalgamated Transit Union. He also played a key role in the formation of the short-lived National Black Independent Political Party in D.C. Glenn always had the ability to include humor and a bit of irreverence in his work, which won him many allies.

In recent years, he had taken on family responsibilities and concentrated his work there and in the ATU, but remained a friend to the SWP and never stopped being a fighter against injustice wherever it was manifested. He leaves behind a wife and child. His former comrades miss him very much.

*Fritz Edler
Washington DC*

Drought and environment

On August 18 the Delaware River Basin Commission voted to

tap into the reserve water supply in order to counteract the effects of the current drought. A maximum of 20 billion gallons of water will be tapped from these sources which would increase the supply of water for about 10 days. This decision begs the questions, what is the source of the drought, and what can be done to alleviate this potentially disastrous problem?

Because of global warming, the amount of water in the oceans is increasing. Today the technology exists to desalinate water. Desalination plants operate on several Caribbean islands and on battle ships in the U.S. Navy. Therefore desalination plants could be built to alleviate the drought, but to my knowledge this idea has not even been discussed in the media.

Hundreds of years ago the land east of the Mississippi River was one big forest with numerous Native American villages. Trees give off water and this water creates rain. The deforestation of this area, no doubt has contributed to the decrease in rainfall.

Today there are several nuclear power plants in the Northeast. These plants require massive amounts of water to operate. In the state of Pennsylvania there is an enormous amount of anthracite coal. Coal can be mined cleanly and burned cleanly, yet this process is apparently more expensive than generating electricity from nuclear power plants.

This state of affairs clearly demonstrates that the only way for humanity to live in harmony with nature is by having a workers and farmers government where human needs are more important than profits.

*Steve Halpern
Philadelphia*

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.

Irish nationalists protest rightist march

BYANNE HOWIE
AND PAUL GALLOWAY

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — A siren wailed over the Lower Ormeau Road in south Belfast early in the morning August 14. It was the signal for residents of the area and their supporters who had gathered that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was moving in to seal off the area in preparation for a sectarian rightist Apprentice Boys parade later that morning.

Although many people found themselves blocked into side streets by rows of armored cars and police in riot gear, around 200 people sat down in the road to protest the reactionary march. They were soon hemmed in by dozens more armored cars and police. As the crowd chanted "SS-RUC" and sang, the police read the Riot Act, a legal instruction to disperse. The demonstrators held their ground, and police started forcibly removing people, driving two columns of armored cars through the center of the crowd. As the cops inched forward, shouting "Fenian scum" and other anti-Catholic abuse, protesters were dragged and thrown onto the pavement, beaten with batons, kicked, and punched.

Having been pushed off the main road, protesters made their way through houses and gardens to a side street near the Sean Graham betting shop, where five nationalists were shot dead by loyalist (pro-British) gunmen in 1992. The protest continued there, with chants of, "What do we want? Civil rights! When do we want them? Now!" and "Disband the RUC," drowning out the sound of the band that led 19 Apprentice Boys in their parade.

In the two and a half hours it took the cops to beat residents off their street, 27 protesters and one international observer suffered injuries, including broken bones and head injuries. Gerard Rice, spokesperson for the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community (LOCC), which called the protest, said, "The police were brutal. It was the worst I've ever seen, but I'm relieved no one in my community is dead." Rice was thrown to the ground while attempting to address the protest when the armored car he was standing on suddenly reversed. He was also kicked by the cops.

The Apprentice Boys parade was the first anti-Catholic, rightist march to go down the Lower Ormeau Road, a small Catholic area in south Belfast, in four years. Pro-British groups carry out thousands of these intimidatory parades every year, reinforcing the anti-Catholic discrimination that is a pillar of maintaining London's rule over Northern Ireland.

The August 14 march had been approved by the Parades Commission, a body set up by the British government, despite the fact that the LOCC had suggested a compromise route that would have allowed the Apprentice Boys to march over the bridge at the bottom of the road, then turn off. Alistair Graham, chairman of the commission, rejected the compromise on the basis that this route did not pass any houses. A local parish priest Anthony Curran,

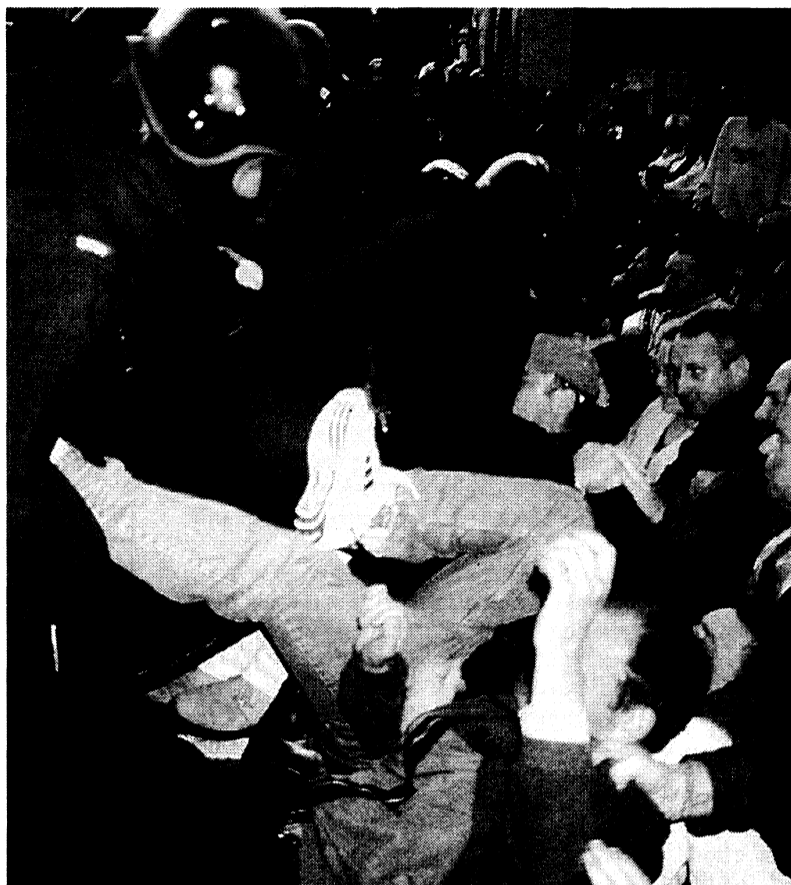
who attended the commission hearings, said, "The clear implication is that the Apprentice Boys had to be permitted to cause offense to someone living in a house close to their march before the commission would consider a concession had been made."

The Apprentice Boys who marched in Belfast were on their way to join the annual Apprentice Boys commemoration in Derry, where 10,000 paraded later on the same day, protected by a heavy presence of RUC and British army troops. This parade was approved by the Parades Commission, while a protest march organized by the Bogside Residents Group (BRG) was blocked by riot cops.

The media had been predicting "Republican-orchestrated violence" in Derry. BRG spokesperson Donncha MacNiallais responded, "The ultimate responsibility for any trouble rests solely and squarely on the shoulders of the RUC and behind that decision to force parades through here and through the Ormeau Road."

RUC forces the same day attacked another protest against an Apprentice Boys march in Lurgan. After sealing off the nationalist Williams Street area — and arresting one local resident for trying to go home — the cops fired plastic bullets at protesters, injuring two.

The decision of the Parades Commission to allow the marches in Belfast and Derry is part of a push by the British government against the nationalist resistance in Ireland. It came at the same time as Marjorie Mowlam, the



Cops attack residents defending Lower Ormeau Road in Northern Ireland

British government's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, is considering claims by pro-British Unionist politicians that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has broken its cease-fire and that therefore the release of IRA prisoners should be halted. Unionists — those who favor the "union" of Northern Ireland with Britain — claim also that Sinn Fein, the party that leads the fight against British rule, should be excluded from the Assembly set up under last year's Good Friday Agreement.

Another report pending is that of the Patten

commission, set up to review the future of the RUC. One possible proposal leaked is to increase the size of the RUC considerably, under the pretext of allowing space for the recruitment of Catholics to the currently 95 percent Protestant force.

On August 19 the RUC followed up their assault on south Belfast residents when nine people were arrested in early morning raids, including Rice and two other members of the LOCC. They were charged with public order offenses.

Rice was singled out for special humiliation, being taken into the street in his underwear and made to dress himself in public. Although he did not take part in the sit-down protest, Rice has been charged with causing disruption and disorderly conduct, on the basis that he led protesters in chanting and singing.

Speaking on behalf of the LOCC, John Gormley said that the RUC's speed in moving against people who took part in a peaceful protest was "in sharp contrast to its complete inactivity in the face of 15 months of violent Orange protests in Portadown." He said the nine who were arrested would be strenuously denying the charges, and that Rice was "only asking for his civil rights."

The determination of broad layers of nationalists like Rice is not lost on the British government. Three days after the arrests in Belfast, the Parades Commission announced it had banned another rightist march, of the Black Preceptory, which was due to go down the Lower Ormeau Road August 28.

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Saskatchewan farmers mobilize in cavalcade to demand immediate relief

BYANNETTE KOURI
AND NED DMYTRYSHYN

REGINA, Saskatchewan — Well over 1,000 farmers from across Saskatchewan and some from Manitoba converged on this provincial capital in a convoy of more than 350 vehicles August 17 to demand government action and immediate relief. Many people gave the thumbs up and "V" for victory sign in support of the farmers as the cavalcade — moving at less than five miles per hour — tied up noon-hour traffic in the heart

of the city. The protesters and their vehicles filled the parking lot in front of the legislature and spilled out on to the neighboring streets. This was the third such action in the last six weeks. Farmers in northern Manitoba rallied the same day, and on August 19 other farmer protests took place in Alberta and southern Manitoba.

Thousands of farmers are facing bankruptcy in Canada with the collapse of grain prices, in the worst agricultural crisis since the depression of the 1930s. According to government statistics, net farm income in Saskatchewan last year averaged Can\$8,500 (Can\$1=US\$0.67) and that farmers were losing Can\$54.38 per seeded acre according to Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food statistics. In Saskatchewan, 1,000 farmers are driven off their land each year.

The August 17 caravan, organized by the Bengough Rally Group, demand an immediate cash injection of Can\$80 per acre to help bail out cash-strapped farmers. Harvey Linnen opened the rally at the steps of the legislature on behalf of the organizers, explaining that the actions and meetings on the farm crisis would continue and everyone should sign up to help. "The wives will keep these rallies going while the harvest is going on," he declared. "The bankers are at our door. [Federal Agricultural Minister] Van Clief is not interested in coming to see us, so we're prepared to go to Ottawa. If Ottawa doesn't come to us we'll go to it. Because no one is prepared to lose the family farm." A contingent of 150 farmers is planning to go to Ottawa at the end of August, and is pressing the provincial government to pick up the tab for airfare. A large train convoy to Ottawa is planned for November, after the harvest.

In 1995 the federal government took away

the Crow's Rate, a transport subsidy, more than doubling farmers' transport costs. Bengough Rally Group leader Lloyd Pletz said, "Not only is Ottawa responsible for slashing the Crow's Rate but the federal government is responsible for deregulating the railways, which meant increased costs and closure of lines, gutting crop insurance programs, and taxing our inputs [seed, fertilizer, fuel, pesticides] to death. They're carrying a war aimed at driving farmers off the land to fatten their financial coffers."

Signs on the vehicles, which included combines, tractors, and a sprayer, graphically illustrated the situation. "If farming is the heartbeat of Canada then we're in cardiac arrest"; "Food comes from farmers, not Safeway"; and "Urban people need farmers, farmers need urban people" were just a few.

To show that farmers don't cause high prices, one graph on the side of a combine illustrated that one bushel of wheat made Can\$29 worth of bread in 1975. Today that same bushel of wheat makes Can\$90 worth of bread, but the farmer gets the same Can\$3 per bushel of wheat as he did in 1975. Other signs indicated that malt barley prices are Can\$2.15 per bushel and that farmers lose more than Can\$11 per acre in production. One bushel of barley produces 333 bottles of beer. Retail stores sell that beer for around Can\$450.

As these reporters participated in the convoy and rally, many farmers explained their frustration with government inaction, low grain prices, cuts in transportation subsidies, and high prices for inputs — seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and fuel — as well as the failure of current insurance programs to cover their losses. "My income is so low that the last two years I haven't paid tax," said Alan

Continued on Page 7

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3

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