

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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'No contract, no work'

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'Our campaign is a voice for fighting workers'

Socialist Workers launch presidential ticket

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—"The Socialist Workers campaign is made up of workers, farmers, and youth who are in the midst of struggles and reach out to every other place where working people are taking a stand," stated SWP presidential candidate James Harris at the launching of the party's national election campaign, held June 25 at Columbia University.

"We are the most realistic campaign. We tell the truth about what is going on in the world. We explain that the root cause of the problems all workers face is capitalism. The socialist campaign will provide class answers to what is confronting working people," continued Harris, "and will explain that we need socialist solutions, and that to achieve this workers and farmers need to make a revolution and take political power."

Joining Harris on the platform was Margaret Trowe, the SWP's candidate for vice president. Both candidates have decades of experience as working-class fighters and internationalists. Harris is a garment worker in Atlanta and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Trowe is a meat packer in Austin, Minnesota, and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. (See candidates biographies on pages 6-7)

The meeting was also the launching of the campaign of Samantha Kern, 21, a national leader of the Young Socialists, for U.S. Senate in New York. Kern pointed to the



Socialist Workers candidate for president James Harris and vice presidential candidate Margaret Trowe announce election campaign at June 25 rally in New York.

growing number of workers on strike here in the financial center of world capitalism—from longshoremen on the picket lines at Domino Sugar to workers at the Museum of Modern Art to janitors in Manhattan fight-

ing for a union.

Kern described her participation in a labor rally 10 days earlier, sponsored by the New York Central Labor Council, against

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Meat packers in St. Paul rebut bosses' antiunion campaign

BY TOM FISHER

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—The bosses at Dakota Premium Foods are stepping up their campaign against the workers there fighting to win union representation in this slaughterhouse in South St. Paul.

Dakota Premium employs a little more than 200 workers, and kills and cuts some 800 head of cattle a week. The big majority are workers born in Mexico or other Latin American countries. There are also some workers who are Black, Chicano, and white. Over the past six months the company has jacked up the speed of the production line to carry through a huge increase in production. This forced march has resulted in numerous on-the-job injuries.

On June 1, workers carried out a sit-down strike against these conditions. That action served as a launching pad for the ongoing fight by the workers to organize themselves into Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. On June 12, some 200 meat packers and their supporters marched from the union hall to the plant gate as part of this campaign.

More than half of the workers have signed cards indicating they want the UFCW in the plant. A union representation election is scheduled for July 21.

Four workers in the kill department quit under pressure from the company June 23 after management cut their wages and in some cases forced them to do jobs that were

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Protesters denounce execution of Gary Graham

BY LEA SHERMAN
AND DAVE FERGUSON

HUNTSVILLE, Texas—Amid outrage by many around the country and internationally, Gary Graham, 36, was executed here June 22 by the government of Texas. Carrying out his vow to "fight like hell" every step of the way, he was strapped down

by several guards and taken by force to the death chamber, where he was killed by an injection of poison.

In his final statement Graham, who had taken the name Shaka Sankofa, affirmed as he had for the last 19 years that he did not kill Bobby Lambert, the charge for which he was sentenced to death. "I'm an inno-

cent Black man that is being murdered.... What is happening here is an outrage," he declared.

Graham said his execution was "nothing more than state-sanctioned murder, state-sanctioned lynching, right here in America, and right here tonight.... They know I'm innocent. They've got the facts to prove it."

Thanking all those who had campaigned for his freedom, he called for a campaign for a moratorium on all executions. "People must come together to stop the systematic killing of poor and innocent Black people," he stated. "Let the world see the barbarity and injustice of what is really happening here."

Graham was sent to death row at the age of 17 on the testimony of a single witness who said she saw him shoot Lambert through her car windshield from about 30 feet away in a dimly lit grocery store parking lot. Prosecutors never produced any physical evidence linking him to the case. Graham's attorneys cited evidence that he did not have adequate legal representation at his trial. There are eyewitnesses, workers at the grocery store, who say the gunman was not Graham but a much shorter man; these witnesses were never called during the trial.

Supporters, family, and friends as well as opponents of the death penalty began gathering early outside the Huntsville prison, demonstrating to demand a reprieve for Graham and awaiting the decision of the

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Militant/Lea Sherman

June 22 rally outside Huntsville, Texas, prison against execution of Gary Graham. "I am an innocent Black man that is being murdered," he declared in his final statement.

Cuban six-year-old returns to Havana

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Elián González, his father Juan Miguel González, and immediate family returned home to Cuba June 28, hours after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a final appeal by distant relatives in Miami who sought to keep the Cuban six-year-old in the United States. An injunction from the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals barring his removal from the United States expired that afternoon.

Cubans across the island expressed their elation over the success of their seven-month-long campaign to gain the return of the boy to Cuba.

The Supreme Court issued a brief order rejecting the appeal filed by the Miami relatives and a separate emergency request aimed at postponing the child's departure. The emergency request was filed with Supreme Court judge Anthony Kennedy, who referred it to the full court. The order read in its entirety, "The application for stay presented to Justice Kennedy and by him referred to the court is denied. The petition for a writ of certiorari [the appeal] is denied."

On June 1, a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta had re-

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Miners in Australia strike against extended workday — page 4

Fiji farmer speaks on fight against rightist coup, military takeover

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—In Fiji, the sugarcane harvest usually runs from June through November. But in many parts of the country, small farmers, both indigenous Fijian and of Indian descent, refused to harvest their crop in protest against the May 19 right-wing coup by businessman George Speight and the subsequent May 29 military takeover. About one-third of Fiji's export revenue comes from sugar products.

Speight and his gunmen took Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and other politicians in the Fiji Labour Party-led government hostage in Parliament. A month and a half after the crisis began, Chaudhry and 26 others were still being held as Speight and the military continue to jockey for position on small questions while agreeing on the big ones, especially on the overthrow of the government.

Mohan Singh, 60, has worked his land his entire life. He is a supporter of the Labour Party, Fiji's only nonracial party, which was founded in 1985. In a June 18 phone interview from his farm, he explained that in 1987 he was detained and questioned by police for his outspoken opposition to the overthrow of the first Labour Party-led government, barely one month after it came to power.

Singh, whose family came from Punjab, India, 60 to 70 years ago, was the first to be born in Fiji. The farm is between Ba and Tavua in the Indo-Fijian village of Tagitagi on the northern coast of Viti Levu, Fiji's main island.

Most Fijian farmers, whether of Indian or indigenous descent, are tenants on long-term leases. Some 82 percent of the land is controlled by the Native Lands Trust Board, which in turn is controlled by and administered in the interests of the tiny number of wealthy chiefs who sit on the Great Council of Chiefs. Many indigenous Fijian farmers know the board doesn't represent their interests, "but the bulk of them won't say so openly," he said.

Singh is unusual among small-to-medium

Fijian farmers because he owns 12 acres of freehold land. Small farmers lease anywhere from 5 to 10 acres. Most Indo-Fijian farmers are descended from indentured laborers who were brought to Fiji from India from 1879 to 1916 by the British colonial administration to work for Australian sugar giant CSR in segregated, near-slavery conditions.

Many farmers work as cane cutters

Many producers are too impoverished to survive off the sale of their cane at harvest time, so many also work as cane cutters in gangs organized by foremen known as sardars. The gangs move from farm to farm cutting the cane with machetes and loading it on trucks that take it to the processing mills. There are three mills on Viti Levu and one on the island of Vanua Levu.

A member of the National Farmers Union, which counts both indigenous and Indo-Fijian farmers as members, Singh has "tried to convince people not to harvest." He summed up the initial view of many in the area as "Release the hostages and then we will cut cane." Many see the release of Chaudhry, who has an image as an uncompromising leader, as crucial to their ability to resist in a sustained and organized way.

The army presence is highly visible in the western part of Viti Levu—where opposition to both Speight's coup and the military government is widespread—and is "much heavier than in 1987, with roadblocks and checkpoints everywhere," Singh said. This repression has effectively intimidated many indigenous and Indo-Fijians from participating in protests planned for early June in the village of Veiseisei and the town of Lautoka.

"If it were possible, we would have gone to [the capital] Suva to protest," he said. Calling it a "campaign of intimidation," Singh angrily explained, "The military is obviously working with Speight."

"The people are scared," he said, "They know Chaudhry was beaten, [trade union leader] Felix Anthony was detained and beaten, and NFU leaders have been locked



Militant/Doug Cooper

May 31 demonstration in Canberra, Australia, of Fijians and supporters against overthrow of Labour Party-led government. Farmers in Fiji waged a harvest boycott to protest May 19 rightist coup and subsequent military takeover.

up and beaten too."

Singh described other pressure and intimidation to end the harvest boycott in the area around Ba, known as a stronghold of the Labour Party. Agents, known as *columbars*, of the government-owned Fiji Sugar Corporation are visiting farmers in their homes and threatening people with dire consequences if they don't begin harvesting, he said. And many sardars are telling their labor gangs they will lose their bonuses if they don't start cutting.

Intimidation against farmers

He noted widespread stories from other parts of Fiji of people being burned out of their homes and women being raped by thugs. "Nothing like that is happening in this area," he said. But, he worried, "People in [nearby indigenous Fijian] Vadravadra village falk nicely now but I don't expect it will last. Until recently, I didn't feel my neighbors would find common ground with Speight."

Fluent in both the Fijian and Fiji Hindi languages, Singh noted that the Fijian-language radio has ominously been telling of the 1970s expulsion of all ethnic Indians from Uganda by the Idi Amin regime. As in Fiji, many had lived there for generations.

All these pressures had led the majority of farmers in the area to acquiesce to beginning the harvest on June 16, he noted with dismay. The Ba sugar mill was now working, but was the only one of the country's four mills doing so, he said.

Attitudes on whether to maintain the harvest boycott cut across party allegiances. For example, Jagnath Sami, a prominent cane farmer and a leader of the Fiji Cane Growers Association who stood unsuccessfully for the National Federation Party (NFP) in the 1999 election, has opposed harvesting,

Singh explained. The NFP, which before the rise of the nonracial Labour Party traditionally claimed the allegiance of most Indo-Fijians across classes, did not win a single seat.

As for the overall situation, Singh noted that in the towns many shops were open, teachers were reporting for work even if no students had returned to classrooms, and "the Fiji Trades Union Federation has not put on a general stoppage" because of fears for the safety of the hostages. "So what can farmers do by ourselves? We are carrying the burden," he said.

Asked about the record of the now-deposed Labour-led government, Singh explained: "It was the best of all governments. Prices we received for our cane were at an all-time high. The Chaudhry government forgave \$F27 million [\$US12.4 million] in [emergency drought assistance] loans when it came into office. This was like a great burden being lifted" off small farmers, he said. Fertilizer prices came down too. Most of all, government dealings were "transparent," unlike the previous government of Sitiveni Rabuka, where corruption was rampant.

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

THE MILITANT

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Striking miners: 'No contract, no work'

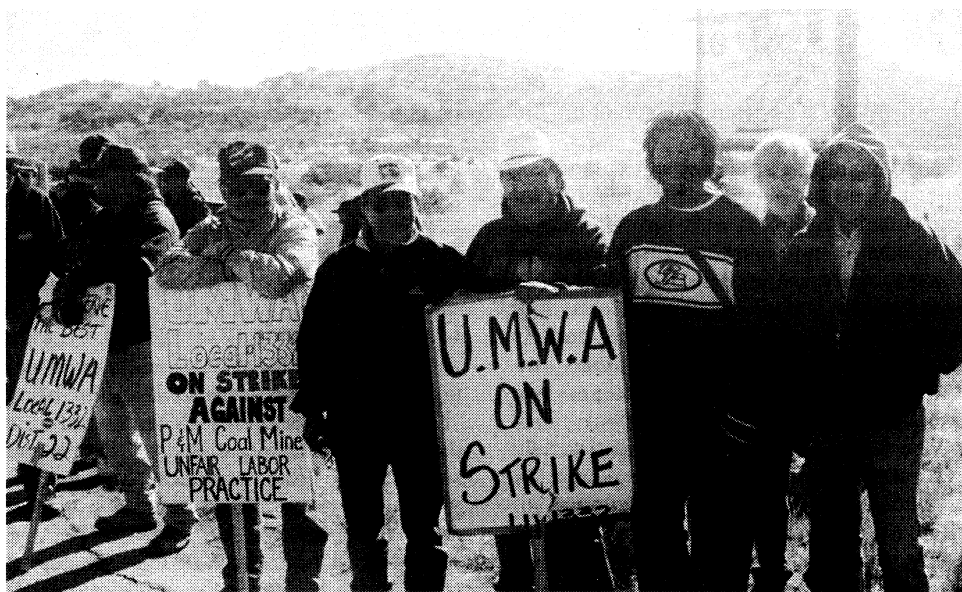
BY JACK PARKER

TSE BONITO, New Mexico—"We are just getting started," United Mine Workers Local 1332 president Lawrence Oliver told the *Militant* here June 26. Oliver was describing the current stage of the union's strike at the McKinley mine against Pittsburg and Midway (P&M) Coal Co. Local 1332 members have been out since May 15.

That evening 150 workers and their relatives joined the picket line to protest against three miners who broke ranks to go to work in the morning. "These are the only workers who crossed so far," Oliver said. "The same three guys scabed when we struck in 1987."

Spirits on the picket line were high. The scabs came out escorted by eight company vehicles and at least that number of Navajo Nation police cars were parked at the gate. The strikers chanted, "No contract, no work" and "Our land, our jobs, the union is here to stay," expressing the fact that the mine is on the Navajo reservation. More than 90 percent of the workforce is Native American.

The union won a small but important victory the evening of June 26 when the Navajo police were forced to back down, agreeing to let 10 workers picket directly in front of the north gate of the mine. A temporary



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Coal miners and their supporters picket Pittsburg and Midway mine near Gallup, New Mexico, in May. Some 150 workers rallied on the picket line June 26.

restraining order limiting pickets is now in place because a judge ruled in the company's favor even though there have been no reported incidents of union violence in the strike. But the company found it impossible

to further restrict the union's democratic rights because of the number and the determination of the protesting unionists.

At a rally held earlier in the day, UMWA international president Cecil Roberts

pledged the International's full backing of the McKinley strikers. Roberts said letters asking for strike support have already been sent out to all unions affiliated to the AFL-CIO and he promised to go before the UMWA Executive Board seeking an increase in the \$150 weekly benefits that the McKinley strikers receive. Roberts also stated that if the strike continues, the union will broaden its appeal for support by targeting Chevron and its corporate offices in San Francisco. Chevron is the company that owns P&M.

At the rally, Phyllis Shanklin, the wife of a miner, said relatives of strikers decided to organize a women's auxiliary. She was elected to head it. A women's auxiliary was also active in the 1987 strike.

"When corporations come here nonunion, they just come to make money and get out," said John Wilson Jr., a Diné (Navajo) striker who has worked at the McKinley mine for two years. Like some other strikers, he previously worked at the company's Black Mesa mine in Kayenta, Arizona, also in the Navajo Nation.

"The more organized labor comes in, the more protection our people will have," Wilson stated. "A lot of our people worked for uranium mines. They didn't have safety equipment. A lot of miners were exposed to uranium and died from radiation poisoning. Our tribal leaders had a hard time getting compensation for ex-miners. A lot of abandoned mines continue to harm our people because reclamation has not been done to clean it up. The union fights for a lot of benefits—not just for workers but the whole Navajo tribe."

Unionists mark Ludlow massacre, today's battles

BY LESLIE DORK AND JACK PARKER

LUDLOW, Colorado—About 200 unionists and supporters gathered June 25 at the site of the 1914 Ludlow mine massacre. The commemoration is held annually to remember those who were martyred during battles to organize the Western coalfields.

At least half the participants came from Pueblo, Colorado, where 1,000 workers from United Steelworkers of America (USWA) locals 2102 and 3267 have been involved in a fight with Oregon Steel to get their jobs back for the past 33 months. Also present were miners from southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, many of whom have faced layoffs and mine closings in the last few years.

On the morning of April 20, 1914, Colorado National Guard troops opened fire on a tent colony of 1,200 striking coal miners and their families at Ludlow. The miners were striking against the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The shooting continued through the day and evening. The tents the miners lived in were set afire. When the smoke cleared, 18 to 20 people were found dead, including two women and 11 children. Most had suffocated when the tents collapsed during the fire.

Today the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) maintains the Ludlow site as a monument to the struggle of organized labor in the United States. An archeological dig is now under way at the site to help get out the facts about the conditions working people in the area faced before, during, and after the Ludlow massacre.

Ernie Hernandez, president of USWA Local 2102, reminded the crowd that the struggle continues today in Pueblo. Several speakers spoke of the long-standing bonds of struggle between the USWA and UMWA.

International UMWA president Cecil Roberts called on working people to support the miners on strike at the McKinley mine outside Window Rock, Arizona, and the Kemmerer mine in western Wyoming. He said Chevron, the owner of both mines, is "not big enough to beat the UMWA."

A collection after the rally netted almost \$500 for the striking miners of locals 1332 at McKinley and 1307 at Kemmerer. Workers gathered at tables to enjoy a barbecue and discuss common issues they face in their union battles. Much of the informal discussion centered on the labor battle in Pueblo. Strikers and their relatives exchanged in-

formation about their solidarity-building trips, especially to the company's headquarters in Portland, Oregon, to promote the union's corporate campaign.

They pointed to the \$5.5 million the company is losing on the scab-run plant, the inferior steel being produced, and the unsafe working conditions.

Since the dispute began, three workers have been killed on the job. There had not been a death in the plant for more than 20 years when it was unionized.

Strikers and other workers interviewed by the *Militant* were unanimous in their conviction that they will win.

Rally demands USDA fulfill accord with farmers

BY MARY MARTIN AND JAMES HARRIS

WASHINGTON—Some 80 farmers and supporters from 12 states held a rally and march here June 19 to protest the refusal by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement the terms of an April 1999 settlement won by farmers who sued the government for decades of racist and discriminatory practices. They chanted, "No farmers, no food; no justice, no peace!" as they rallied at the USDA and then marched to the U.S. Capitol grounds.

The protest was called by the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), whose members are among thousands of farmers who were all but promised a \$50,000 cash payment, credit, and other relief measures as an out-of-court settlement to their class-action suit, *Pigford v. Glickman*.

While the cash award was a paltry sum compared to what many farmers had lost, the ruling clearly upheld the farmers' claims

of discriminatory acts by USDA officials, including delays and denials of loans.

These practices, as well as the normal workings of the capitalist economy, have resulted in thousands of family farmers being pushed off the land in recent decades.

Although the farmers won the class-action lawsuit, some 40 percent of the individual plaintiffs have subsequently been denied compensation on grounds that their individual claims were inadequate.

In a further assault, the FBI has sent agents to harass farmers under the pretext of investigating "fraudulent claims" that have supposedly been filed.

Charmin Lewis, 24, a cattle farmer from Oklahoma, said, "Both sides of my family farmed, but my mother's side could not continue farming. I'm here because I don't want to see that happen to me. I want something to be done so I can continue to farm. Some people in my family have received notice of settlement awards. The same exact rea-

sons given for approving them are given as reasons to deny others' claims."

The farmers held signs that declared, "Give us our money," "KKK took their hoods off and joined the USDA!" "Vote bipartisan for justice," and "Congressman Watts, thank you!" The last two signs referred to the search by some of the farmers for support among Democratic and Republican politicians.

On May 8 Democratic members of Congress, led by the Congressional Black Caucus, voted down a resolution calling for expediting settlement for those farmers covered by the April 1999 consent decree. At the rally, Republican Congressman J.C. Watts from Oklahoma told the farmers he would reintroduce the bill and call for a bipartisan effort to pass it.

A busload of farmers from Oklahoma were present to join the protest as well as show support to Watts. Some indicated they supported him in his bid for reelection. Republican Congressman Jay Dickey of Arkansas, who had introduced the original resolution, also addressed the rally.

The protests in the U.S. capital that the BFAA has organized several times this year since the consent decree was signed have attracted other family farmers who have been hit by the double whammy of higher prices for fuel, feed, and fertilizer, and lower prices for farm products. Among the demonstrators were two dairy farmers from Wisconsin, who have been affected by the drop in milk prices.

This rally joined forces for a while with those rallying at a Juneteenth celebration on the Capitol steps. June 19, known as Juneteenth, is a commemoration of the date in 1865 at the end of the Civil War when Blacks in Texas learned of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, which declared the abolition of slavery. Organizers of the Juneteenth rally in Washington, a group called the Self-Determination Committee, called on the U.S. government to pay reparations to the descendants of African slaves in the United States.

BFAA president Gary Grant announced that farmers will return to Washington in July to continue their protests.

From Pathfinder

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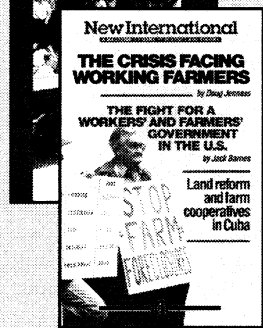
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YS leader speaks in Sweden, UK, and Iceland

The Young Socialists is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information write to the Young Socialists, P.O. Box 33, Times Square Post Office, New York, NY 10108, or call (212) 695-1809, or send an e-mail to: young_socialists@hotmail.com

BY JASON ALESSIO

NEW YORK—The Tehran International Book Fair, held May 3–13, was an important one for Pathfinder Press. This book fair, a by-product of the 1979 revolution, has been a way for a wide cross-section of people in Iran to have access to a broad range of books from that country and internationally. One of the largest in the world, it draws hundreds of thousands of people every year.

Pathfinder was present at this year's fair, bringing the history and lessons of the international working-class movement and the fight for socialism today. These books met an enthusiastic response by many who attended and were searching for clear political answers from a working-class point of view.

Following the book fair, the Young Socialists and the Communist Leagues in Stockholm, Sweden; London and Manchester in the United Kingdom; and Reykjavik, Iceland, organized Militant Labor Forums to present a report on the book fair and what it says about politics today.

The speakers discussed the gains made by Iranian working people through their revolution, which overthrew the U.S.-backed monarchy, as well as the current political situation in Iran and the experiences and political discussions at the Tehran Book Fair this year.

In Sweden, the Young Socialists organized a meeting with political activists among the Sami, a nomadic people who live by herding reindeer. The Sami people have lived in areas in northern Sweden for more than 1,000 years, yet the government claims they have no land rights because they lack state-authorized documents that indicate private property rights.

During my stay in Stockholm, the Sami had occupied a small section of the Parliament gardens in protest. They said they had learned how to occupy the land from the real thieves, the Swedish government. Sweden's rulers have framed up two Sami leaders on false charges of slaughtering bears and bombing a power grid.

The Young Socialists in Stockholm also took part in a protest against police brutality. In addition, they organized teams to a local high school, where we were able to have a Pathfinder book table right outside the cafeteria during lunch hours. Here we met a few youth who were interested in Che Guevara and Malcolm X. One of them explained that he had just given a classroom presentation on Malcolm X and had found the book *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, which he bought at the last book table, very useful.

In London, the Young Socialists hosted a "Meet the YS" meeting where two youth interested in joining the revolutionary youth group had a chance to discuss the aims, principles, policies, and the current political campaigns of the organization. We also discussed going to the July 27–29 Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, participating in summer school classes currently under way in the United States, and starting up a class series in London on the basics of socialism.

We were able to get out on teams to two local colleges where we sold the *Militant* and invited interested people to come to the

forum titled "The Iranian Revolution Today."

In Manchester, we carried out a plant-gate sale at Electrium, an electronics plant. Waiting outside the plant with the *Militant* as people came in to work, we discovered that workers there are on a rotating strike and each day one section of the workforce does not report to work. Many of the workers stopped to talk with members of the Communist League about the strike and two bought the *Militant*.

The forum on the Iranian revolution held in Reykjavik was attended by 18 people, 11 of them youth. The ensuing discussion included a number of questions about U.S. politics, especially on the YS summer perspective of conducting classes and campaigning for the socialist candidates.

Two youths expressed interest in attending the Active Workers Conference in late July after discussing how it is an opportunity to link up with communist fighters from around the world and help concretize a world perspective of working-class politics.

Class in Reykjavik draws youth

The next day there was a class on a section in *Capitalism's World Disorder* titled "Lifetime education for all" followed by a dinner and social organized by the YS and supporters of the communist movement, which was attended by some 15 people. After the meal, the YS had a raffle that kicked off a fund drive to raise money to cover travel expenses for youth interested

in attending summer school classes in the United States and the Active Workers Conference in Ohio. We raised around \$100.

In every country visited, the Young Socialists is working to reach out to fighters by orienting to the working-class resistance, from getting industrial jobs for the summer to going on teams to distribute the *Militant* and Pathfinder literature where struggles are breaking out. They are also working to get themselves and other interested youth to the Active Workers Conference, and to participate in one of the summer school centers, which are located in New York City, Chicago, and the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

Jason Alessio is a member of the Young Socialists National Executive Committee.

Miners in Australia strike against 10-hour day

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Some 20,000 miners, members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), walked off the job for 24 hours on June 19, bringing coal mines in Queensland and New South Wales to a standstill.

The strike was in protest against a recent decision by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) that allows employers to force miners to work 10-hour shifts underground and opens the way for the introduction of 12-hour shifts. The decision also carried out the bosses' demand for a 10-year freeze on wages under the Miners Award. Awards are legal documents established by arbitration that set uniform minimum pay and working conditions in a particular industry.

On June 16 about 400 miners, construction workers, and other unionists marched through Sydney to the AIRC to protest the decision. The majority of miners came down in buses from the northern district branches, from the Hunter Valley, and around the Newcastle area, north of Sydney. A group of miners also flew in from Queensland to attend the rally. With their T-shirts and placards on the march, the miners denounced the attacks on safe working conditions through the extension of hours. They chanted slogans condemning both the AIRC and Peter Reith, the federal minister of workplace relations, who has led the attacks on unions here.

Miners were also protesting a June 15 High Court decision to reject a claim by the CFMEU that the federal government had breached the Constitution when it ordered the AIRC to strip industrial awards to just 20 conditions. In a split decision, the High Court ruled that the government had acted lawfully in 1996 when it changed the workplace relations legislation to ban rules about occupational health and safety, protective clothing, and a range of other issues from being covered by awards.

This decision overturns 100 years of constitutional law under which arbitration pre-



Militant/Doug Cooper

Miners and other unionists march June 16 in Sydney, Australia, against government commission's decision to extend workday. Days later, 20,000 miners held 24-hour strike.

vented the government from directly setting wages and conditions. Dissenting High Court Justice Michael Kirby said, "This decision involves a radical enlargement of the federal legislative power under...the constitution."

A week earlier, on June 5, some 15,000 construction workers, metal workers, and other union members marched on the Australian Democrats office in Sydney. Chanting "Hands off the workers" and "Just say No!" workers called on the Democrats to block Reith's latest round of antiunion legislation, the Workplace Relations Amendment Bill.

This bill was intended to restrict the ability of workers to take action collectively through industry-wide union campaigns. The Australian Democrats rejected the bill

in the Senate on June 6.

Both marches were led off by locked-out workers from Joy Mining Machinery, a heavy mining equipment manufacturer. These workers have been organizing picket lines at the Moss Vale plant south of Sydney for three months.

Tony Maher, president of the CFMEU's mining division, said the union would continue to fight to overturn the High Court ruling. "We will defend our conditions on the job and we will intensify our political campaign to reverse these rotten laws which rob workers of their rights and conditions and victimize many of those who are prepared to fight for them."

Linda Harris is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia.

'Pennies don't cut it,' say St. Louis Machinists

BY ANGY FOLKES AND ALYSON KENNEDY

ST. LOUIS—Some 250 members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1345 went on strike here June 1 against Allied Healthcare Products Inc. Of the approximately 200 workers voting, 148 cast a ballot against the company's contract proposal.

Workers took a \$2-an-hour pay cut in 1988 and three years ago they struck because the company threatened to freeze wages.

They went back to work for about what they're being offered now. Workers on the picket line told the *Militant* they want the \$2 back and that pennies just don't cut it.

Some 160 of the striking workers make \$8.35 an hour. The company is offering a raise of 30 cents the first year, 35 cents the second, and 35 cents the third—barely a \$1 increase over three years—and proposes to add \$20 to the \$70 monthly premiums workers pay for health insurance for a family.

"I wasn't happy with the proposal to increase the medical insurance and the company being able to change providers after

one year and being able to increase the insurance after one year," said Modess Echeazu, an assembler tester and member of IAM Local 1345 who has worked in the plant more than 10 years.

"It is an outrage that the company is proposing that if workers go out on sick leave for 26 weeks and then come back to work the company won't pay them benefits if they get sick and have to go out again before three months. I have a sister and a brother with cancer and a heart condition."

The company is refusing to upgrade classifications. The union is demanding that molding machine operators be paid machine operator wages of \$10.55 an hour, instead of assembly pay of \$8.35 an hour.

The contract proposal also states that if workers are summoned to court as a witness or a petitioner, they will not be charged an attendance point, but if they are the defendant the absence will count against their record.

Into the third week of the strike, the unionists remain confident and determined to stay out for as long as it takes.

"My concern is the health and safety of

the people who use these medical devices," said Stephanie Hardin. She has worked in the plant for two years and works on the oxygen regulator assembly line in the Patient Care Department.

"This is no ordinary strike. It affects peoples lives. It's a life-and-death issue. One of the reasons I voted no is that the department I work in has been working mandatory overtime since the first of the year: 10–12 hours, six days a week."

The plant makes hospital and health-care equipment and supplies such as oxygen regulators, calibration analyzers, automatic ventilators, and backboards for ambulances. Strikers said plant managers, company personnel, and their relatives are working in the plant trying to crank out some products, in violation of regulations that require trained and certified employees.

Angy Folkes is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1345 on strike against Allied Healthcare Products. Alyson Kennedy is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in St. Louis.

Upcoming sessions of YS summer school

July 2–8

Class 5 *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*

"Leading the party into industry," pp. 127–166

Class 6 *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*

New International no. 11, Section II, "U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War," pp. 109–124

Socialists launch presidential ticket

Continued from front page
the city's antiunion "rat" employers. It attracted a number of workers from around the city involved in fights for union rights and dignity, who were reaching out for support and extending solidarity to each others' battles, she explained. Nearly a dozen giant inflatable rats, adorned with posters of targeted employers, were on display at the Union Square rally site. "These are definitely the most popular rats in the city," observed Kern.

Four years ago Kern was won to the Young Socialists after attending a meeting for socialist candidates. She announced that the YS has endorsed the SWP campaign and will be in the forefront of organizing ongoing support for the socialist candidates nationwide. Young activists will be joining up with other campaign supporters to spearhead petitioning brigades to place the party on the ballot here in New York in July and August and a number of other states around the country.

In addition, the YS is conducting weekly summer school classes to study what a number of speakers referred to as the "essentials" of the campaign, which includes *Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and *New International no.*

Workers born in other lands—from Latin America, Asia, and Africa—who now live and work in the United States bring with them invaluable class-struggle experiences that help to strengthen the fighting capacity of the entire labor movement. In Minneapolis, among those helping to lead the strikes at a number of area hotels are workers born in Somalia who travel in flying picket squads from hotel to hotel trying to stop cars from entering.

"Many workers born in this country are finding to their immense satisfaction that the very people they were told were stealing their jobs and driving down their wages," said Trowe, "are taking the moral high ground and are among the leaders in the fight for dignity, for the right to organize a union, and to make them real fighting organizations."

The struggles today are a result of the relentless drive by the bosses against working people, Trowe said. They have increased the intensity of labor, lengthened the work day, set aside safety and work rules, and driven down pay in industry after industry. The increasing competition between the imperialist powers means that their very successes drive the capitalists to push even harder. "They are threatening our lives and



Militant/Aaron Armstrong
Samantha Kern launches her candidacy for U.S. Senate in New York. "Our campaign is reaching out to workers and young fighters," said Young Socialists leader at rally.

Reporting from the ongoing United Mine Workers of America picket lines out West in Kemmerer, Wyoming, and Gallup, New Mexico, Jan Miller, a coal miner from Ft. Collins, Colorado, said these strikes, which have been going on for more than a month, remain solid. "The socialist campaign will be quite attractive to a number of these miners," stated Miller, who reported that through the course of their experiences these UMW members are realizing that their fight is tied to the struggles of other workers around the world.

Both Swanson and Miller reported on the interest in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* among these fighting workers, as well as Pathfinder books that take up central questions in world politics today. A socialist perspective gets a serious hearing among a layer of these workers engaged in struggle, Miller said.

Rolande Girard, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami/Dade County, described how Miami is like the rest of the country where working people are involved in stepped-up resistance to the bosses' attacks on conditions on the job and democratic rights. Workers at RC Aluminum, many of whom are Cuban-American, are conducting a fight for union recognition, for example. Socialists campaigners, noted Girard, are also finding a more open response in south Florida among these workers and others throughout Florida to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder literature.

To rousing applause Girard announced that because of a recent change in the electoral law, the Socialist Workers presidential ticket will be on the ballot in Florida for the first time.

Girard in turn introduced Argiris Malapanis, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida. Malapanis, who works at a nonunion garment shop, read a message of solidarity 13 workers there sent to the meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, fighting for union recognition. "Your fight encourages us to do the same here. We wish you victory," the letter stated in part. "Many workers sense we're on the verge of organizing drives that will pose questions for workers that we haven't seen in a long time," said Malapanis.

The SWP senatorial candidate from Texas, Lea Sherman, works as a meat packer in an unorganized plant. She spoke about the variety of activities in which campaign supporters there have been participating. These include a speaking engagement with a neighborhood group in a *colonia* on the outskirts of Rosenberg, Texas, where residents are fighting for clean drinking water; setting up a Pathfinder literature table at a statewide immigrants rights rally in Dallas; and joining the protests outside the prison in Huntsville against the execution of Gary Graham.

Elvidio Mejia, who works in the Pathfinder printshop in New York and is a leader of the garment district branch of the SWP in the city, pointed to the invaluable role of Pathfinder books in getting the lessons of the working class movement into the hands of fighters resisting the bosses' offensive today. He described how every Thursday afternoon immediately after the *Militant* is printed, socialist campaign supporters are out on the streets of New York with the new issue of the campaign newspaper and Pathfinder literature, discussing with workers and students the big political issues of the

day, as well as participating in labor protest actions.

Attractive photographs illustrating the labor resistance from striking coal miners in the West to a workers' general strike in South Africa were on display outside the meeting hall. A lively reception with a delicious food spread organized by supporters of the SWP before and after the event became a place for nonstop political discussion.

Pointing to the rank-and-file resistance by workers defending unions or fighting for union organization, and struggles by working farmers, presidential candidate Harris stated, "The class struggle in the United States is heating up." The U.S. ruling class "is weaker and the working class is beginning to get stronger."

Why rulers back death penalty

The socialist campaign, emphasized Harris, will talk about what issues such as the death penalty are all about. "In addition to getting out and building demonstrations against it and their barbaric state-sponsored executions, we explain what it is," he said.

"The death penalty is an instrument of class terror," continued Harris. "It is meant to be unjust and arbitrary. That is how the capitalist system works. The death penalty is carried out by the police on the streets every day and through the prison system in every single state. It has nothing to do with fighting crime. Its only purpose is to instill a sense of terror in the working class. To make you think twice before you strike or join a protest against cop brutality. It is meant to keep you from fighting. It is part of the assault on democratic rights and the moves already made by the Clinton administration to set up a military command over the United States."

Turning to the discussion in the capitalist media about social security, Harris cautioned the audience to be suspicious when capitalist politicians—who are not the most farsighted of individuals—all of a sudden start talking about how the social security fund may run out of money in 30 years.

"The truth of the matter is that a lot of surplus value is produced by working people and they don't want us to have it," commented Harris. "Social security was won by workers and farmers through social struggles. We should reject ideas that make us look at it as an individual retirement package. We fight against the idea that there are individual solutions to what workers

Continued on Page 10



Militant/Aaron Armstrong
Audience at June 25 socialist campaign launch, which also featured SWP candidates from several states and other fighters involved in labor struggles across the country.

11 with the feature article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." Kern said the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* will be one of the main ways the socialist candidates and their supporters introduce the campaign to working people and young fighters.

'Gravediggers of capitalism'

"The brutalization of workers by the bosses goes hand in hand with the attack on social security, the scapegoating of Blacks, immigrants, women, and welfare recipients," stated vice presidential candidate Trowe. "It goes hand in hand with the increase of police brutality, use of the death penalty, and U.S. military aggression against our brothers and sisters in other countries."

"But that is not the end of the story," continued the socialist candidate. "The brutal drive of the capitalists for profit is producing something in addition to profit. It is producing the gravediggers of capitalism, right there in the plants, in the mills, in the mines, and in the streets of New York and other cities."

Trowe pointed to the recent sit-down strike at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the ongoing fight by workers there for a union as part of the "cumulative impact of a series of struggles in Minnesota and elsewhere." She described the reaction of one young woman who works a knife job at the plant. "We didn't actually intend to have a strike," she told Trowe. "We just wanted to sit in the cafeteria until the boss slowed the line down."

Both candidates hailed the internationalization of the working class in the United States, with immigrant workers a growing component of the American working class.

limbs," Trowe said. "Workers are saying, 'Enough!'"

Trowe emphasized the fact that socialist workers who are now running as candidates, have been part of struggles across the country, putting forward a fighting working-class revolutionary alternative to the parties that uphold and defend capitalism. "We'll keep doing the same after the election as well," stated Trowe. "But we don't let the capitalists monopolize the electoral arena. We run for office as the tribune of the people, as the voice of the fighting, revolutionary vanguard of workers and farmers."

Meat packers fight for a union

This was a striking feature of the meeting. A large number of the participants were union fighters deeply involved in the resistance of workers and farmers, among them Socialist Workers candidates from around the country. They represented several generations of activists with experience in a wide diversity of struggles.

Joe Swanson, a union fighter and socialist from Des Moines, Iowa, spoke about how the resistance we see among working people in the Minnesota area is spreading. He reported that five days earlier two-thirds of the sanitation workers employed at the IBP packinghouse in Perry, Iowa, also sat down in the cafeteria and said that they were not going to work if they do not get a pay raise. He pointed to the attractive displays prepared by campaign volunteers that highlight through photographs important struggles by workers and farmers. "A good chant for this campaign is that of the St. Paul meat packers, Si se puede! (Yes we can)," he said, leading the chant which was repeated several times during the meeting.

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Join with the socialist campaign in 2000

Harris and Trowe are working-class fighters and internationalists

James Harris

Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. President

James Harris is a unionist and member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. He is a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, currently on a leave of absence from his job in the Atlanta area at Marshall's Distribution Center in order to campaign.

He has been active in working together with co-workers to strengthen his union in "right-to-work-for-less" Georgia, and in building solidarity with struggles of workers and farmers across the United States and internationally.

Harris, 52, was the party's candidate for U.S. president in 1996. He has brought a revolutionary socialist perspective to the fight for Black rights, in mobilizations against imperialism and its wars, and in working-class politics for more than three decades.

He has been a participant in activities to back the growing resistance of working people to the increasingly harsh conditions of life and labor being imposed by the bosses and their government. He has joined labor battles and picket lines, built participation in strikes and social protest struggles, and helped to spread information on these struggles by distributing the *Militant* newspaper and the monthly Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Harris has joined picket lines of Teamster members on strike in a fight for union recognition at Overnite Transportation Co., which has a large terminal in Atlanta. When textile workers in Kannapolis, North Carolina, stood up and voted a union in, Harris helped get out the word about this important labor victory—the largest union-organizing drive won in the South in decades.

He has been active in a struggle against police brutality in Valdosta, Georgia, and has participated in activity with the People's Tribunal, an organization fighting to win justice for the family of Willie James Williams, killed while in police custody in that southern Georgia town. He has spoken out to demand an end to the anti-worker and racist death penalty. Earlier this year Harris joined tens of thousands who took to the streets and held meetings to defend affirmative action in Florida against attacks by the state government, and has participated in demonstrations, forums, and rallies against attempts to roll back affirmative ac-

tion in Georgia.

Through these struggles, Harris has promoted an alliance of workers and farmers, reaching out to farmers defending their land and livelihoods in face of the tightening squeeze that is forcing thousands off their farms. He has demonstrated on numerous occasions with farmers in Washington, D.C., in protests against the U.S. government's continued widespread racist discrimination against farmers who are Black. Harris took part in the March 21 Rally for Rural America in Washington, D.C., which demanded relief from the vise of high operating costs and record-low prices farmers get from distributors and processors, many of them monopoly-owned, for their crops and livestock.

Supporter of Cuba's socialist revolution

In February Harris was part of a delegation to revolutionary Cuba that included six farmers and two members of the Atlanta Network on Cuba (ANOC). The delegation was invited by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) of Cuba. The "Farmer to Farmer" tour, organized by the ANOC, enabled U.S.-born farmers to meet fellow rural producers in Cuba and learn about the advances they have made as a result of the workers and farmers revolution in that Latin American nation. The farmers from the United States were also able to tell the Cuban people about their fight to keep and work their land. The visit helped to advance unity between farmers in the United States and in Cuba.

In April 1996 Harris was part of a delegation of workers from the United States who traveled to Cuba to participate in the national convention of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country's trade union federation. The delegation also visited work sites, talked with fellow unionists in Cuba, and saw firsthand the fighting spirit of workers in Cuba in the face of Washington's 40-year-long trade embargo and other attacks.

Harris lived and worked in Detroit in the early 1990s and was a member of the United Auto Workers there. He helped broaden solidarity with labor struggles such as those of workers on strike against Caterpillar. Harris spent several months in Peoria, Illinois, helping establish a branch of the Socialist Workers Party there in response to the battle by members of the UAW against Caterpillar.

Born into a working-class family in Cleveland, Harris first became politically active in the civil rights movement. With growing protests against racist discrimination, tens of thousands of Black families in

Harris, continued on next page



James Harris

Militant/Aaron Armstrong



Margaret Trowe

Militant/Carole Lesnick

Margaret Trowe

Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Vice President

Margaret Trowe is a meat packer at Quality Pork Processors, the slaughterhouse for Hormel Foods, organized by Local 9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) in Austin, Minnesota. Along with her co-workers she has most recently been actively winning support for the organizing drive by packinghouse workers at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, who are fighting to gain union recognition, and for striking hotel workers in the Twin Cities area. The St. Paul packinghouse workers staged a seven-hour sit-down strike to demand a slower line speed and some control over job conditions, opposing a brutal speedup by the bosses.

ers by bus to Louisville, Kentucky, in February 1999 to join fellow strikers from Natchez, Mississippi, in a protest at the Titan booth at the National Farm Machine Show.

Like Harris, Trowe has worked to forge an alliance between workers and exploited producers on the land—working farmers. Farmers in the Midwest have faced depression conditions for a number of years, generating protest actions and a groundswell of discontent. She participated in these struggles over the past few years, including building support for the Rally for Rural America this past March.

She has also sought to link up workers and farmers in the United States with their counterparts in other countries, such as helping to organize a tour of Iowa by Jose Brito, a leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil.

This spring Trowe was part of a delega-



Militant/Jake Perasso

Meat packers and supporters march in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 12, as part of fight to win union recognition. Their fight is an example to all working people.

Trowe moved to Austin from Des Moines, Iowa, where she worked in a meatpacking plant in nearby Marshalltown. In 1999, along with other members of UFCW Local 1149 and community activists, she helped found the Ad Hoc Committee for Human Rights, which organized protests in March against attacks on the rights of immigrants. When Marshalltown police announced they would deputize officers with powers to aid the Immigration and Naturalization (INS) cops in deporting Mexican-born workers, packinghouse workers organized to get 150 people to a city council hearing to condemn the action.

The police chief then decided to drop the deputization plan. A few weeks later, 250 people marched to the county courthouse to protest Operation Vanguard, an INS operation that has driven many Mexican-born workers out of their jobs in packinghouses throughout the Midwest.

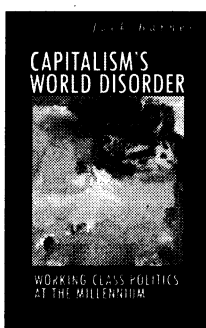
Trowe has been active building solidarity with the striking Steelworkers at Titan Tire in Des Moines. Her union local sent \$1,000 to the strikers, and fellow meat packers raised funds to buy pork for the strike food bank. Trowe traveled with Titan strik-

tion of fighting farmers and workers that attended the convention of the National Association of Small Farmers of Cuba. The U.S. delegates to the congress met farmers from cooperatives throughout Cuba, as well as international delegates from Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and other countries. Among the farmers they met in Cuba they found tremendous interest in and solidarity with the struggles of farmers in the United States. In turn, the U.S. delegation got a firsthand view of the accomplishments of Cuba's socialist revolution and the historic gains made by workers and peasants in the country.

Trowe has served on the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, as organizer of several party branches, and is currently a member of the party's national trade union work leadership committee.

As a teenager in the 1960s, Trowe became active in the fight for Black rights. On a trip to rural Louisiana to visit her grandparents, she became aware of the blatant racist segregation that existed at that time in the South. The growing civil rights movement and battles for Black freedom were in full swing,

Trowe, continued on next page



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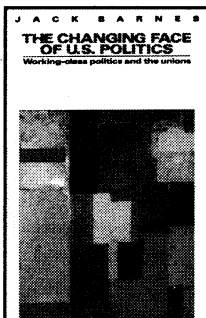
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Harris, continued from previous page
the city staged a school strike in the early 1960s, setting up "Freedom Schools" to study African-American history.

On graduating from high school, Harris attended Cleveland State University, where he was a founding member of the Black Student Union. He organized fellow students into demonstrations opposing the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people as well as actions against racist practices of the college, which then had only a small percentage of Black students. He became a member of the Student Mobilization Committee Against the War in Vietnam and later served on its national staff in Washington, D.C.

Through these experiences he joined and later became a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance. He ran for school board in Cleveland on the Socialist Workers ticket in 1969, and soon after joined the SWP.

A supporter of Cuba's socialist revolution, Harris participated in the second Venceremos Brigade to Cuba in 1969 along with hundreds of other youth from the United States. Brigade members cut sugar cane for a couple of months in an expression of solidarity with the efforts by millions of working people in Cuba to maximize sugar production. Working alongside Cuban workers and meeting volunteers from Vietnam, Korea, and elsewhere deepened his sense of internationalism.

Harris moved to Atlanta in the early 1970s, and joined in the struggles of the Black community against police brutalization of working people. At the time, a number of young Blacks had been killed by police SWAT squad units. Later Harris helped mobilize supporters of Black rights in Atlanta to join actions in Boston in the battle for busing and school desegregation in that city.

In 1977 Harris moved to New York to join the staff of the National Student Coalition Against Racism, which had helped lead mobilizations for school desegregation. He became a national chairperson of the coalition.

In the late 1970s the SWP responded to the first signs of growing capitalist economic crisis, employer attacks on the unions, and working-class resistance by getting a big majority of its members into unions in factories and mines. Harris helped lead this effort, becoming a production line worker in 1978 at the Ford auto plant in Metuchen, New Jersey, where he was a member of the United Auto Workers.

Harris later worked in a garment factory in Los Angeles, as the party deepened its industrial base by building units of party members in the garment unions. In Los Angeles he helped the party branch reach out to the growing numbers of immigrant workers coming into the United States, and was the chairperson of the party in the city.

He also participated in brigades to defend the Nicaraguan revolution in the mid-1980s, and joined a delegation to visit revolutionary Grenada in the early 1980s to tell the truth about the first revolution to take power in a Black and English-speaking country in the Caribbean.

He has traveled to Trinidad, Zimbabwe, and South Africa to further links with workers and other fighters in those countries.

Harris served for a time as the national organization secretary of the SWP. He was a staff writer for the socialist newsweekly *The Militant* in New York. He helped cover the mass battles in South Africa to bring down apartheid as well as the 1989-91 strike by Machinists against union busting at Eastern Airlines. In 1994 Harris traveled to South Africa to attend the Congress of South African Trade Unions convention.

A longtime advocate of independent working-class political action, Harris participated in the National Black Independent Political Party, founded in Philadelphia in November 1980. Harris is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as well as the Atlanta Network on Cuba.



Trowe, continued from previous page
and seeing racist practices such as separate water fountains and waiting rooms for Blacks and whites at the train station made a deep and lasting impact on her.

As a high school student she joined in the movement to desegregate the public schools in Oakland, California. The school

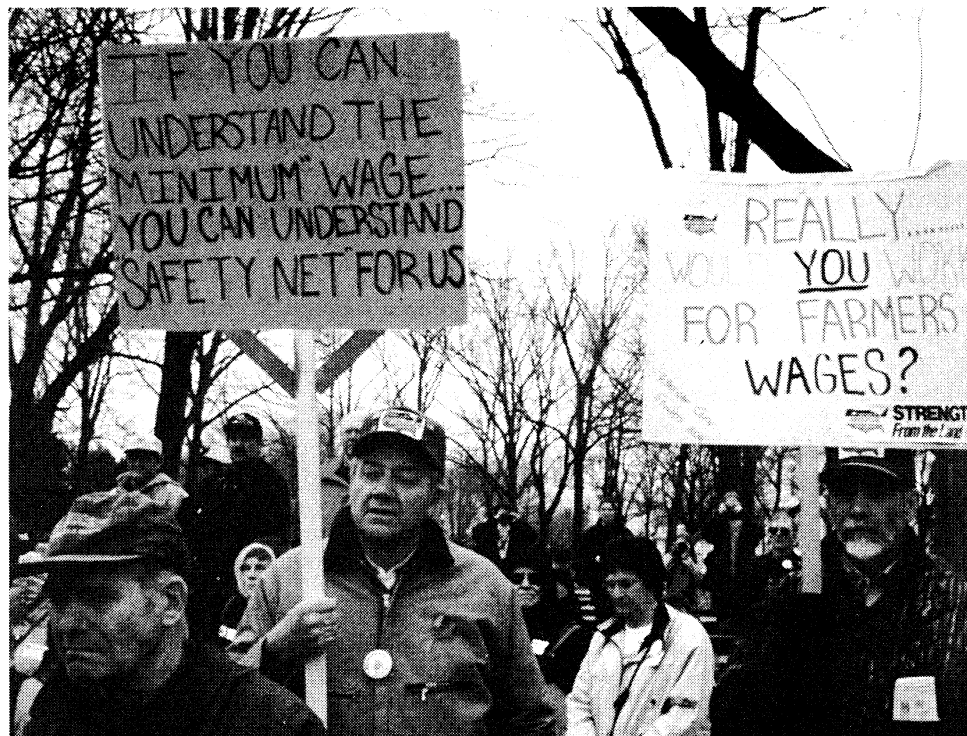


Militant/Patrick O'Neill

May Day marchers in New York City. Sign says, "No human being is illegal."

district boundaries were gerrymandered by the government to make the one high school, Skyline High, almost all-white. That high school had the most modern facilities and the smallest class sizes. In one action, hundreds of people marched on a school board meeting to demand an end to segregation. Trowe was a member of the Interracial Relations Club at Skyline.

Trowe helped build the movement against U.S. imperialism's war on the people of Vietnam. As a teenager, she would hitchhike with school friends from Oakland to the Berkeley campus of the University of California, where they participated in rallies against the war. She marched on the Oakland induction center in 1967, and got her first taste of police violence. During this time Trowe became a supporter of the Cuban revolution.



Militant

Farmers from around the country at Rally for Rural America in Washington.

Trowe also got involved in the struggle for women's rights, staffing an abortion rights hot line in the early 1970s, when abortion was still illegal. She was a leader of the Women's Center in Bloomington, Indiana, where women ran the Freewheeling Women's Press in the basement, and printed movement materials.

After moving to Bloomington to begin a four-year Ph.D. program in history, Trowe found that being in graduate school was an obstacle to deepening her involvement in the social movements she had begun participating in. When she wrote a paper on 19th century U.S. history that was sympathetic to the Haymarket martyrs in Chicago and hostile to "robber barons" such as Rockefeller and Carnegie, her professor called her to his office, and said, "You can't take sides," a remark that ended her college years. She instead taught women's studies at the Free University, and got a job as a waitress and cook.

The onset of the first worldwide recession since World War II in the mid-1970s prodded Trowe to search for a scientific explanation of the workings of capitalism and the exploitation and oppression it perpetuates and reinforces in society. Dissatisfied with rationalizations by pro-capitalist economists, she began reading works by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the founding leaders of the modern communist movement. The combination of her experiences and reading convinced Trowe that a revolutionary working-class party was necessary, and she joined the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party in 1975.

In the 1980s Trowe deepened her study of Marx and Engels during a six-month study session at the leadership school organized by the SWP. Students at the school also studied Spanish. Trowe speaks Span-

ish and French.

In 1977 Trowe joined other women's rights fighters in Seattle in founding the Washington Equal Rights Amendment Coalition, which organized several marches and rallies. That year Trowe was the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle. She remains a member of the National Organization for Women.

Trowe visited Nicaragua in 1982, and met working people who had been part of overthrowing the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship in 1979 and initiating an anticapitalist revolution. She joined actions against Washington's assaults on this new beachhead of revolutionary struggle in the Americas, and sought to win co-workers and other unionists to defend the workers and farmers government.

In 1995 Trowe participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, which was attended by 30,000 women's rights supporters. She wrote about the conference for the *Militant*.

Trowe has been an industrial worker most of her adult life. She drove a bus in Bloomington, Indiana, in the early 1970s, became a sheet-metal grinder and fitter in 1975, and worked as a welder/burner/fitter at Todd Pacific Shipyards in 1978, as part of the efforts by SWP members to get industrial jobs.

In 1986 she was part of the mass walk-outs that began a successful five-week strike by 5,000 unionized men's clothing workers in Montreal, Canada. She spoke in French at workers assemblies during the strike. On two different occasions she worked in Pathfinder Press's printshop in New York City, carrying out various responsibilities, including in the management of the shop, which produces Pathfinder books and prints the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

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Militant/Stu Singer

The United Mine Workers of America mobilized some 8,000 miners and retirees for rally in Washington, D.C., May 17 to defend lifetime health-care benefits.

Hundreds in Texas protest execution

Continued from front page
parole board and then the courts. It was Graham's eighth execution date.

At 1:30 p.m. the state Board of Pardons and Parole issued its denial of a reprieve or clemency. The 18-member board, appointed by Gov. George W. Bush, voted 14-3 against a stay of execution, 12-5 against commuting his sentence, and 17-0 against a pardon, with one member not voting.

Later that day, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the appeal for a stay of execution in a close, 5-4 decision. Then a civil suit in Austin, Texas, was filed in an attempt to postpone the execution, but that too was denied.

Almost three hours after the scheduled 6:00 p.m. time of the execution, Graham was given the lethal injection. Among those witnessing the execution were Democratic Party leaders Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, Nation of Islam minister Robert Mohammed, and Bianca Jagger, a leader of Amnesty International.

Protest in Huntsville

At one point the crowd opposed to the execution swelled to more than 500, including many from Huntsville's Black community. They joined a march outside the prison.

The demonstrators protested not only the execution but a small contingent of Ku Klux Klansmen and their supporters who came to cheer on the killing of Graham.

Jenee Pierre, a student at Sam Houston State University, came with three of her friends. She wanted Graham "to get a new trial to let the evidence be heard." Her friend Ashley Etienne added, "Our struggle here can turn around the death penalty, which is a step backward."

Seven anti-death penalty protesters were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and one with assault.

The protest at Huntsville was the subject

of a violence-baiting campaign since the Republican state convention earlier in June, where a protest in defense of Gary Graham had taken place. The big-business media focused on the fact that Quanell X of the New Black Panther Party, along with about a dozen supporters, some openly carrying shotguns, got into an altercation with a Republican delegate. Charges were brought against one of Quanell X's supporters. In Huntsville, Quanell X and some of his supporters, briefly carrying shotguns, spoke and marched outside the prison.

Some 200 extra cops, decked in full riot gear as the execution neared, manned barricades as several police helicopters flew overhead.

Governor Bush, who had been confronted by anti-death penalty demonstrators at previous campaign stops, asserted after the execution, "After considering all the facts, I am convinced justice is being done." While campaigning in Los Angeles he said, "As far as I'm concerned there has not been one innocent person executed since I've been governor." This is the 135th execution during his tenure as the state's chief executive. Both major presidential candidates, Republican Bush and Democrat Albert Gore, are advocates of the death penalty.

During the last days before the execution, state and local officials worked doggedly to make sure Graham did not get a reprieve. The day before his death, Harris County District Attorney John Holmes obtained a day-old affidavit from a bailiff at Graham's trial that he sent the board of parole. In this brand new testimony, the bailiff asserted under oath that Graham had told him after the trial verdict, "Next time I'm not going to leave any witnesses."

The same day, Lt. Gov. Rick Perry and Texas Attorney General John Cornyn called a news conference to insist that Graham was guilty and urge his execution. Cornyn declared, "I personally felt it was important for us to be able to explain again what type of super due process that criminal defendants are entitled to and in fact receive—and in fact Mr. Graham has received."

International defense campaign

For the past several years, an international campaign was waged demanding freedom for Gary Graham, as more people found out about the gross denial of justice in his case. His execution sparked protests in many parts of the country and internationally.

In a statement issued from Havana the day

after the execution, the Continental Latin American and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE) said the Americas-wide student group "strongly condemns the U.S. government for the execution of the American youth Shaka Sankofa, which constitutes a violation of human rights. Without a doubt, the U.S. judicial system is not capable of representing the true interests of its citizens."

"Mumia Abu-Jamal, who remains on death row, faces a similar situation. OCLAE solidarizes with this noble cause and demands his prompt release," the student organization stated.

Cuban president Fidel Castro also issued a sharp condemnation of the killing of Graham and hailed his steadfast and dignified opposition to the execution (see accompanying box).

In Houston, David Ferguson, a sewing machine operator and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in the 18th District, said, "Shaka Sankofa/Gary Graham died a fighter. With his final words, as the poison flowed into his veins, he condemned the lynching that was being carried out against him and called for the abolition of the death penalty. We join Graham and the thousands who protested around the world

in condemning this act of barbarism."

"The death penalty," Ferguson added, "is intended by the capitalist rulers to terrorize the working class, particularly Blacks, Latinos, immigrants, and other workers who resist the conditions created by capitalism. It is one and the same with the instant death penalty carried out by cops every day on the streets. The railroad trials, incompetent defense attorneys, and arbitrary dismissal of appeals are not signs of a broken system, but of a system working the way it is designed. The death penalty has nothing to do with crime. Every worker who resists is supposed to think: 'that could be me.'"

In the week preceding the execution of Graham, three men were put to death—Paul Nuncio, 31; John Burks, 44, and Thomas Mason, 48. The week following Graham's execution, Jessy San Miguel is scheduled to die.

A wake and funeral services for Gary Graham were planned in Houston.

Lea Sherman is a meat packer and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate. Dave Ferguson is a sewing machine operator and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress.

Fidel Castro condemns execution, hails Gary Graham as a fighter

In Cuba, President Fidel Castro condemned the execution of Gary Graham (Shaka Sankofa) as "an unspeakable crime" in a June 24 message to a rally in the Cuban city of Holguin that was organized to demand the return of six-year-old Elián González to Cuba. In his letter, reprinted in the Cuban newspaper *Granma*, Castro detailed some of the facts illustrating how Graham had been denied a fair trial. "He was given the death penalty and executed simply for being black," he stated.

"Shaka Sankofa has shown the world the bitter fruits of a social system where the differences between the richest and the poorest are infinite," Fidel Castro wrote.

The Cuban leader hailed "the dignity with which he defended himself" and the fact that "he didn't go like a lamb to the slaughter. He forcibly resisted the execu-

tion process right up until his death, as he had promised." Castro added, "He died like a hero."

"In this way, oppression, exploitation, inequality, and injustice creates people who, facing the most difficult moment of an unjust death, are capable of shaking an empire and stirring the admiration of all honest people in the world," the revolutionary leader stated. "For us, it constitutes not only a duty of gratitude, but also a great international duty to join the energetic protests of millions of U.S. whites, blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, and other races that are indignantly condemning this repugnant, racist form of applying justice."

"These facts convince us, more than ever, that the future belongs to our dreams of equality and justice for all human beings. The people will win!"

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St. Paul meat packers counter company's antiunion campaign

Continued from front page

previously done by two people. "We are talking to people about the need to stay in the plant and fight these abuses. We know they were all union supporters," said Amy Roberts, a worker in the boning department who supports the union campaign.

Workers in the cut and kill department told the *Militant* that the top bosses have been organizing meetings with small groups of workers every day, repeating many of the same false statements about the union they have been saying since the start of the organizing drive, and trying to portray themselves as benevolent figures who can solve workers' problems if given a chance.

Workers report that a lawyer hired by the company was present at all the meetings. If you vote for the union, "it will be a union representative and me who will be deciding your fate, not you, and you don't want that," the lawyer told the packinghouse workers.

Steve Cortinas, Dakota Premium's manager, was present at some of the company meetings with the mostly Spanish-speaking workforce. "Making references to the union election and union representation, Cortinas told us that workers had to have 'legal docu-

ments in order' and that the company lawyer was there to clarify any questions," Matias Loya told the *Militant*. "He also said that anywhere from \$4 to \$44 dollars will be discounted from our paycheck every week for union dues."

Issue number four of *The Workers' Voice*, the pro-union newsletter of the workers at Dakota Premium, answered on June 28 what the company had stated the previous day at these meetings. "All workers have a right under the law to vote in a union election, regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Unions are not here to investigate workers, they are here to represent them," the newsletter stated.

The company then invited workers to a hotel after work that day. "Cortinas told us he was concerned about the workers being quiet in the meetings with the company and that no one was asking any questions," said Loya. "He urged us to go meet with the lawyer at the hotel if we didn't feel comfortable doing it with supervisors in the plant."

"How dumb do they think we are?" stated the headline of *The Workers' Voice*. "We know the company is paying that lawyer. And we know that the attorney will report



Militant/Jake Perasso

Workers at Dakota Premium march in support of their right to a union June 12. Union backers in the plant are combating bosses' efforts to divide workers and are preparing for July 21 representation election, including through use of *Workers' Voice* newsletter.

everything we say back to Cortinas," it read. The newsletter called on workers to report any unfair treatment by the company to the union organizing committee. It also carried an ad for a rally and march sponsored by workers striking several Twin Cities hotels, encouraging all packinghouse workers to attend.

"There were about 18 workers at the meeting at the hotel when I was there," reported Samuel Farley, a supporter of the union. "The company had gone all out,

with quite a spread of food and beer and wine," he added. "In the meeting, company head of personnel Evelyn Ojeda argued against the union by saying, 'If you bring the union in the plant it will be like having two companies and you will be in the middle. Isn't it better that you meet with the company directly?' she told us," Farley reported.

"But the union is not a company," said Farley, "our problem is the company, not the union. The union is not the one that is making money off our labor, nor is it the one that speeds up the line, nor the one cutting the wages of workers in the kill. It's the company that is responsible for the injuries on the line and then forces us to work while injured," he stated.

"We have to go toe-to-toe answering this," said Miguel Olvera, also a union supporter. "The company does not hesitate in giving people beer, wine, and food on the one hand, and cutting your wages on the other. But our union meeting last week was the largest yet," he said.

Olvera described the meeting. "About 90 workers from out of both the cut and kill came to the union hall that day and we had quite a discussion," he said. "A lot of workers talked about the dangers of some leaders or workers being bought off by the company, and someone asked what would happen if we lost the election. I think the best answer was given by one of the veteran workers in our plant. He said last time the company was organizing its drive to get rid of the union eight years ago, they paid some people off and spent a lot of money paying the tab of all the workers at the local bar."

"But this time it will be different," this worker told those at the meeting, "We are a lot stronger this time."

Tom Fisher is a textile worker in Minnesota.

Minnesota hotel strikers vote on contract

BY ROBERTA BLACK

MINNEAPOLIS—As hotel workers in the Twin Cities expanded their strike to a total of seven hotels in the last week of June, the union negotiating committee reached a tentative agreement with the hotel owners June 28. As we go to press, workers are in the process of voting on the contract proposal.

The agreement came a day and a half before the start of an international Alcoholics Anonymous convention in Minneapolis, expected to draw 50,000 people and fill area hotel to capacity.

The hotel employers offered a 26 percent wage increase for the lowest-paid workers and 20 percent wage increase for other workers over the next five years. They also offered an increase of 70 cents per hour in payments to the medical insurance fund.

Hotel workers had varied reactions to the proposal. Nancy Bergwich, a housekeeper at the Thunderbird Hotel for 21 years, said, "We hurt the company. We had good solidarity. We had conventioners checking in and the rooms weren't clean. I like the new floating holiday and the increase in medical insurance, but the wage increase is not adequate." Lamedon Nultmeier, also a housekeeper at the Thunderbird Hotel, said, "All unions in Minnesota are stronger because of our strike. We had a lot of members of other unions on the picket lines, including teachers, mechanics and Pepsi strikers. More people should help the Pepsi strikers as they helped us, and go visit their picket line."

"The hotels were forced to give us an offer because of the AA convention," said Fadumo Melrased, a worker at the Hilton. "The company does not care for other people. I do not agree with the proposal—it is not enough for the work we do." Arron Dewitt, a cook at the Hilton, said, "I think we could have gotten more."

Over the previous week, workers at the Regal Hotel in Minneapolis and the Holiday Inn Airport II in nearby Bloomington joined the strike, expanding the number of striking hotel workers to 1,000. The union also scheduled a public rally for June 29 in front of the Minneapolis Hilton Hotel.

Two temporary employment firms—Dixie Staffing Services and Professional Metro Temporaries—agreed to stop supplying replacement workers to the hotels affected by the strike after Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 17 threatened to take strike action against those firms.

Representatives of the hotel owners have claimed in the media that the strike has had little effect. Most struck hotels, however, have had to cut back their room service and restaurant services. Local Democrat and Republican leaders began to feel pressure from the economic impact of the strike and to work for a quick settlement as well, includ-

ing mayors Sharon Sayles Belton of Minneapolis and Norman Coleman of St. Paul.

The picket lines in front of the Hilton in Minneapolis have included workers who are Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, Bosnian, and Latin American, as well as U.S.-born workers both Black and white.

'We will, we will strike you'

The *Star Tribune* reported, "On the night of the strike vote, there were seven interpreters in the meeting hall. When an overwhelming number of the workers agreed to strike, a woman who works at the Hilton Minneapolis went to the front of the room and taught the workers a version of the Queen song, 'We Will Rock You.' 'We will, we will strike you!' she sang. Soon, the room was filled with people with all sorts of accents singing along."

The strikers' energy and determination has been evident on the picket lines. Strikers hold up signs directed to customers entering and leaving the hotel saying, "Thanks for leaving—please don't come back while we're on strike." Some drivers honk their

horns in response to show their solidarity.

Hilario Ponce, a striker at the Hilton with five years' service as a banquet server, said, "We all have the same needs, and we will be here until we win".

Issues in the strike involve both wages and health insurance. The union had originally demanded a 25 percent to 45 percent wage increase over the next five years, with the highest raises going to the lowest-paid workers.

Striking workers point out that the pay increases would be a small proportion of the cost of the room to the hotel customer. For example, housekeepers clean 16 rooms per day, with only half an hour for each room. On the average, for every room the housekeeper cleans she receives \$3.75—a room for which a guest may pay \$150 or more.

The union has demanded an increase of 85 cents an hour in the company's contribution to the union health insurance fund. The union is striking for health insurance that would cover the families of their members. Currently the health insurance covers only the workers themselves.

UFCW opens drive to organize Omaha packing

BY PACO PÉREZ

OMAHA, Nebraska—A drive to unionize meatpacking workers here has begun, organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union and by Omaha Together, One Community (OTOC). Officials and activists announced the campaign at a June 20 press conference. Among the companies targeted are ConAgra, Greater Omaha Packing Co., and Nebraska Beef.

OTOC is an organization of 38 religious congregations. Announcements have been made at religious services about the organizing drive, and union approval cards have been distributed at the churches, according to workers in the area.

Union organizers, community activists, and a group of workers from several plants have been meeting every week to discuss the campaign. A worker at Nebraska Beef who has attended the meetings told the *Militant* that 40 percent of the employees have signed union approval cards so far. The organizing drive has generated discussion among some workers on the benefits of joining the union.

Students organized by the national AFL-CIO's Union Summer program have been passing out leaflets and union authorization cards at meatpacking plants for several weeks and will continue to do so throughout the summer.

The meatpacking bosses have launched their own campaign. A forklift driver at

ConAgra said that the company had circulated an antiunion letter in the plant. This worker said that the letter claimed it wasn't telling workers not to join the union, but that they were encouraged to ask how much union dues would be, and that it was not necessary to join the union because the employees could get a better deal talking to the company directly.

The UFCW has filed unfair labor practice charges against the ConAgra Beef Co. plant in Omaha. They accused the company of searching employees' lockers for union literature, questioning employees about their

support to the union, and of videotaping the license plates of workers who took union leaflets at the plant gates.

Mark Denier, communications director of the UFCW, said that the union has put the Immigration and Naturalization Service on notice that a labor dispute exists in a number of packinghouses in the area. In a press release, the union also criticized the INS Operation Vanguard, in which *la migrá* requests employee records from a company and then sends notices to workers the INS suspects of not having documents, hoping to drive them out of the plant.

Workers at Iowa IBP plant stage sit-in

BY EDWIN FRUIT

PERRY, Iowa—Sanitation workers at the IBP packinghouse here staged a two-hour sit-down strike in the company cafeteria June 20 to demand a \$1-an-hour wage increase. Some 50 to 60 cleaners, employed by what union activists believe is an IBP-owned company called DCS, work at the plant. The IBP plant is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union; DCS is not organized.

Sanitation workers start their shift at

6:00 p.m. and use heavy hot water hoses to clean the plant during the night. When the workers came in for their shift they gathered in the cafeteria, refused to go to work, and placed their demand for a wage increase on the company. A plant manager eventually convinced workers to return to their jobs with a promise that the company would respond to their demand by the following Monday. As of June 28 the sanitation workers had not yet received a response. There are about 800 workers at the IBP plant.

Support socialist campaign

The *Militant* enthusiastically supports the campaign of James Harris for U.S. president and Margaret Trowe for vice president, as well as that of other Socialist Workers candidates around the country. These candidates are working-class fighters and the program they advocate represents the interests of working people. We urge you to consider the socialist alternative in the 2000 elections, join in action with the campaign to deepen the resistance of working people in town and country, and discuss the class answers and political course the candidates propose.

The *Militant* will continue to feature coverage of the campaign, both in the printed and on-line editions. The paper is a place partisans of the campaign and those interested in finding out more about a fighting working-class and socialist alternative can follow the activities of the candidates, read their statements, and find out how they can become a part of this effort. We are pleased the candidates and supporters of the campaign are using the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books in the campaign, through which they can help introduce workers, farmers, and youth to the facts about strikes and social struggles today, a fighting working-class perspective on developments in politics, and a broader world view and internationalist outlook.

The struggles of working people today against the increasingly harsh realities of our daily lives—from the bosses' relentless push on the production lines, to cop violence on the streets, to government assaults on democratic rights, to victimization by the INS and other police agencies, to the assault on social security and other hard-won gains—pose more sharply than ever the need for independent working-class political action and a revolutionary course to fight for a workers and farmers government.

Immigrants strengthen labor

In the growing fights against the employers in the United States to organize the unorganized, and on other fronts of working-class resistance, workers from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere in the world are emerging as part of the leaderships of these struggles. This is of immense importance for workers, working farmers, and everyone who identifies with the labor movement and sees it as an ally in their fight for justice.

These developments are rooted in the way the U.S. capitalists have set about boosting their profitability over the last decade and a half. They have achieved increased productivity not by the introduction of new technology and computerization, as is often claimed, but by a wide-ranging assault on the workforce. Intensification of labor through faster line speeds, longer hours, and increased workloads imposed on workers are what their temporary gains are built on. Although the bosses have scored notable successes over their competitors in Europe and Japan over the last two decades, they will continue driving on this course in the certain knowledge that their rivals are already moving to close the gap through the same methods.

A key component of the employers' drive has been to draw millions of workers from Latin America and elsewhere into factories and plants, as they impose brutal conditions on the job and cut wages. The workers' "illegal" or "undocumented" status, they calculated, would make them accept whatever the bosses dish out. And should immigrants need reminding of their rightless position, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, every other kind of police, and the courts were close at hand. This is the purpose of these cops and the laws they enforce: to terrorize a section of the working class, separate them off from other working people, and thereby weaken our class as a whole.

The bosses are now running up against the other consequences of this setup. Through their very successes, they have brought into being a working class in this country that is more international, that has more varied political experiences, and that better knows the scope and brutality of U.S. imperialism.

The workers from Somalia—a nation occupied by U.S. troops in 1993 and 1994—who helped lead the flying pickets in the Minneapolis hotel workers' strike exemplify this.

Through giant battles in the 1930s in face of the ravages of the Great Depression and in subsequent struggles, our class organized potentially powerful industrial unions. But labor in the United States never broke from its backing of the two-party system and the trap of lesser-evil politics. The labor officialdom remained a defender of capitalism and the parties that serve the capitalist ruling class—the Democrats and Republicans. They hoped at best to win a few concessions from the employers and their government, while backing Washington's wars, national oppression, and exploitation of workers and peasants around the world.

Instead of using the organization, resources, and potential power of the unions as a motor force for independent political organization, the labor skates in every election turn tens of millions in union funds over to the parties of the same bosses who are attacking working people.

This dead-end road has crippled the labor movement, undercutting its ability to pose every question as a social question and to fight and act on a political level for the interests of a class in society.

This is the only way to unite working people, build an alliance of workers and farmers, and uncompromisingly chart a course to lead them to power. In this, the Socialist Workers campaign offers an example for the entire labor movement.

Socialist campaigners are fighting for ballot status in many states, building solidarity for strikes and other struggles, opposing Washington's war moves and assaults on working people around the world, distributing the *Militant* and campaign literature, and organizing meetings across the country of those interested in the socialist alternative. Join in this effort!

So do the workers from Latin America who came to the rescue of May Day this year, and helped pump new life into the demonstrations in the United States on this international workers' holiday.

Immigrant and native-born workers are driven toward industrial and political action by exactly the same causes. The increase in working-class resistance that we see today—including the organizing drives that are starting to gain momentum—is not an option for the workers involved. The bosses' drive to wring more profits from our labor power is forcing workers to act to defend our very lives, limbs, and humanity.

The role of immigrant workers in the current struggles shows that what short-term success the bosses have can also bring them new and bigger problems. In protests and strike actions organized by meat packers in the Midwest, by janitors and truck drivers across the country, home builders in Washington State, and aluminum window workers in Florida, immigrant workers are standing up for the union, fighting for better contracts, and putting their stamp on these struggles.

This strengthens the battles of all unionists here and helps prepare the labor movement to defend itself and all working people against the demagoguery of rightist politicians who will scapegoat immigrants—along with Blacks, women, and the political vanguard of the working class—and incite violent attacks on them as part of their assaults on the labor movement. For example, ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, running for U.S. president and well on the road to capturing the Reform Party nomination, calls for immigration to be slowed so that "hyphenated" Americans can be "assimilated."

These kinds of political questions are being posed in other countries as well, especially the imperialist powers. Marchers in London on June 24 called on the British government to repeal its vicious asylum and immigration laws. One contingent summed up just what all working people should celebrate and embrace: "Refugees have the right, here to stay, here to fight."

All activists in the labor movement should fight to win their union to back these crucial struggles today, demand equal rights for immigrants, and an end to all harassment, intimidation, threats, and deportations by the INS and police agencies carried out against these workers.

Socialists hold campaign rally

Continued from page 5

face. Social Security can only be defended—and expanded—fighting to defend a class and as a social question for every single working person. We are for government-guaranteed universal health care, retirement, old-age pension, and disability payments."

Also preparing for the coming battles is Patrick Buchanan, who looks to build a fascist movement with a cadre that will seek to take on and defeat a rising revolutionary movement of working people in the streets. Harris took note of the fact that Buchanan has succeeded in capturing control of a third capitalist party in this country, the Reform Party, which he will use as a pole of attraction in the national election arena to advance his reactionary aims.

Since announcing he would seek the Reform Party nomination last October, Buchanan has systematically moved to take control of the organization. He succeeded in defeating Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, who had major influence over large sections of the party's apparatus. Ventura, who left the party in February, was the most prominent politician to win office on the Reform Party ticket. Lenora Fulani, a former presidential candidate of the New Alliance Party which gained an influence in the Reform Party, especially in New York, resigned June 18 as cochair of Buchanan's presidential campaign. In mid-June, Buchanan's brigades succeeded in unseating delegates backing party founder and two-time presidential candidate Ross Perot in his home state of Texas.

Buchanan's approach is very different from that of the Green Party, which just nominated Ralph Nader as its presidential candidate, Harris explained. The Greens seek to function as a left wing of the Democratic Party, while Buchanan's moves are in opposition to the two-party system. "Buchanan seeks to accumulate and energize the forces that will be needed to carry out acts of violence against a rising working-class movement, defeat it, and impose a fascist tyranny in this country," stated Harris.

'Same kind of problems I'm having'

Among those attending the campaign rally was Mark, a meat packer at Best Provisions and member of UFCW Local 174 in New Jersey, who requested his last name not be used. He said he found the meeting "uplifting." The problems the candidates are talking about are "the same kind of problems I'm having—longer hours, weekend work, and management speeding up the machines," he said. The union activist is fighting to get his job back after the company fired him after he spoke out against the bosses' refusal to pay shift differentials and contractual raises that workers were entitled to.

"What I see is a lot of people fighting for the same thing and there's a lot of power here," said Mark in a discussion with a co-worker after the event.

José, a new member of the Communist League in Toronto who is planning on getting a job in meatpacking, was also attending his first socialist campaign rally. He took a 10-hour bus ride down to New York for the event. He was most impressed by the fact that the "speeches were based on a platform," not personalities, and that what was put forward were "collective solutions as opposed to individual solutions."

Concluding her remarks at the rally, Trowe stated, "The tide is turning. Vanguard workers are beginning to stand together and fight, and this is having a cumulative effect. A rich learning process is going on. The school of hard knocks is becoming the school of resistance. There could be no better time to launch a Socialist Workers campaign."

Over the next few months socialist campaigners will be joining petitioning teams around the country in an effort to get the party on the ballot in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

Through the course of this intensive effort they will reach tens of thousands of working people with information on the socialist campaign. A number of states, in an effort to keep working-class parties off the ballot, have imposed restrictions too difficult for the SWP candidates to meet for this election.

The Socialist Workers campaign newspaper, the *Militant*, will be providing full coverage of the SWP candidates not only in the pages of its paper but with additional information on its web site as well. Participants in the meeting contributed \$2,700 to the campaign.

Cuban six-year-old returns to Havana

Continued from front page
fused to overturn the Immigration and Naturalization Service's decision that an asylum application filed on behalf of Elián González was invalid, affirming that the executive branch of government has broad authority to interpret and implement policy in immigration matters because they have substantial "international-relations implications."

The full panel of the appeals court subsequently refused a rehearing request filed by the attorneys of Lázaro González, Elián's great-uncle, who then appealed to the Supreme Court.

After the Cuban boy was found November 25 off the

Florida coast, the U.S. government placed him in the custody of Lázaro González, and for seven months refused to return the boy to Cuba, in flagrant and arrogant violation of Cuba's sovereignty. On April 22, the government seized him in a raid of Lázaro González's home in Miami by heavily armed INS cops and U.S. marshals, an action the Clinton administration used to assert the extrajudicial powers of the INS and further limit the constitutional rights of working people in the United States.

From the beginning, Cubans mobilized repeatedly in rallies, marches, and other actions to demand the U.S. government return Elián González to his country, winning broad international support for their battle.

As he was departing with his son from the airport in Washington, D.C., Juan Miguel González said, "I am extremely happy to be going back to my homeland." In Havana, close family relatives and dozens of students from Elián's school in the town of Cárdenas were on hand at the José Martí international airport to greet them.

The Cuban government issued an official statement read on national television that said, "Now more than ever, our population must act with the utmost dignity, serenity, and discipline." Emphasizing the broad historical struggle against U.S. imperialist domination in which this victory is but one battle, the statement reiterated, "Our fight has just begun, and a long road before us still remains."

Protesters condemn killing of two men by St. Louis cops

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

ST. LOUIS—Actions have been held to protest the June 12 killings of Earl Murray and Ronald Beasley by the police in Berkeley, a majority-Black township northwest of here. The two men were killed when cops shot into their car 20 times in a Jack-in-the-Box restaurant parking lot.

The cops belonged to a special "drug task force" drawn from various police departments and the federal Drug Enforcement Administration. They allege that Murray was a drug dealer and that they had twice bought drugs from him.

Greg Freeman, a reporter for the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, wrote in a June 18 article that a "witness saw Murray get into his car when the police vehicle rammed the back of the car. Police then started shooting into his car, the witness said. One of the officers then ran up to the car and started firing more shots at the men inside the vehicle, according to the witness." The men were unarmed.

The cops claim Murray backed his car into an undercover police vehicle, got wedged under the bumper, revved his engine, and spun his tires. The cops fired out of fear for their lives because they were caught between the spinning tires and the curb, police officials claim.

In response, a series of protest meetings and marches have been called. The first meeting was held two days after the killings, at the All Saints Episcopal Church in North St. Louis. On June 19, more than 100 people gathered at the community center in Kinloch, a Black community in North St. Louis County.

Bell Atlantic workers hold action on job to press contract fight

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG

NEW YORK—Telephone workers at Bell Atlantic here, members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), stood up together at work for 10 minutes June 26. Their on-the-job demonstration marked the beginning of talks that will lead up to the expiration of their two-year contract in August.

Workers told the *Militant* that the big majority of CWA Local 1105 members at the Bell Atlantic building at 213th Street and Broadway in Manhattan wore black T-shirts the union had made, emblazoned on the back with the words "Respect or strike."

Mugabe Innis, a customer service representative with six years at the company, explained that the unionists sought "to show that we were really serious, straight to the point," with the action and the T-shirt message. Innis said Bell Atlantic is "trying to take away medical benefits" and "take our work and give it to others for less money," two issues that were at the heart of the successful two-day strike the CWA waged against the telecommunications giant in August 1998.

Innis and other workers saw the action as a building block toward the unity in action needed to win a contract with no takebacks this year. They noted the importance of prior preparation in their victory two years ago.

Mitchel Rosenberg is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 174 in the Bronx, New York.

Carol Wilkerson, one of the protesters and a state worker who lives in University City in St. Louis County, said, "Something needs to be done; this has got to be stopped. They assumed he had drugs. I knew Murray personally. He was slaughtered. He was shot four times in the face—once in the temple, once in the lip, and the other two times in the ear. Two lives were taken brutally. We demand to see the videotape, and we demand justice for the family and community."

"We are tired of this. It could have been any one of us," stated Clarnesia Collier, a bus driver for the Laidlaw Bus Company.

Protesters packed into the community center and heard talks by representatives of the National Action Network and the Urban League. The crowd spilled outside into the street. Following the talks, everyone went outside and lined up in rows of five. Wearing white ribbons with the names of Beasley and Murray on them, carrying candles, and waving white cloths, the 100 or more marchers were followed by a procession of 50 cars with their lights on.

Continuous chants of "No justice, no peace" and "We're fired up, can't take it no more" rang out as the crowd marched down North Hanley Road.

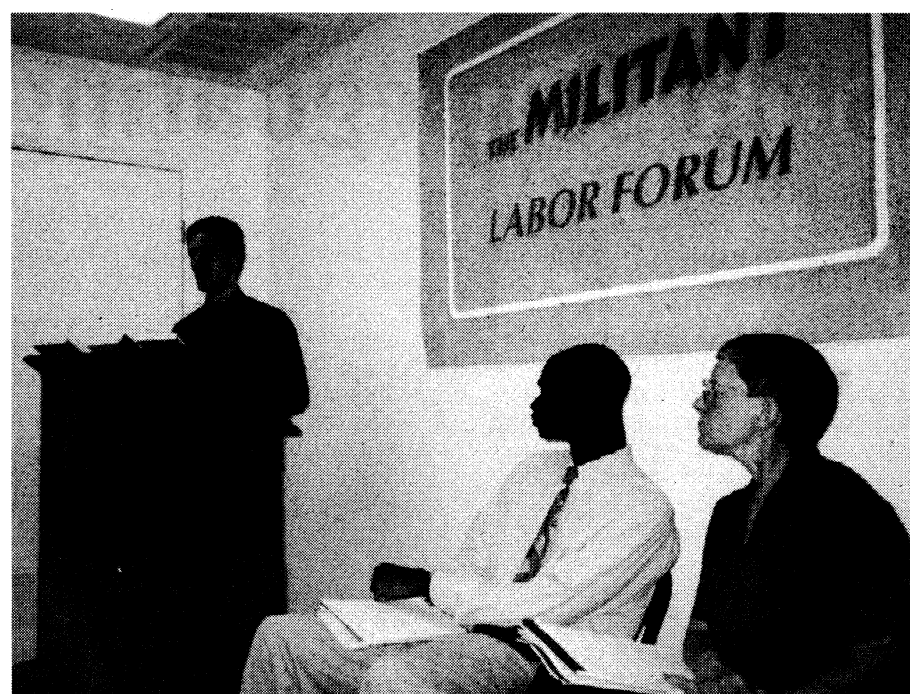
Memorial at the killing scene

The marchers gathered around a memorial for Murray and Beasley, decorated with flowers, cards, and a silhouette target with a man with 19 red dots, in the parking lot of the Jack-in-the-Box.

"Today we have brothers and sisters here who are not going to stop until we get justice," Tiahmo Rauf, a spokesperson for the National Action Network, told the crowd. He invited everyone to attend a June 22 community meeting at the All Saints Church in St. Louis.

About 100 people turned out for this third meeting, which was chaired by Eric Vickers, a Democratic candidate for Congress. He said that those present at the emergency community meeting the previous week had decided to write the St. Louis County prosecutor, Robert McCulloch, demanding the restaurant's surveillance videotapes of the incident and a special prosecutor to investigate the killings. The demands have not been

Alabama forum hears report on Tehran book fair, class struggle in Iran today



Militant/Dave Wulp

June 17 Militant Labor Forum in Birmingham, Alabama, heard report back from Tehran International Book Fair. Young Socialists leader Jason Alessio (at podium) described the welcome given to Pathfinder books at the fair by young Iranians. Also speaking was Cindy Jaquith (right), who talked about the international impact of the 1979 revolution against the U.S.-backed shah, and about the class struggle in Iran today. Atlanta YS leader Paul Cornish (center) chaired the forum, attended by 30 people from Birmingham and Atlanta. The forum was the highlight of a Socialist Educational Weekend including sales at four mine portals in Alabama, where 18 copies of the *Militant* were sold, and a class on "Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution: Cuban Workers Discuss Economic Reforms."

met, he said, and proposed a June 28 march on the county prosecutor's office.

Representatives from Operation PUSH and other Democratic politicians also addressed the crowd. James Bardol of the NAACP said action was needed because "we want to bring credibility to the police."

Then many people from the crowd lined up at a microphone to speak. One woman told the audience, "Every Black person in the city of St. Louis should be here tonight. You can do something about this. We need thousands of people. We are tired of this and we are not going to tolerate it any more."

Many others spoke, blasting the rampant police violence targeted against Blacks in the city. Some talked about the need to get broad numbers of people to turn out for the protests, including immigrants, Blacks, and whites.

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri, called for prosecuting and jailing the cops who killed the two men. She also pointed to the Kinloch march as an example in building a broad action.

In a statement released by her campaign, Kennedy stated, "The cops' job is to mete out punishment to working people.... It's not a question of rooting out the bad apples." The cops are an integral part of the capitalist state, which needs to be replaced by a government run by working people, she argued. As the way forward, Kennedy pointed to the course of working people relying on our own strength and seeking allies among others fighting exploitation and oppression exemplified in recent strikes and other struggles by workers and farmers.

Actors win support in strike for contract

BY CLAUDIA HOMMEL

CHICAGO— On strike since May 1, members of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists have been winning support in their fight for a contract with major advertising producers.

According to Karen Austin, national recording secretary of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), production of commercials in Los Angeles is down by 90 percent. Producers are meeting resistance as they scramble to find locations where they can hire enough experienced actors to cross the line.

"They can't even go to Canada, because our sister union is honoring our strike," stated Austin, "as are the unions in the United Kingdom and the International Federation of Actors. There's no place they can hide."

A key demand in the strike is "pay-per-play"—to maintain the practice of paying actors each time a commercial is shown and institute a onetime fee for unlimited use of a commercial. If the ad bosses roll back this gain, the union estimates an actor would average only \$11 per day over the normal 13-week commercial cycle.

In Chicago the median annual income for union actors from commercial work is \$4,200. The auditioning, preparing, and being on call is full-time work; very few actors, however, earn more than a part-time income from it. Only 8 percent earn enough to qualify for health and pension benefits each year.

When actors here find out about auditions, shooting schedules, and locations of struck work, a rapid response team of strikers has often been able to convince nonunion actors to refuse the audition, turn down the offered

work, or even walk off the set of a struck production. There are reports of actors leaving behind upward of \$60,000 in fees.

After considerable debate the union is now offering actors not in the union the opportunity to get their union card by serving 80 hours of strike duty on picket lines and telephones. In Los Angeles the program has been so successful that 1,200 actors have signed up for the SAG eligibility program, and the union has placed others on a waiting list.

Twenty-nine-year old Dale Inghram said that until the strike he was apathetic about the union, but now he's on strike "for as long as it takes." He was especially inspired by

telephone workers of the Communication Workers of America who helped the actors bring the strike to a stockholders meeting of telephone giant AT&T.

More than 1,600 production companies have broken ranks with the producers' Joint Policy Committee to sign interim agreements accepting the unions' contractual conditions. This past week Ford Motor Co. announced a moratorium on its production of commercials for its 2001 models until the strike is settled.

Claudia Hommel is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

LETTERS

New web site is well done!

The new web site is well done! Everyone at the *Militant*, especially the web administrator, along with all the paper's supporters, should be proud. Clear and attractive; useful and accessible; not to mention, nothing like it to help inform and organize working-class fighters. Can't wait to tell all those I know who already look to the *Militant*, as well as all future readers, about it.

*Mike Fitzsimmons
Cleveland, Ohio*

Enlightening article

The special feature in the June 5 *Militant*, "Cuban workers discuss economic reforms," was enlightening and informative.

Raul Castro's mention of Lenin's emphasis on politics over administration bears further examination, especially within the context of how the Bolsheviks led the Soviet

Union under the period of the New Economic Policy. I think it would be helpful if the *Militant* did an article looking into how the Bolsheviks handled that challenge, and how Soviet workers and farmers responded to their leadership during those years.

Also, it would be good to reprint relevant speeches of the Cuban leaders as they work their way through this challenge.

*Baxter Smith
Baltimore, Maryland*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

Leon Trotsky
Featuring "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and future"
By Karl Marx

\$14.95 from Pathfinder

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.

'Stop scapegoating immigrants in UK'

BY CELIA PUGH

LONDON—Carrying placards demanding "stop racist scapegoating," 4,000 people joined a spirited demonstration through central London June 24. Their opposition to anti-immigrant laws passed by the Labour government was hardened by the deaths a week earlier of 58 youth from China, who suffocated as they hid in a truck entering the south coast port of Dover. Government restrictions on "economic migrants" force thousands to seek entry to the United Kingdom by dangerous routes.

Capitalist politicians and commentators, feigning sympathy for the 58 who died, have used the case to escalate their campaign to

restrict the rights of immigrants—all in the name of cracking down on traffickers of human beings. Their goal is not to keep these workers out of the country but to maintain their status as second-class citizens who can be intimidated and superexploited, while serving as scapegoats for the problems created by capitalism itself.

Under the Asylum and Immigration Act adopted last November, refugees awaiting decision on asylum status are barred from employment or social security payments, and are given vouchers and a small amount of cash, set at a level 30 percent below the official poverty level. They can be "dispersed" to any city at the discretion of gov-

ernment officials. Refusal to go there means loss of all support. Home Secretary Jack Straw has proposed a measure that would require people to apply for political asylum in the country they are fleeing.

A contingent marching with the Colombian Refugee Association chanted, "Refugees have the right, here to stay, here to fight." Multicolored banners from other immigrant organizations took up the demand for the right to asylum for refugees from countries such as Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Sudan. Others demanded the closure of detention centers and an end to deportations and imprisonment without charge of immigrants waiting to appeal de-

portation orders.

Days before the demonstration, the government confirmed its intention to deport all remaining Kosovar refugees, by force if necessary. Some 4,500 Kosova Albanians came to Britain a year ago as part of a United Nations evacuation program that British officials now declare unnecessary.

Fifteen-year-old Ivan Balaz carried a banner in support of the campaign to defend Roma, or gypsies. His family fled the Czech Republic two years ago after attacks by racists. "We should be allowed to stay," he said. Of the 5,000 Romany asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, only three have been granted the right to stay.

Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, a member of the Sudan Women's Union, marched with a group of immigrants from that African nation. She said, "There are tens of thousands of Sudanese in Britain and few have been given refugee status." Referring to British colonial control over Sudan before that country's independence, she added, "We didn't want the British there—we should be able to run our own country. Now that we've come for a share of what's ours, they're trying to send us away."

A busload from Birmingham marched behind a banner declaring, "Justice for the Jhumat Family." Kundan Lal Jhumat said, "We called off a demonstration in Birmingham advertised for today. We encouraged everyone to come to London instead to join this march. I believe we're much stronger when we're together as one voice."

Jhumat's brother appears in court August 14 charged with affray by the authorities. This is a retrial after a previous jury failed to reach a verdict. Jhumat defended family members whose market stall was attacked by a racist gang last year. After eight months of the defense campaign, the police charged one of the racists, who was then given a conditional discharge. The family is pushing for the charges against Jhumat to be dropped and for the police to be charged with malicious prosecution.

Many marched under trade union banners, mostly from public service and teaching unions. Several groups of college students organized delegations.

Celia Pugh is an airport worker and member of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Rose Knight, a member of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, contributed to this article.

Workers in London protest Ford layoff plans

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

LONDON—Five hundred Ford workers rallied June 22 in a noisy and enthusiastic demonstration outside the company's central London headquarters. They were protesting Ford's decision to end vehicle production at its plant in Dagenham, east London, which is expected to eliminate at least 3,250 jobs.

"We want to tell the company they should honor the agreement, for the future of our workplace and our livelihood," said Dennis, a line worker in the Paint, Trim, and Assembly Plant (PTA) for 14 years, who asked that his last name not be used. Workers carried union placards saying, "Ford, honor your agreements" and "No closure." One handmade placard declared, "Jac Nasser, job slasher," referring to Ford's CEO.

Many workers came straight off the night shift at the PTA and body plants on union-organized buses. Others went in late onto the day shift, losing half a day's pay. Union stewards had gone around the day before in those plants encouraging workers to attend. The company was forced to run the production line at half speed for most of the shift.

The protesters were referring to a 1997 agreement signed by Nasser and officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and other unions that "confirmed Dagenham Operations as a long-term strategic source for the Fiesta and the lead plant for the next generation Fiesta," the car model made at Dagenham, and that declared the company's "intention" to keep the Dagenham diesel engine plant in operation.

In February the company announced it would cut the PTA and body plant night shift in August, with the loss of 1,350 jobs. In May came the news that it would close these plants in 2002 as part of a European restructuring including the closure of plants in Poland, Portugal, and Belarus. The *Financial Times* of London reports that more than 2,000 workers in Genk, Belgium, and Cologne, Germany, have already been affected by the changes.

This restructuring is Ford's response to a crisis of capitalist overproduction of cars in Europe, driven by increased competition.

The London Chambers of Commerce has estimated that the closure of Dagenham's assembly operations will cost 20,000 jobs.

Contingents of workers from Johnsons Controls on the Dagenham estate, who make car seats for the production line, and from the Visteon radiator plant in Basildon, Essex, brought banners to the rally. The Johnsons workers were cheered loudly when TGWU chief negotiator Tony Woodley thanked them in his speech.

"If they get away with it at Ford Dagenham, they can get away with it anywhere," said John, a PTA worker for 12 years.

In an effort to undercut resistance, Ford is offering "voluntary" redundancy (layoffs) and early retirement packages, relatively large by standards in this country. The company also promises 500 new jobs in the engine plant, which it says will stay open. Relatively few engine plant workers attended the rally. Nonetheless, quite a few workers who are leaving in July participated.

At the end of the protest, Woodley



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

June 22 union march of 500 in London protesting Ford's decision to shed more than 3,000 jobs. Immigrant workers played a prominent role in demonstration.

emerged from the Ford building and announced, to loud cheers and banging of placards, "The unions are now in dispute with the Ford Motor Company." The workers in the body and assembly plants will take a strike authorization vote at the end of July.

Depending on the result of that ballot, voting will be extended to the other plants at Dagenham.

Caroline Bellamy is a member of the TGWU at Ford Dagenham.

Strikers in Ecuador oppose austerity measures

BY HILDA CUZCO

Trade unions in Ecuador carried out a national strike June 14 and 15, joining teachers who have been on strike since May 15. They protested the government's austerity measures, the replacement of Ecuador's currency with the U.S. dollar, and the sell-off of state-owned enterprises to capitalist investors, and called for the cancellation of the country's foreign debt. They also demanded the removal of the U.S. military base from the coastal city of Manta.

The strike was sponsored by a coalition of labor and political organizations known as the Patriotic Front, as well as the United Workers Front (FUT), Evangelical Federation of Peasants (FEINE), National Federation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Black Organizations (FENOCIN), and other groups.

Unionists and other protesters marched through the streets of Quito, and in provinces including Los Rios, Esmeraldas, Zamora-Chinchipe, and Manabí. The government deployed a massive police and military presence to intimidate protesters, throwing tear gas and making numerous arrests.

Luis Villacis, president of the Patriotic Front, said the strike paralyzed public transportation in the provinces of Carchi, Imbabura, and Cotopaxi. The union action was less effective in major cities such as Quito and Guayaquil.

The leadership of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador

(CONAIE) endorsed the strike but did not actively participate in it. CONAIE and other Indian groups were the leading force in the January 21 uprising that toppled the government of Jamil Mahuad and briefly brought to power a three-person junta that included CONAIE president Antonio Vargas before the military handed the presidency to Vice president Gustavo Noboa.

The popular rebellion was detonated by Mahuad's moves to "dollarize" the economy by substituting the national currency, the sucre, with the U.S. dollar at a fixed rate of 25,000 sucres per dollar, a measure devastating to the living standards of working people and middle classes. After taking office, Noboa carried through the dollarization, fueling the ongoing protests.

The National Union of Educators (UNE) has 145,000 members on strike. They are demanding an increase in monthly wages to \$100 over the next nine months, and the immediate release of their union president, Aracelly Moreno, who has been arrested and charged with "slandering" the president.

Carmela América Yépez, 70, one of the teachers on hunger strike, declared, "It's not fair that somebody who has dedicated 27 years of her life to education only gets paid 1,800,000 sucres [US\$72] a month." Yépez provides for three orphaned grandchildren.

Meanwhile, 32,000 doctors in the Medical Federation of Ecuador launched a national strike June 2. They oppose moves to

privatize the health-care system and are demanding increased government spending on health care, as well as a salary increase to \$300 a month. Hospital workers have continued their strike in Guayaquil to demand wage increases, transportation subsidies, and increased health-care funding in the national budget.

According to a report by the Ministry of Social Welfare, the official poverty level in Ecuador doubled to 14 percent between 1998 and 1999. The official unemployment rate increased from 9 percent to 17 percent. The real figures are much higher.

As a substitute for resolving the economic crisis, the government pays many working people a "bonus" of 262,500 sucres—about US\$10 a month. Eighty percent of those receiving these payments are peasants. To collect them some have to walk up to three hours, get a ride to the city, and then wait in lines of up to 700 people at a bank.

"If I get paid the bonus, I buy rice and shortening; the rest goes for gas and water," said Maria Chimbo, 30, a farmer standing in line with her five children at a bank in Riobamba.

An International Monetary Fund delegation arrived in Quito to make sure the austerity measures are being carried out as IMF officials demand. Their main concern is that the Ecuadoran government continue to make payments on its foreign debt, which now stands at \$16 billion.