

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Jack Barnes on working class
& transformation of learning

— PAGES 8-11

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Meat packers press for union victory in St. Paul

Dakota Premium bosses step up antiunion propaganda

BY TOM FISHER

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Two weeks before the union election, the bosses at Dakota Premium Foods here have launched new attacks on the union-organizing drive in the plant. Workers there are find-

ing ways to answer the attacks and to move forward.

Dakota Premium, with some 200 workers, the majority Spanish-speaking, is a beef slaughterhouse where the employers carried out a drive to intensify the speed of work

over the previous six months. Many workers say they were being forced to perform double the amount of work from before. The company was also forcing meat packers to work while they were injured.

Workers in the plant responded to these intolerable conditions with a seven-hour sit-down strike on June 1 to demand a decrease in the line speed and press other demands.

The company, surprised by the swiftness and seriousness of the strike, made concessions on the line speed and some other issues. To safeguard their advances, workers launched a new drive to organize a union in the plant, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789. A previous organizing drive in 1991 had succeeded, but the union was voted out in 1992 when it failed to gain a contract.

The union election is set for July 21.

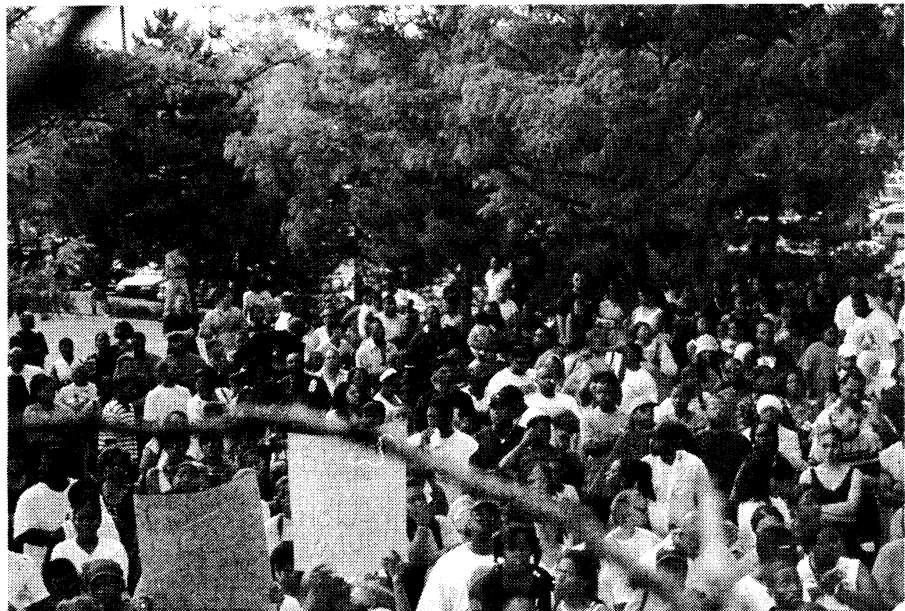
On July 11 the company called together small groups of workers from various areas of the plant to hear talks against the union-organizing drive. Speaking for the company were company manager Steve Cortinas and Dominick Driano, a director of Human Resources for the holding company of Dakota Premium Foods, Rosen Diversified Industries. The lawyer did most of the talking. According to workers in the plant, the lawyer made points to the different groups of workers along the following lines:

"Don't vote for the union. The union is another business, a company that comes between the worker and Dakota Premium Foods. The union prevents you from having any say over your conditions.

"If the union wins the election, what will it mean? They won't get a contract. Eight

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Thousands protest killing of Black man at shopping mall in Dearborn, Michigan



Militant/Illona Gersh

Some 5,000 people rally July 5 against the killing of Frederick Finley, a 32-year-old Black man who was choked to death by a mall security guard in a mostly white suburb. Another protest is planned for July 17. See story on page 3.

Socialists launch ballot drive in New York

BY GREG MCCARTAN
AND ELENA TATE

NEW YORK—"We collected 1,780 signatures tonight!" said Don Mackle, after the first day of petitioning to place the socialist campaign on the ballot in New York. Some 50 campaign supporters fanned out across the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn, armed with clipboards, campaign fliers, and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* newspapers, and got the drive to collect 30,000 signatures off to a flying start.

July 11 was the first day of the campaign to win ballot status for James Harris and Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidates for U.S. president and vice president, along with Jacob Perasso for U.S. Senate and Paul Pederson for Congress. Perasso is a packinghouse worker and leader of the Young Socialists. Pederson is the chairperson of the Brooklyn branch of the SWP and a worker in the printshop of Pathfinder Press.

Also running for Congress are William Estrada, a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union; John Hawkins, a worker at Pathfinder's printshop; Olga Rodriguez, an airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists; Douglas Nelson, also a worker at Pathfinder's printshop and leader of the Young Socialists; and Glova Scott, a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, In-

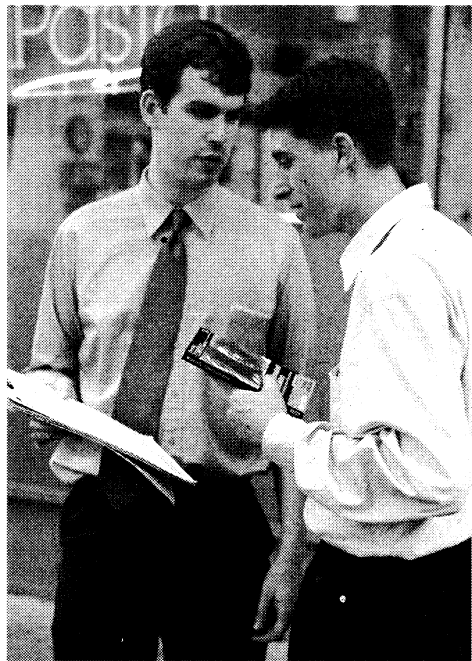
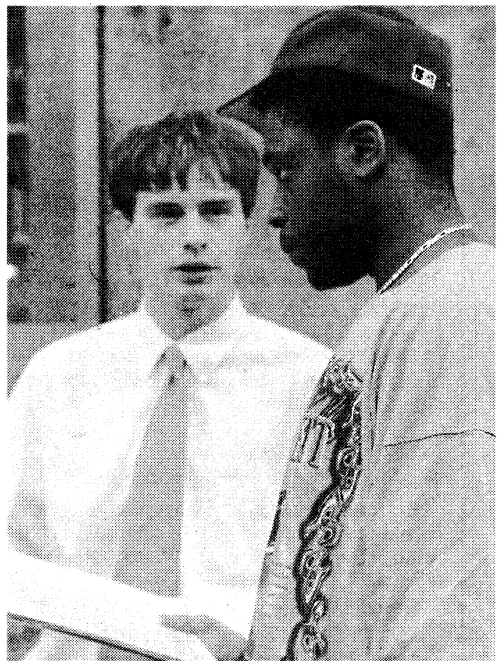
dustrial and Textile Employees.

Mackle, one of the organizers of the petition drive, said, "Team members reported collecting well over the 15 signatures per hour that we had set as our goal. Supporters in Brooklyn averaged more than 23 per hour. Veteran petitioners reported being struck by

the interest of people in learning more about the campaign. This is a reflection of the deepening working-class resistance that our campaign is a part of."

The three branches of the party, along with the Young Socialists, held planning

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Militant photos/Ruth Nebbia

Socialists campaign for ballot status in New York. In left photo: Jacob Perasso, candidate for U.S. Senate; in right photo: Paul Pederson, candidate for U.S. Congress.

Protests push back rightist march in N. Ireland

BY PETE CLIFFORD

PORTADOWN, Northern Ireland—"The nationalist community is confident and won't be intimidated by these threats," declared Sinn Fein leader Francie Molloy. Molloy and hundreds of local residents had gathered here July 9, behind razor wire and barricades erected by the British Army, and successfully prevented for the third year running a rightist Orange Order parade from going down Garvaghy Road, a majority Catholic community here in Portadown.

"This isn't about a parade going down the Garvaghy Road. It's about those who are marching trying to reverse the political process, trying to kill off the Good Friday Agreement and once again put the nationalist community under siege," stated Molloy, who represents Mid Ulster in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Sinn Fein is the party that has been leading the fight for a united Ireland free from British rule.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement provided for the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly with limited self-government powers. It registered the continued weakening of British rule over the northern six counties of Ireland, including the weakening of pro-British groups such as the Orange Order.

For years, the Orange Order has organized hundreds of triumphalist parades in Northern Ireland, aimed at reinforcing anti-

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Marchers in Mississippi: Black youth was lynched

BY ROBERTO GUERRERO
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

KOKOMO, Mississippi—"Everybody get your walk on! Everybody, everybody get your walk on, what!" sounded off many high school students who joined this 700-person-strong march here, in searing southern heat, to demand a federal investigation into the circumstances surrounding the hanging death of Raynard Johnson.

Local police have declared the Black 17-year-old's death a suicide. He was found hanging from a pecan tree in his front yard June 16. But the prevailing view here is that Johnson was the victim of a racist lynching carried out as a result of his relationship with a female classmate who is white. Family members say the suicide claim just doesn't add up. The belt Johnson hung from, for example, was not his.

Many local residents of this small rural town pointed to the fact that a deputy of the local police department was the uncle of the young woman Johnson had a relationship with. According to residents, since the night of the hanging, the deputy and his family have left the Marion County area.

Melvin Hollins, head of the local NAACP

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Striking miners: 'They haven't loaded one coal train' — page 15

Swedish trial of youths attacks rights

BY DAG TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The government here took another step in its assault on democratic rights and the labor movement through the course of a mass trial of 30 youths who occupied an abandoned hospital in Linköping. The state used a piece of antilabor legislation that allows prosecution of a group for "violent rioting."

With the exception of minors among them, all the youth had been held in custody for more than one month awaiting trial. Two of them were sentenced to six months in prison, another to three months. Most of the rest were sentenced to mandatory "community service." None were cleared of the charges.

When asked why the court had meted out such stiff punishments compared to a similar case five years ago, a district attorney answered, "The times are different now."

The youths had occupied an abandoned hospital building in the center of Linköping to press their demand for a youth house. At 3:00 a.m., eight hours after the occupation began, cops made a surprise attack, which was fended off by the youths. The house was then surrounded by cops and no one was allowed to leave until a police detachment from Stockholm arrived.

When the youths surrendered, lights used for the cops video cameras were turned off. According to several activists on the scene, the police then began to systematically beat those lying on the ground. Dogs were turned loose on them and one young woman was badly bitten. At the hospital she was forced to undress in front of three male cops.

A campaign in the media began, backing the cops and portraying the youth as violent terrorists. Without a shred of evidence the firebombing of the garage of a leading local politician was ascribed to the youths, who were in jail when it took place.

The "violent rioting" charge is based on an old law directed against fighting workers. In an article in the conservative paper *Svenska Dagbladet*, Per E. Samuelsson, an attorney in criminal law, argues that the law does not apply to the youths in this case. "The law was written for another time, against workers' rebellions," he said.

Under this regulation anyone at the scene

of what the authorities determine to be a riot can be charged and convicted. Sentences for "fomenters and leaders" are up to 10 years in prison and for participants up to four years. This law was used last year in the arrests of 243 people taking part in a "street party" organized by Reclaim the City. The violence on the part of the cops was widely criticized, and a sizable protest was organized.

Another argument put forward by the prosecutors was that the youths were all guilty of attempted violence because they were there "together and in consultation." They argued that all the participants in the occupation knew about stockpiling of stones and other "weapons," and all had a "common intent" of committing violent actions. This was also central in the media campaign.

The formulation "together and with a common purpose" has been used by prosecutors in several cases over the last decade, starting with a case in 1990 where the prosecutor put two defendants on trial, claiming both had been present at a murder, while acknowledging he couldn't prove who had committed it. The defendants were acquitted. Two years later the high court of Sweden accepted the notion of "common purpose" in a separate murder case.

This precedent has been used in several recent cases where the defendant has been very unpopular, including right-wing murderers and arsonists.

In the Linköping trial the court was not ready to accept this part of the prosecutor's case, but it had served its purpose in the media of justifying the long pretrial jailings.

The Swedish ruling class has been united in this attack on democratic rights. Few voices have been raised in protest of the political trial in Linköping. The "left" organizations are quiet or have undercut a united defense by arguing that the youths used "wrong and dangerous methods."

The Communist League and Young Socialists in Sweden issued a statement June 24 condemning the cop assault on the occupation, the subsequent jailing of the youths, and the trial and convictions. The outcome means "the court wants to increase the possibilities to use cops and the courts to suppress political and social protest.

U.S. bases in Okinawa draw protests



Residents of Okinawa rally outside the Japanese island's Futenma U.S. air base, where a U.S. marine accused of molesting a 14-year-old girl is stationed. The soldier was arrested July 3. Two other U.S. marines were arrested the previous week after a scuffle with a taxi driver.

Seeking to defuse protests, U.S. general Earl Hailston, U.S. Marine commander in Okinawa, issued a formal apology for the incidents, which occurred two weeks before a Group of Eight summit meeting was to take place in Okinawa. More demonstrations against U.S. military bases there are expected at that time. In 1995, three U.S. soldiers were convicted of raping a 12-year-old Okinawan girl, a case that sparked huge protests. Some 47,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Japan, nearly two-thirds of them in Okinawa.

"It confirms that the issue is not whether the youths that occupied a house in Linköping used right or wrong tactics," the statement said. "No. The issue is that the cops and the court used the youths' fight for a youth house in Linköping as an excuse for launching a brutal attack on democratic rights. The issue is the necessity to defend these youths against this injustice in order to be able to defend everybody's democratic rights in the future."

The statement said that capitalist governments around the world are in an increasingly insecure situation given the social and economic crisis. The labor movement, it said, has a giant stake in defending the youths because the government will use the same laws and repressive measures against the unions and working-class fighters.

Dag Tirsén is a member of the metal workers union

Bay Area health-care workers strike

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

SAN FRANCISCO—Four thousand health-care workers carried out a successful one-day strike July 6 at 10 Bay Area hospitals.

The strikers, members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 250, were joined on the picket line by members of the California Nurses Association. The same day, 500 hospital workers marched in downtown San Francisco to press their demands.

The unionists' main demands include an increase in staffing and reduction of the workload that would lead to better patient care and fewer work-related injuries.

On the picket line at the Alta Bates Medical Center in Berkeley, DeAnn Horne, a union representative with 11 years' service as a care associate, had just worked nine days of back-to-back shifts, including the July 4 holiday.

"You're exhausted—there's a possibility that you can make a mistake," Horne explained. "They're throwing so many patients

at us. Sometimes we don't even have time to read our charts and that is obscene."

"It used to be normal that when a worker was sick or injured on the job, the worker was replaced. But it's not the case anymore," said SEIU Local 250 president Sal Rosselli. "It's escalated work-related accidents," he noted, "all caused by short-staffing."

The hospital workers' fight coincides with a month-long strike by 1,700 nurses at two Stanford University hospitals in Palo Alto.

The bosses at the Children's Hospital in Oakland retaliated against the strikers by locking out all workers who were scheduled to work and who honored the July 6 strike. On July 8, some 150 workers held a spirited rally in front of the hospital. They received widespread support from passersby.

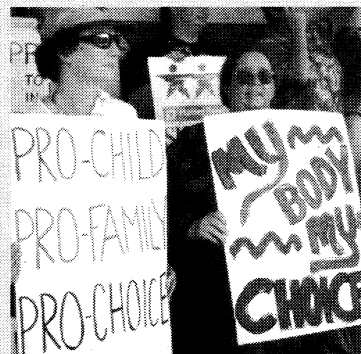
Negotiations on new contracts continue. The union's old contracts with the hospitals expired in May. Federal mediators are involved in the negotiations.

Deborah Liatos is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

THE MILITANT

Defend a woman's right to choose

Support for a woman's right to abortion remains strong, despite decades-long efforts by the U.S. rulers to undermine it. The 'Militant' explains why championing a woman's right to control her body is essential for the labor movement, and reports on the fight to defend this important gain. Don't miss a single issue



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5,000 in Michigan blast killing of Black man

BY ILONA GERSH

DEARBORN, Michigan—Chants of “No justice, no peace,” “No justice, no profits,” and “Enough is enough!” reverberated through the parking lots of Fairlane Mall here July 5 as more than 5,000 people rallied to protest the killing of Frederick Finley outside of Lord and Taylor one week before.

Media estimates of the crowd ranged from 5,000 to 10,000, as the mall parking lots were jammed with vehicles and nearby roads gridlocked. Some people never got to the rally because of the congestion.

Finley, 32, was choked to death by a security guard outside of Lord and Taylor June 22, according to family members and press reports. Finley and his family had just left the store when plainclothes security guards stopped and began to arrest his 11-year-old daughter, accusing her of shoplifting a bracelet she was wearing. Finley, trying to prevent the guards from arresting her, was grabbed in a chokehold, and thrown to the ground, witnesses report.

One guard is said to have put his knee on Finley's neck, while another handcuffed him, rendering him unconscious. While near death, Finley received rough treatment. A Dearborn cop reported that when he arrived on the scene, a security guard was on top of Finley, who was lying face down on the ground, and was handcuffed in the front.

According to the written report, the cop got up, and “then yanked the Black male suspect off the ground, stating ‘Get the f— up,’ and then dropped him back down on the ground. The Black male suspect on the ground was still unresponsive.” The hospital confirmed that Finley died of asphyxiation.

‘\$4=death’

The family denies that there was an attempt to steal the bracelet. They had just spent more than \$200 in the store, and were still carrying more than \$600 in cash. They say that they had forgotten about the \$4 bracelet the daughter had put on her wrist.

Picket signs at the rally read, “\$4=death,” “Finley family—you are not alone,” “Justice is not for sale,” “No justice, no peace,” “No justice, no profits,” and “Life is worth more than \$4.” Two larger-than-life photos of Malcolm X were held high.

A little boy sitting on his father's shoulders wore a sign that said “Death penalty.” Speakers at the rally included Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Dick Gregory, Martin Luther King III, Detroit NAACP president Wendall Anthony, Congressman John Conyers, and Attorney Geoffrey Fieger, the lawyer representing the Finley family in a \$600 million lawsuit against Lord and Taylor and Fairlane Mall. Family members stood on the stage. The speakers reflected the angry reaction in Detroit to the killing of Finley.

Detroit, which is overwhelmingly Black, is surrounded by mostly white suburbs. In recent months the news has reported dozens of incidents of police harassment and brutality directed against Detroit residents who are Black. It is common for drivers who are Black to be pulled over by the cops while passing through the predominantly white suburbs. This has become known as a DWB (driving while Black) incident.

One participant in the rally was Bob Cracchiolo, a retired UAW member who decided to protest such harassment near another suburban mall in Eastpointe. Cracchiolo, who is white, faces numerous charges as a result of his picketing.

“I'm here because this could have been my husband, my son, or my daughter,” one woman told this reporter. A young man said, “It could have been me. Security guards are just private cops. There's no telling what they will do when they stop someone who is Black. They can get out of hand.”

“The cops are judge, jury, and executioner all in one,” said an elderly man who said he was active in the civil rights movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. “They decided he was guilty. Finley got the death penalty. The crime? Shoplifting.” “It's time for us all to stand up against racism,” said another participant. “This rally shows we can be strong.”

Pointing to other cases of police brutality, Jesse Jackson opened the rally by pointing out, “What happened here could have happened anywhere in the country.”

“This is not about shoplifting. This is about murder,” said Al Sharpton. He announced plans for a second rally, on Mon-

day, July 17 at noon, which will take place at the federal building in downtown Detroit. The rally will demand a federal investigation into the killing of Finley.

U.S. Congressman John Conyers announced that he had called U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to ask for a federal investigation of Lord and Taylor, Fairlane Mall, and the city of Dearborn.

Racist history

Several references by speakers at the rally pointed to the segregationist past practices of city officials in Dearborn to explain the racial profiling that they said led to the deadly attack upon Finley. Mayor Orville Hubbard, who held office from 1942–78, was a staunch anticommunist and racist. The policies of his administration supported the interests of the biggest employer in Dearborn, the Ford Motor Company.

Dearborn, the site of the world headquarters of Ford Motor Company, was built as a segregated city for whites. Ford resisted unionization of its workforce for longer than all the other big auto manufacturers.

During World War II, the federal government attempted to build housing projects in Dearborn to address a housing shortage. Twelve thousand Blacks worked in war production in Dearborn, but only a few dozen lived in the city.

Besides calling for the prosecution of the guards who killed Finley and a federal investigation, speakers at the rally called for a boycott of Lord and Taylor and the



Militant/Ilona Gersh

Angry demonstrators packed shopping mall in Dearborn, Michigan, July 5 to protest killing of Frederick Finley by department store security guard.

Fairlane Mall.

Store owners there report that sales dropped by up to 50 percent in the week following the killing.

The day after the rally, one of the guards,

Dennis Richardson, was arraigned in the 19th District Court in Dearborn and charged with involuntary manslaughter.

The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office announced that no one else will be charged.

Miami trade ban with Cuba struck down

BY BILL KALMAN

MIAMI—A U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down a Massachusetts law requiring state agencies to boycott companies that do business in Myanmar (also known as Burma) reinforced the authority of the executive power in the United States in setting foreign policy.

The Massachusetts ban was imposed because of alleged human rights violations in Myanmar. Justice David Souter, writing the Supreme Court's opinion, said the Massachusetts law “undermines the president's authority by leaving him with less economic and diplomatic leverage.”

This decision opposed any weakening of U.S. presidential powers on this question. “It is not merely that the differences between the state and federal acts in scope and type of sanctions threaten to complicate discussions,” the court wrote, “they compromise the very capacity of the president to speak for the nation with one voice in dealing with other governments.”

This decision had an immediate impact here in Florida. The Miami-Dade County policy that prohibits the use of county funds or facilities to anyone having business dealings with Cuba was also struck down. Anyone applying for county money or venues to stage cultural, athletic, or academic events had to sign an affidavit pledging that they do no business with Cuba or Cubans on the island. “[The Massachusetts] ruling precludes Miami-Dade County from enforcing our Cuba policy,” said county mayor Alex Penelas, stating that “while disappointed... we will follow the law.”

The ruling class here instituted the ban in 1996 in the wake of Cuba's decision to defend its sovereignty by shooting down two planes organized by Brothers to the Rescue, a counterrevolutionary outfit that had repeatedly flown aircraft that violated Cuban airspace and ignored warnings to return to Florida.

The Miami-Dade County policy was already under legal challenge. In May, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a class action law suit challenging the policy's application to cultural events. The suit, filed on behalf of the Miami Light Project, GableStage, Grupo Cultural La Ma Teodora, the Cuban Cultural Group, and two concert promoters, challenged the policy on First Amendment grounds. Other organizations, like the Concert Association of Florida, the Florida Grand Opera, and the New World Symphony, discussed joining the lawsuit.

The policy had a chilling effect on cultural exchange. For example, the Miami Light Project could not bring to the city Grupo Vocal Desandan, a Haitian musical group that resides in Cuba, because of the

policy. On May 17, Federal District Judge Federico Moreno, anticipating the Supreme Court's Massachusetts decision, issued a temporary order nullifying the county ban because “there is a substantial likelihood that the ‘Cuba Affidavit’ will be found unconstitutional.”

Cuban-American ultrarightists reacted with anger and resignation. Javier Souto, a county commissioner and veteran of the U.S. government-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April 1961, said, “We are not going to stay quiet. We will need to be creative in finding ways not to make things easy for Mr. Castro.”

Jose Basulto, founder of Brothers to the Rescue, stated, “Anyone who has a beef with us is striking now. They're ganging up against us because we're perceived as vulnerable.”

The publishers of the *Miami Herald*, reflecting the prevailing viewpoint of local ruling circles, supported the ACLU's lawsuit. In a June 20 editorial headlined “Let Cuba Ordinance Die,” the *Herald* wrote: “What the lawsuit can do is return greater Miami to the national fold, opposing Castro but in ways that are consistent with national policy and law. It may also spare South

Florida the costly embarrassments of losing such events as the Latin Grammy Awards and the Junior Pan Am Track and Field Championship.”

Ban less and less effective

The county ban became less and less effective, particularly over the past year. Last October the Cuban band *Los Van Van* played in front of 3,000 at the Miami Arena, a city facility. In February the Miami Film Festival sold out its showings of the Cuban film *Life is to Whistle*, despite the county rescinding almost \$50,000 in grant money. And in March, county officials backed down from canceling the opening night party at the Latin American Studies Association annual convention, which was held at a county venue. About a hundred Cuban academics attended the conference.

In May, the Cuba policy was waived for AT&T in order to award the company the lucrative pay phone contract at Miami International Airport. AT&T provides long-distance service to Cuba.

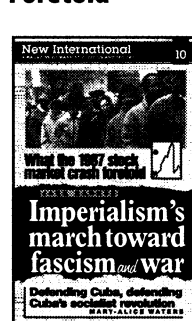
Bill Kalman is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1138 in Hialeah, Florida.

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UNITE strikers in Florida win support

BY MIKE ITALIE

POMPANO BEACH, Florida—Workers struck Tartan Textile here July 6, demanding an immediate \$1 per hour wage raise.

The 220 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in this industrial laundry north of Miami—a majority of whom are Haitian women—are angry about wages under \$7 an hour and weekly take-home pay of \$192. Some carry their last pay stub with them and show it to people who come by the picket line. The company offered only 25 cents an hour per year in wage increases.

Houston-based Tartan Textile, which employs more than 3,000 workers at 28 plants across the country, washes linens and surgical gowns for hospitals and nursing homes. Most of the plants are union-organized, about half belonging to UNITE. None of the contracts at those plants expire at the same time as the one here.

Sympathy strikes in other states

At a July 11 rally of more than 100 strikers and supporters outside the Tartan Textile plant in Pompano Beach, several workers had just come back from other states. They had gone there to set up pickets by UNITE urging workers at plants owned by Tartan to go on sympathy strikes to aid their brothers and sisters here.

"The solidarity we got was unbelievable," said Randal Preddie, a truck driver and member of UNITE on strike here, in an interview with *Militant* reporters. UNITE members at Tartan Textile plants in Freeport and Hempstead, New York, kept those facilities "closed tight yesterday," he stated. Preddie and other workers who had traveled to these factories said sympathy job actions were also under way in Rome, Georgia; Paterson, New Jersey; and in Maine and



Militant/Eric Simpson

Workers on strike at Tartan Textile during a picket line July 6.

Virginia.

Preddie said he and a dozen other workers were arrested by police while picketing the Hempstead plant on July 10. "But we were released on our own recognizance when we got to the police station," he said. "The police is on the company's side but they are nervous about the amount of support we have. I can't forget the militancy of the workers, especially the women workers who operate the laundry machines. They are better than the men. They were amazing. They would not be intimidated by the police and company security who were telling them to disperse from the picket line."

Carmelita Doristrin, with seven years at the Florida plant and a wage of \$6.15 per hour,

pointed out that conditions were even worse before the union was voted in six years ago. "Now we have vacations and holidays, and they don't treat us as bad on the job," she said. "We have medical insurance, although it's so bad the hospital won't accept it sometimes."

Gloria Portillo started at Tartan Textile just before workers voted in the union in 1994. She pointed out that without the union "there was only one break, while now there are three, and it was hard to even get permission to go get some water."

Some of the many signs in English, Spanish, and Creole that workers carry on the picket line read: "Working under 110 degrees, Sweating Like a Pig for \$6.15 after 7 years. No More," "Trabajando como mulas,

no te debes insultar" (Working like mules, don't let them insult you), and "Veye yo" (Keep an eye on them).

Up to 25 strikers at a time mass by the plant gate from 5:00 a.m. until late in the evening. They gather to sing, dance, blare whistles, and rush together into the driveway to shout at any scabs who come by. Children of the strikers join the picket, sometimes taking the bullhorn to lead the chants.

Leroy Forde is one of many strikers who accuse the company of discrimination. With 15 years experience in maintenance before being hired 14 months ago at Tartan, he was given \$8 per hour instead of the regular starting maintenance wage of \$12. A native of St. Kitts in the Caribbean, Forde said the company has not kept its promise of bringing him up to full scale after a year. Forde is solid behind the union, he said, because "we need protection and to defend ourselves from the company, which is trying to take advantage of us. They want to keep us down."

To win support for the fight against Tartan, the union is organizing strikers to speak out on Haitian radio programs based in south Florida. Strikers report that the company had been slowly bringing in workers from other plants in preparation for a strike, and about 20 workers from the plant here in Pompano Beach have crossed the line. Each morning the company also brings in a bus of workers from temporary agencies to try to break the strike, but some of the replacements have begun to leave the plant in disgust at the working conditions.

Donald Lorfilis, a 25-year-old student from Florida International University, came in on one of these buses. When he saw the picket signs in Creole, he decided to come out on his break and learn about what was going on. "I read the Creole signs because that's my first language," said Lorfilis, adding that for workers to be out picketing "the company must be disrespecting people in their jobs. I saw the conditions inside and they're trying to work people like robots." Another worker, driving through this industrial area looking for a job, stopped at the picket to find out what was going on and decided to put on a union button and stay for a while.

Striker Carmelita Doristrin is one of many day shift workers who stay on picket duty from early in the morning until well into the afternoon. She demands a \$1 an hour raise, but said that fighting the bosses' abusive treatment is just as important. While she hand-feeds a machine 300 sheets an hour, said Doristrin, "the bosses yell at us. They don't respect us. But they must be made to respect us because we are human beings."

Mike Italie is a garment worker in Miami.

Chicago laundry workers strike for a union

BY LISA POTASH
AND LISA-MARIE ROTTACH

CHICAGO—"I want a union so I can be treated like a human being," said Natalie Payton, one of the 35 workers on strike at the Five Star Laundry in Chicago.

On June 19, about 50 percent of the workers at the company walked out as part of a four-month fight to win union representation. Five Star is one of a number of local laundries that the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) has tried to organize over the last two years.

Many workers leading the strike are immigrants. "We're tired of tricks and lies and will stay out as long as it takes," said Jaime, 24, from Mexico. Maria, also from Mexico, pointed to the company's intimidation tactics. "They threatened those inside, saying whoever signed the union card would be fired. They signed anyway." Approximately 90 percent of the workforce have signed union cards. Around 40 employees have continued to work during the strike, in addition to the temporary workers that Five Star has brought in. The company has reduced all those working during the strike to temporary status.

The Five Star walkout is an unfair labor practices strike. UNITE charges Five Star with threatening to fire workers who support the union. Also, workers who wouldn't sign up for a pro-company outfit—Local 707 of the National Production Workers Union, which is not affiliated with the AFL-CIO—were told their paychecks would be held back. The union also charges that Five Star offered bribes to individual workers to cross the picket line, and that it changes conditions of work and production without first negotiating with the union.

Natalie Payton, who was picketing outside Five Star, said that the bosses "talk to you any kind of way. They don't ask you about overtime. They tell you. A supervisor came up to me and showed me the palm of his hand, where he'd written 1:30! They tell you to go to lunch by gesturing with their hands to their mouths to eat. And we get only one of our two 15-minute breaks," she said. "For how hard I work I deserve some respect. The company is getting new accounts but we're not benefiting. On Five Star's one-year anniversary, they gave us pizza!"

Prior to the walkout, workers started at \$6.50 an hour, usually topping out at \$7.25,

with a smaller number of workers getting up to around \$8.50. They get no benefits except a medical plan at great expense to individual workers.

Payton and Sherry Clark, both young Black workers who recently joined the strike, also reported that Black workers are not allowed to talk to each other while working. One boss told Payton that "Blacks don't like to work." Payton and Clark also pointed to individual favoritism as a problem. They mentioned a number of unsafe working conditions, including no air conditioning, exposed rollers within machines, and sharp machine corners that are supposed to be covered by rubber. Payton said, "We could drop dead. They don't care. They'd just cart

us out and send in some new workers."

UNITE has organized leafletting teams at hotels contracting with Five Star to let customers and hotel management know about issues of this strike. Three hotels have since canceled their contracts with the laundry company.

Several workers from the large UNITE-organized sewing plant Hart, Schaffner and Marx have joined in picketing and leafletting teams.

Lisa Potash and Lisa-Marie Rottach are both sewing machine operators and members of UNITE in Chicago. Potash is also the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress.

2,200 unionists walk out at Vancouver hotels

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Unionists walked off the job at seven major hotels here and set up picket lines in a fight for wage increases, better health and dental benefits, and improved pensions.

The 2,200 workers, organized by the Hotel, Restaurant, Culinary Employees and Bartenders Union (HRCEBU) Local 40, voted by a 97 percent margin to reject the offer from the Greater Vancouver Hotel Employers Association. The hotels are the Four Seasons, Westin Bayshore, Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel, the Holiday Inn, Delta Pacific Resort, the Renaissance Vancouver, and the Hyatt Regency.

Angered by the bosses' refusal to meet their demands and the slow pace of negotiations, workers at the Delta Vancouver Hotel in Richmond walked off the job on July 3 at 1:00 p.m. The union had issued a 72-hour strike notice and the workers decided to exercise their right to strike without sanction from Local 40. Workers on the picket line explained to *Militant* reporters that they had been without a contract since March and had discussed among themselves the need to take action. Taxi drivers and the operators of the hotel's bus for guests immediately respected the pickets.

As news of the strike at the Delta Airport Hotel spread, workers at the other hotels also began walking off the job. "It was a real grassroots movement," said Bruce who works in banquets at the Hyatt Regency. "In

the passion of the moment, we tore apart cardboard boxes to make signs. I'm thinking of keeping one of them as a souvenir," he continued. "Zero increase, zero work," the workers had written on several signs. Several hours later Local 40 officials gave their authorization to the strike.

Wages, benefits, and pension are key issues in the walkout. The Greater Vancouver Hotel Employers Association offered wage increases of 0, 1, and 1 percent over three years. "The tourism industry has made a lot of money over the last 15 years so we're asking for a fair wage that keeps up with inflation," said Victor, a doorman at the Renaissance. "We want at least 3 percent a year—the more the better," said one woman striker at the Delta Airport who requested that her name not be used because she feared reprisal from management after the strike. "Here everything is poor—poor wages, poor benefits, poor pensions. That is what we want to change," she said.

"Our dental coverage should be 100 percent, not 80 percent," explained Lielelotte Fett, who has been at the Renaissance Hotel since 1981. "We're on strike for better benefits and pensions," said Kulvinder, a room attendant at the Renaissance for 12 years. "I've been here for 25 years and I'll only get a pension of \$160," said a worker at the Delta Airport Hotel who asked that his name not be used.

The hotel workers are receiving support from other workers. "The offer from the

hotel owners was an insult," said Albert Reagan, a HRCEBU member at CARA flight kitchens who came to the Renaissance Hotel picket line to show his support. The Canadian Union of Public Employees in British Columbia has sent a letter of support, which is on the bulletin board of the picket line at the Renaissance Hotel. Strikers report that people driving by honk in support throughout the day.

In addition, about 100 housekeeping and laundry workers at the Pacific Inn in Surrey, a Vancouver suburb, have been locked out since June 23. The members of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 3000 are fighting against the contracting out of their jobs as the employer tries to bust the union. Jasminder and Surinder told *Militant* reporters that it was their first time on the picket line as they stopped cars to give drivers leaflets explaining the issues in their fight. They have worked at the hotel since it opened eight years ago.

"The owner pays contract workers only \$8 an hour but CAW members make \$10.88," explained Local 3000 vice president Jean Van Vliet. About 450 members of the local at other hotels are also in negotiations with the bosses at the height of Vancouver's busy tourist season.

Beverly Bernardo is a meat packer. Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of the International Association of Machinists, contributed to this article.

NY socialists launch drive to get on ballot

Continued from front page

meetings the weekend before the petitioning drive in order to get off to a strong start. They plan to collect over half the signatures before the start of the Active Workers Conference on July 27 through a daily effort that includes a team of workers and students who have volunteered days off to petition full-time.

In addition to Washington, D.C., supporters are organizing to place the socialist campaign on the ballot in Colorado, where papers have been filed; Washington State, where the petitions have been turned into the state; Iowa, which has 600 more signatures to go to meet the goal of 2,500; Minnesota where a big effort this week netted 1,674 signatures; Mississippi, where 150 of 2,000 have been collected, and New Jersey, which has completed its drive. In Florida, socialists are lining up 25 electors to meet ballot requirements. Supporters started the ballot drive in Rhode Island, and have signed up 618 people out of a goal of 2,300.

BY JANICE LYNN

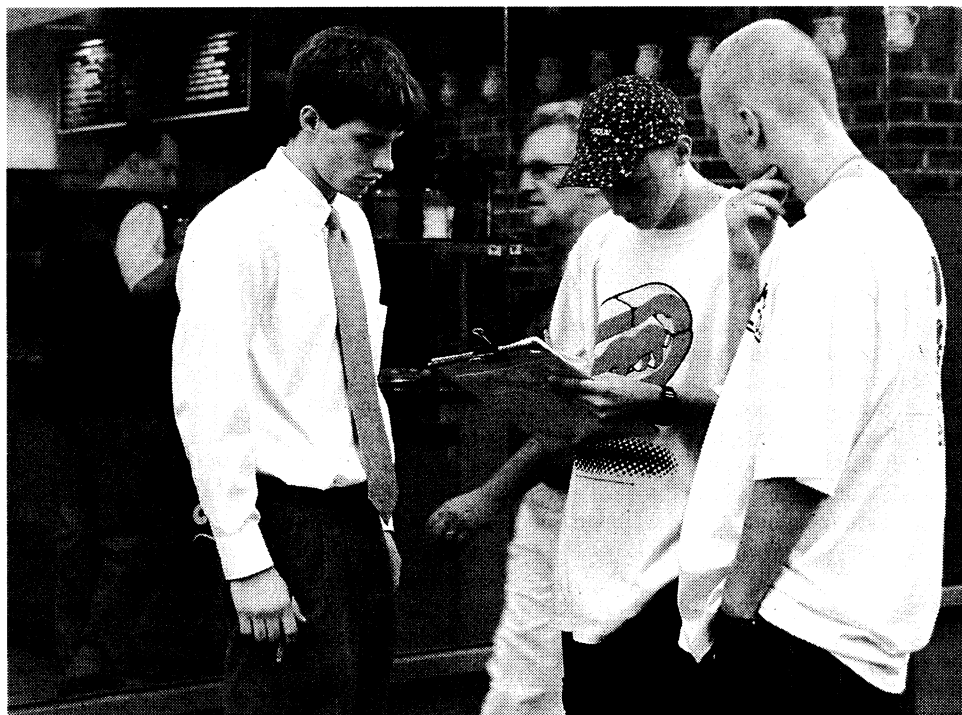
WASHINGTON—Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe spoke to scores of working people here July 7–10. “James Harris and I are traveling across this country to meet workers and youth who are resisting the offensive of the bosses,” Trowe told an audience at the Friday Militant Labor Forum.

Trowe pointed to the 5,000 people who turned out in Dearborn, Michigan, to protest the killing of a Black man, strikes by mine workers in the Western coalfields, struggles by meat packers in Minnesota to unionize, and rallies, strikes, and actions by janitors in many cities who are standing up for their rights against company assaults. “Our campaign is joining these picket lines and protests wherever they break out,” she said.

The forum followed several days of petitioning to get the socialist candidates on the ballot here. Two people who met petitioners came to the forum and one bought a subscription to the campaign newspaper, the *Militant*. A young woman who attended decided to help campaign the following day. Trowe visited four different locations in the city, talking with working people and encouraging them to sign the petitions that her supporters were circulating. Many who signed were glad to learn about the socialist campaign. One man signed up for a subscription to the Spanish-language campaign magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*. Altogether some 15 copies of the *Militant* were purchased along with several Pathfinder books and pamphlets. The day netted some 540 new signatures on petitions.

Brenda McDaniel, who signed to put the socialist candidates on the ballot, told Trowe, “It’s nice you’re a regular worker.” She volunteered to help distribute campaign flyers the next time campaigners come to the shopping center. A number of workers and youth were particularly appreciative of the socialist campaign’s stance against police brutality. One signer told of police harassment of youth in that area and invited the socialists to a community meeting the following week.

Trowe then went to Union Station and met with several railroad workers at an eatery there for an in-depth discussion on so-



Jacob Perasso, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, petitions in New York City July 12. Militant/Ruth Nebbia

cialism and other issues the unionists were concerned about. Amtrak worker Tom Headley took Trowe around and introduced her to a dozen or so other workers. The following morning Trowe and two campaign supporters met workers heading into the Smithfield ham plant in Landover, Maryland. The meat packers bought two copies of the *Militant* and four copies of the special *Perspectiva Mundial* supplement about the struggle of meat packers in Minnesota.

By the end of the second week of petitioning some 2,345 signatures were obtained on petitions towards the 3,320 required.

Socialist campaigners plan to collect well over this number by the August 15 deadline. They have also begun petitioning to place Socialist Workers candidate Sam Manuel on the ballot for delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives. Manuel attended the national convention of the NAACP in Baltimore July 9–12, and plans to participate in the August 26 march here in Washington to protest police brutality and racial profiling.

Janice Lynn is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

SWP presidential candidate Harris talks with meat packers and farmers in Iowa

BY JOE SWANSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—One of the first campaign stops by Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris was here in Iowa July 6 and 7. He spent the two days talking with working people, particularly packinghouse workers and farmers, and explaining a revolutionary working-class perspective.

Harris visited with campaign supporters at the afternoon shift change at the IBP plant in nearby Perry, Iowa. Later he met with some of these workers at the Perry public library.

One of them, originally from Mexico, asked Harris what the difference is between Cuba and China. Harris explained that in both countries working people had carried out powerful revolutions, breaking imperialist domination. Washington remains bent on undermining and ultimately overthrowing the workers states in both China and Cuba.

In China, however, a parasitic bureaucracy has usurped political power from workers and farmers, and seeks to stabilize its privileged position by seeking an accommodation with imperialism. In contrast, in Cuba there is a workers and farmers government with a genuinely communist leadership that responds to the interests of working people both in Cuba and internationally.

Other questions raised ranged from the recent elections in Mexico to how we can strengthen our unions here.

At a campaign forum in Des Moines organized by supporters of Harris’s campaign the next evening, a high school youth asked how working people can change their unions when there is a bureaucracy in control. Harris explained that the union is the membership, not just the officials. In the course of struggle on the picket lines and in the streets, the union ranks can gain confidence in their own capacities and begin to assert increasing control over their organization. This tendency can be seen in a number of fights today, from the strike by Western coal miners to the union-organizing struggle by packinghouse workers in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Edwin Fruit, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in the 4th district, chaired the campaign event. Fruit, who is also a member of the Concerned Citizens for Justice, introduced two of the leading activists of the group, which is demanding justice for Charles Lovelady, a young Black man who was killed by two security thugs at a local nightclub in February.

In the discussion, Harris saluted these

fighters and explained that this was one of the many struggles against police brutality and other violence perpetrated against working people. He cited the recent killing of a Black man by security guards in Dearborn, Michigan, and the protest by more than 5,000 working people in response. The killing of working people on the streets by the cops and other thugs are another form of the death penalty that is carried out every day in this country.

Fruit accompanied Harris to a downtown hotel where farmers and rural activists who are members of the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (ICCI) were having their annual state meeting. Farmers explained to the socialist candidates how, with the low prices and high expenses they faced, more and more of them would be driven off the land.

A rural activist from western Iowa told Harris how the large hog confinement factories, given free rein by the government, were creating environmental and health problems in the area. Harris replied that in May he had taken part in a fact-finding delegation with U.S. farmers to revolutionary Cuba. U.S. farmers know from experience that Washington does not side with them, so the delegation was impressed when they discovered firsthand that the Cuban government guarantees fair prices for farmers and facilitates technical aid and low-cost loans for them. Cuban farmers could not understand the concept of “foreclosure,” he said, as no Cuban can lose his or her farm today.

While in Iowa Harris was interviewed by the Associated Press, a columnist for the *Des Moines Register*, and several radio stations.

Trowe joins NY pro-choice action, meets young fighters

BY HILDA CUZCO

NEW YORK—“Women have to have control of their own reproductive rights. It’s part of the Constitution,” said Leah Graniela, 20, one of the dozens of women’s rights supporters attending the National Organization for Women (NOW) Rally for Reproductive Rights in front of the federal courthouse here.

The action celebrated the U.S. Supreme Court’s rejection of a Nebraska 1999 anti-abortion law that bans a medical procedure right-wingers call “partial birth abortion,” clinically known as D&E [dilation and evacuation] abortion, performed by doctors in the second trimester of pregnancy.

Like Graniela, there were other young women among the some 80 people present who came to the rally looking for actions to defend a woman’s right to choose abortion. Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president Margaret Trowe, talked to the activists and shared her experience as a long-time fighter for women’s rights.

“In Wichita, Kansas, the antiabortion forces shut down the abortion clinics in an organized national mobilization in 1992,” said Trowe to several activists gathered around. “But they were defeated after thousands mobilized to keep the clinics open.” That battle was won after pro-choice supporters mobilized from Baton Rouge, Loui-

siana, to New York by the thousands to defend the clinics and reaffirm that they should stay open.

Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign introduced Trowe to the activists at the rally. Pointing out the headline of the *Militant* on the meat packers struggle in Minnesota, Trowe said she is a unionist, and a meat packer herself, and that workers are seeking to transform the unions into fighting instruments for working people.

Several Stuyvesant High School students were also present at the rally. One of them, Cara Wentworth, 17 years old, told the SWP vice-presidential candidate that she was among the students that staged a walkout March 3 in protest against the acquittal of the cops that killed Amadou Diallo, an immigrant worker from Guinea.

Several hundred high school students had marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to a rally by the federal courthouse chanting, “No Justice, No Peace,” while dozens of Hunter High School students also marched from their school to a rally by Central Park.

Trowe introduced the *Militant* to her with the headline on the Supreme Court ruling, the Minnesota meat packers struggle, and others.

Wentworth expressed interest in the Young Socialists as well and talked to YS leader Olympia Newton.

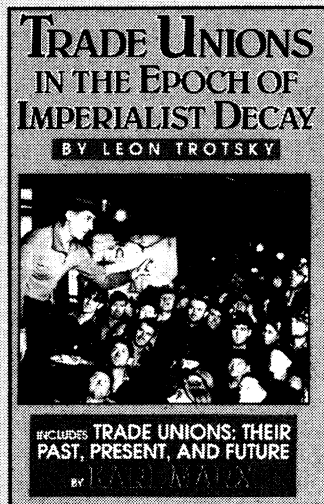
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Socialists discuss steps to merge party's activity with worker and farmer fightback

BY GREG McCARTAN
AND NORTON SANDLER

NEW YORK—At a four-day meeting here of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee June 24–27, meat packers from several regions of the country explained the struggle and ferment among fellow workers in that industry. In St. Paul, Minnesota, socialist workers are in the midst of a fight to win union recognition for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) at Dakota Premium Foods.

The stakes represented by the Minnesota battle were brought home by the news, on the eve of the meeting, about a UFCW organizing drive that has been launched in the Omaha, Nebraska, area among workers currently employed at ConAgra, Greater Omaha Packing, and Nebraska Beef plants.

Coal miners and members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) involved shoulder-to-shoulder with miners on strike against the Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co., as well as socialist workers who are active alongside farmers fighting to defend their land and livelihood, brought additional lessons of recent class-struggle developments to the discussion.

Garment workers—from Miami to Los Angeles, and from St. Louis to New York—brought their experiences of union struggles, actions to defend immigrant rights, and selling the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books to co-workers.

The June 24–27 meeting nominated James Harris for U.S. president and Margaret Trowe for vice president as the Socialist Workers Party ticket in this year's elections. Harris and Trowe are both veteran working-class fighters, unionists, and party leaders. A public meeting to launch the campaign was held over the weekend at Columbia University (see article and biographies of the candidates in the July 10 *Militant*).

Cause of the resistance

In an opening report to the meeting, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes emphasized that the resistance and struggles by working people in the United States today are a consequence of the real relative successes U.S. employers and their government have had in increasing productivity and widening their competitive edge over big-business rivals in Europe and Japan.

This has been done, not primarily through the use of computers, as claimed by many bourgeois economists and commentators, but through the intensification of labor by stretching out the working day and the workweek, speeding up production lines and the pace of work, and incorporating millions of immigrant workers into an expanding industrial working class in this country.

These preconditions have laid the objective basis for the emerging fights by workers today, Barnes said, and the bosses can't change the pace. They cannot and will not

slow down their production lines now, because the employers in Europe and Japan, striving to catch up, are pushing in the same direction. They now will have to fight the future-in-the-present while they continue to drive in a way that guarantees the conditions for its emergence.

The employers must now respond to the resistance in unions and factory workforces in order to maintain dominance over their imperialist competitors. By pushing and probing over the past eight years, the bosses

Premium Foods. When bosses came into the cafeteria where workers gathered that morning refusing to go to their work stations, they ran into a determined vanguard of working people, he said.

The union-organizing drive began in the midst of the sit-down strike. The pro-union slogan "¡Sí se puede!" (Yes we can!) became a common one at the plant in the following days. The fact that workers speak both Spanish and English, Pérez said, has not prevented them from communicating by find-



Striking UMWA members rally June 26 at Pittsburg and Midway's McKinley mine near Gallup, New Mexico. Through the steps taken over the past two years to fuse party's work with emerging worker and farmer fightback, SWP members and Young Socialists find themselves increasingly in the midst of these struggles.

have been able to weaken the unions, Barnes said. But weakening the unions is not enough—they must face a fight that will go through these weakened but not defeated basic defense organizations of the working class.

The bosses have drawn millions into the workforce, and what we are seeing is these very gravediggers of capitalism—as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels accurately explained in the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848—beginning to press back against them.

As part of this process, workers in the United States who were born in Mexico, Somalia, China, or other countries have, while retaining their original nationalities, increasingly also become "American" workers, a source of strength for the working class and a problem for the U.S. bosses.

Francisco Pérez described the seven-hour sit-down strike on June 1 and subsequent actions by packinghouse workers at Dakota

ing a common language in struggle.

Tom Fisher from St. Paul pointed out that the party's branches and fractions—units of communist workers in designated industries and unions—must be ready for outbreaks of struggle such as this one, since they can happen anywhere, and will.

"Workers at Dakota remained disciplined and unified, and they won some important concessions from the boss," he said. The challenge now is to keep organizing and responding to the company as the bosses use a carrot-and-stick approach toward individual workers at Dakota, hoping either to intimidate them or to lure them away from the union.

Becky Thompson, a leader of the party branch in St. Paul, explained how socialist workers and YS members in the city are getting an unprecedented response from workers in the area to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, the only publications that have been carrying consistent and truthful coverage of this struggle.

Frank Forrestal, a coal miner in Pennsylvania, explained conditions miners face on the job and the extent of the employers' assault on past gains won by the union. He gave the example of a recent incident in the mine where he works, in which for 45 minutes the workers underground were not notified that the fans in the mine had stopped functioning.

This can rapidly lead to a buildup of deadly methane gas, the cause of many mine explosions that have taken the lives of countless coal miners. The mine transportation system was shut down as a result. The mine crew had to walk underground as far as eight miles to reach the surface, taking some of the workers four hours to get safely out of the mine.

Jan Miller, a coal miner in the Western coalfields, described her recent visits to meet UMWA strikers at P&M mines near Gallup, New Mexico, and in Kemmerer, Wyoming. These miners are in the middle of what is shaping up as a prolonged battle against concessions demanded by the bosses on health care, overtime pay, and the length of the workday and workweek.

Fightback has begun

In his report Barnes said this resistance in the United States in many cases takes on greater political ramifications than it appears

on the surface because of what workers are increasingly having to confront. Immigrant workers not only have to stand up to the company and their hired thugs; they are also the targets of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops and other federally organized harassment and violence, Barnes noted. As these workers defend themselves against such attacks, they set an example to other workers in taking on political questions that are the most vital to the entire class.

This year, May Day marches in several cities across the country were organized by immigrant workers. These were proletarian-led actions placing political demands on the U.S. government, such as an end to INS workplace raids and deportations, and equal rights for all immigrants, Barnes emphasized.

Barnes noted that the working class in the United States, unlike that in most other imperialist countries, does not have a revolutionary-political tradition which grew out of resistance and struggle against a military dictatorship, fascist tyranny, or repressive state regime that threatened the rights and ability to politically organize by broad layers of the population. In Austria, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and elsewhere, millions of workers have organized revolutionary mobilizations that posed the question of power. The infusion of millions of immigrant workers from Mexico and Latin America who have revolutionary traditions and class-struggle experience under repressive regimes and dictatorships brings an important new element along these lines into the U.S. working class.

Organizing drives and struggles such as those by miners and steelworkers cropping up across the country are beginning to link up rural and urban toilers, as well as show the weight of the leadership of working people who are Black or immigrant, Barnes said.

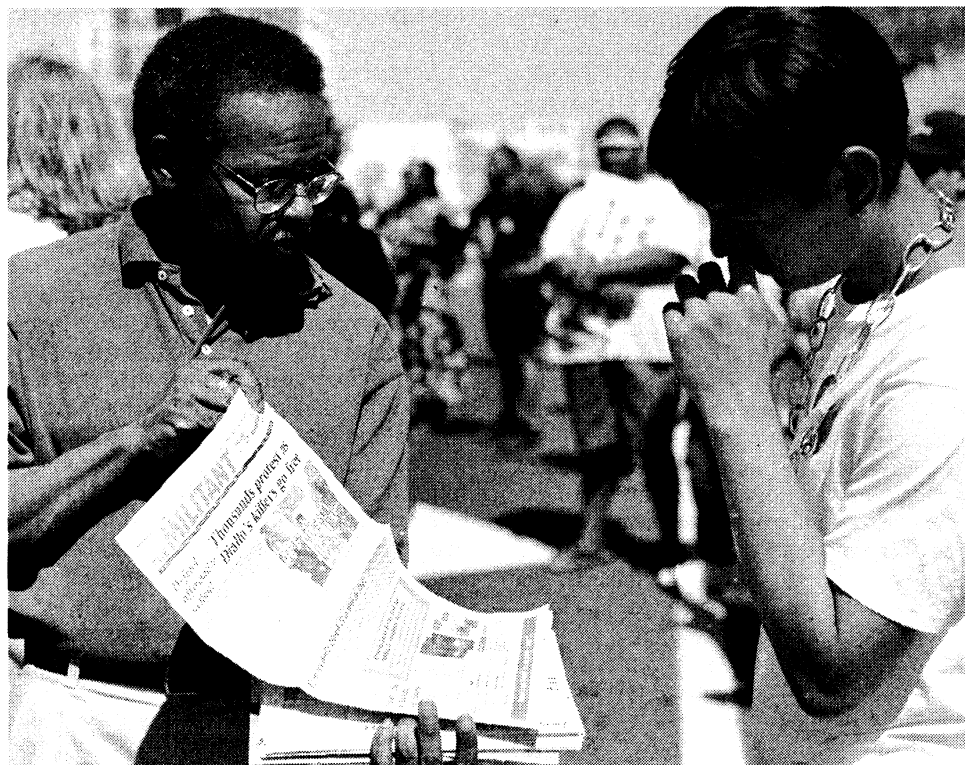
It is possible to see a class-struggle-minded leadership beginning to develop among the ranks in these fights today. These fighters do not start with any preconceived ideas other than determining through deeds who they trust and who they are fighting together with against the bosses and their government, Barnes stated. This is how they will judge communist workers and their party and program.

For the past two years, the party has been taking more and more steps to fuse its work with the emerging worker and farmer fightback. As a result, party and Young Socialists members find themselves in the midst of these struggles. As this happens, worker leaders of the revolutionary party step forward and are chosen by fellow fighters who recognize the qualities and attributes of proletarian leaders. How fighting co-workers judge them will increasingly be an important criteria for the party in the election of its leadership.

Placing these class-struggle developments in the broader political picture, Barnes noted ultrarightist leader Patrick Buchanan's success in taking over the Reform Party. This means that today a fascist-minded political figure has a nationwide party, with access to federal funds and other resources, to use as his political organizing center. This is a new feature of U.S. politics, Barnes said. Buchanan will use this party to keep one foot planted in a national electoral form as he works to develop a cadre who, down the road, will fight in the streets against the working class.

The strikers involved in militant struggles today, Barnes said, represent the first seeds of what will become the working-class answer to the Buchanans and their street thugs of the coming years. The lessons and working-class methods of struggle they are acquiring through experience today—from picket lines to sit-down strikes—are an invaluable preparation for these future battles.

Communist workers will have a new weapon in their political arsenal with the publication by Pathfinder of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Education—The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism*. The booklet's contents, which are taken from *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, by Jack Barnes, together with an introduction by the author, take up



SWP presidential candidate James Harris selling *Militant* at March 7 demonstration in Tallahassee, Florida, to defend affirmative action. Socialists are meeting increased interest by militant workers and farmers in revolutionary literature.

some of the broad political questions that were addressed at the SWP leadership meeting (the introduction is reprinted elsewhere in this issue).

Class struggle in U.S. and Cuba

Mary-Alice Waters, a party leader and editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, presented a report on "The Convergence of the Crisis of Class-Struggle Politics in Cuba and the United States."

The intertwining of the class struggle in Cuba and in the United States has been brought more sharply into focus over the past year, she said.

Through the last decade of confronting the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis, the Cuban working class has come out stronger, while at the same time resistance by workers and farmers in the United States has increased. This combined development is the fundamental reason that six-year-old Elián González was finally able to return home to Cuba, Waters said. If not for these political facts, Washington would have felt considerably less pressure to modify its arrogant refusal to respect Cuba's sovereignty and return the boy.

Waters explained that the Clinton administration seized on the unexpected opportunity offered by the case of the child both to strike at Cuba's sovereignty and to set precedents damaging to the rights of working people by strengthening the powers of the INS to implement policies and procedures exempt from normal judicial appeal and review.

Throughout the past seven months since the case began, the Socialist Workers Party both demanded that Washington immediately return the child to Cuba and kept posing the fundamental class questions involved, Waters said. This included a clear stance that the INS is a deadly enemy of working people, and that workers and farmers must oppose moves to strengthen the powers of Washington's police agencies and executive branch of government. Waters noted that communist workers took the campaign to defend Cuba's sovereignty and the rights of the working class into the mines, mills, and factories, and to fighters across the country.

Rachele Fruit, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Miami, said political developments in that city "help make it more clear that the class struggle in the United States is connected to Cuba. For example, at a recent event in defense of the Cuban revolution, a Cuban activist in the Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community (ATC) reported that workers at the plant where he works, RC Aluminum, were involved in a union-organizing drive. They're winning support from other workers in the city, like those at Goya Foods, who are fighting for a contract. Socialist workers in Miami have joined in promoting solidarity with this fight."

The political discussions and interest sparked by the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books, as described by participants in the National Committee meeting, said Waters, are strikingly similar to the response by revolutionary fighters in Cuba, who give serious consideration to the articles in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* and appreciate the class clarity they get from no other source in the United States.

Waters noted the importance of the two recent delegations of working, fighting farmers from the United States who visited Cuba. The delegations, hosted by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), were made up of farmers from several different regions of the United States who have been involved in protest actions against the devastating conditions they face.

A recent Chicago Militant Labor Forum and lively discussion featuring three members of a delegation that visited Cuba in May—Randy Jasper, a Wisconsin dairy farmer; Basu, an Illinois organic vegetable farmer; and Maggie Trowe, a Minnesota packinghouse worker—showed how easily and naturally U.S. workers and farmers involved in class-struggle developments link their conditions in battles to those of the fighting toilers in Cuba, and how they seek to learn from each other. "They were talking about their trip to Cuba," Waters noted, "but it wasn't a 'Cuba meeting.' It was about deepening the struggle here."

Through their experiences as they try to change what they face, farmers can more

and more see the common proletarian condition the toilers face, and can also be attracted to the potential power of the working class and the revolutionary perspectives the Socialist Workers Party advances, Waters emphasized.

Ted Leonard, a Boston textile worker, and Joel Britton, a Chicago-area packinghouse worker, reported on discussions they each have had with farmers who were part of these delegations. These farmers were eager to speak about what they had learned about life in Cuba, which contrasts sharply with the common distortions prevalent in the big-business media in this country.

Joe Swanson, a veteran socialist from Iowa, pointed out that the Socialist Workers Party will recruit farmers as well as workers in meatpacking plants, mines, and other industries. "We will urge farmers who join the party to help recruit other farmers like themselves," said Swanson.

Branches and industrial union fractions

A centerpiece of the National Committee meeting was how to strengthen the party's branches and industrial union fractions, and put them in fighting trim as the party deepens its participation in these struggles.

One aspect of the restructuring of the party has begun with a few branches moving to set up halls in workers' and industrial districts in the towns and cities where they are located. This is not unusual for a proletarian party in times of an upswing in labor battles, Barnes said.

He pointed to the seamen's branch of the party in the 1940s, which was located in the Chelsea area of Manhattan, close to the docks along the Hudson River. The very location and character of the hall made it virtually impossible for its entire membership not to become involved in the struggles of merchant seamen, as well as other working-class protests that broke out. They were able to harness the full striking power of the branch, both sailors and non-sailors.

Our goal, Barnes said, is to get the hall of every party branch located in workers' and industrial districts, so the very act of doing political work in the area near the hall leverages the work of every single member of the party.

Paul Pederson, a worker in Pathfinder's printshop and a leader of the party's Brooklyn branch, described how that branch is organizing plant-gate and street-corner sales in order to learn more about the garment and meatpacking industries in that borough of New York. "This is how we are going to discover where we need a hall to operate out of in order to effectively orient to meat packers and garment workers and their unions," he said.

The National Committee discussed the next steps in what has been a two-year campaign, as a report by Norton Sandler was titled, to "Structure the Party Through Mass



Meat packers on the line at Smithfield's giant slaughterhouse in Tarheel, North Carolina. As immigrant workers stand up to company assaults and their hired thugs, as well as to the immigration cops, they help set an example for other workers in taking on political questions that are the most vital to the entire working class.

Work." Sandler, from San Francisco, who organizes the party's Trade Union Committee, returned to some of the questions involved in the ongoing struggle by workers at Dakota Premium Foods. "The workers at Dakota are concentrating on the goal of winning the union representation election set for July 21. The workers and union organizers are producing a newsletter called *Workers' Voice*, which answers the company's antiunion moves and organizes workers into the fight," he said.

"Every day counts in an organizing drive," Sandler emphasized. "We can and must help link fighters together, working through the existing union and UFCW structures."

"Fighting workers correctly consider the union ours and the union hall ours," Sandler said. "The officials and functionaries are the officials and functionaries of the union, which is ours. We work to make the union into a fighting instrument and, through these struggles, to develop a leadership that can build on these conquests and widen the battle."

Sandler described the scope of the struggles that have opened in the coalfields over the past nine months, registering the beginnings of a social movement led by miners. He pointed to a series of strikes; a rally the previous day of 150 miners and their supporters in New Mexico, where the union has established a women's support group for the strike; and the May 17 national rally called by the UMWA to demand government funding for miners' lifetime health care and pension plans.

The drive by the coal bosses against the UMWA and conquests such as health care affect broad regions of the country and hun-

dreds of thousands of working people beyond miners themselves, he said. "The fact that there were thousands of retired miners and their supporters, including a few hundred high school youth, at the May 17 rally in Washington is a sign of strength for our class," Sandler said.

"We have met a real interest in the *Militant* among miners who deeply appreciate both the objective coverage the paper gives their struggles and the broader picture of the world it contributes. Miners in struggle expect socialist workers to be there on the picket lines and in the midst of the battle," Sandler said.

He described recent moves by socialist workers in the United Auto Workers union (UAW) to organize a national fraction based in key sectors of auto, aerospace, and agricultural implements plants. Over the past years, the concentration of socialists in these key industries had become more diffuse, and all fraction members employed in UAW-organized shops had ended up working in plants alone.

Socialist workers in the UAW discussed the need to reverse this situation at their meeting in Chicago at the end of April, and decided to get communist workers together in units of two in priority factories by June 15.

"No one functioning alone in a plant is a fraction of the communist movement," Sandler said. "The national fraction is made up of local fractions, not individual members holding a card in the union. Party members in the UAW decided to strengthen the fraction because of what is before us right now in the class struggle," he said. "Our goal is to establish a national UAW fraction again,"

Continued on Page 12

Ohio conference to highlight working-class resistance, building the communist movement

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Workers fighting for unions and decent contracts, farmers resisting dispossession of their land, and youth protesting the death penalty and other brutalities of the capitalist system will mark the upcoming international Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, July 27-29.

The conference, sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists, will feature special presentations by leaders of the SWP on the meaning of the working-class resistance that is unfolding—the *si se puede* confidence that is growing among fighters today; class struggle politics in Cuba and the United States; and lessons for building the communist movement coming out of recent union struggles.

For any worker, farmer, or young person involved in struggle and who is seeking to link up with other fighters, the Active Workers Conference will be the place to be.

Panels featuring participants in recent struggles by working people will draw those attending the conference into the discussion of the changes in working-class consciousness that are coming about as a result of the bosses' unceasing drive against workers on the job—through speedup, cutting back on

safety, and extending the workday.

Joining the panels will be coal miners building solidarity for the Pittsburgh and Midway miners on strike in New Mexico and Wyoming, meat packers involved in union organizing drives in the Midwest, garment and textile workers fighting for union rights, and Young Socialists in different parts of the country getting jobs in these industries and becoming part of the emerging resistance.

Other panelists will speak about the growing opportunities to build the communist movement today. In addition, a number of classes on basic works of Marxism will be given.

A highlight of the conference will be celebrating the success over the past year of supporters of the communist movement in their efforts to put in electronic form the entire array of Pathfinder books that are the indispensable political weapons needed by working-class fighters today. The project to digitize all these titles is making it possible to keep a pipeline of revolutionary books flowing in more readable and attractive formats.

Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteers will sponsor a display of their accomplishments

and how their work is organized. They are also planning to meet on the day after the conference, Sunday, July 30, to train new volunteers who have recently signed up for the project and others who are taking on new tasks.

Displays at the conference will feature the work of the printshop that produces Pathfinder books, and the steps taken over the past year to increase productivity to meet the demand for revolutionary literature. A special sale will be held at the conference with a big discount on the 60-plus newly reprinted Pathfinder titles.

Over the next two weeks, socialist workers and young socialists will be petitioning to put the working-class alternative on the election ballot in a number of states. In addition, teams of socialists will step up visiting picket lines and joining rallies of workers and farmers fighting for their rights. Interested working people and youth met through this work can be invited to attend the conference.

If you are interested in attending the conference, get in contact with the Socialist Workers Party branch or Young Socialists chapter nearest you (see page 12 for the listing).

The working class and the The fraud of education reform under cap

The following is the introduction by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, to the Pathfinder pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*, to be issued in July. The pamphlet contains an answer by Barnes to a question he was asked at a 1993 socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. The edited transcript of that talk and discussion are printed in *Capitalism's World Disorder—Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* in the chapter entitled "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder." This introduction is copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press and is reprinted by permission.

Education "reform" is at the top of the "issues" page of the presidential campaign

Introduction to new pamphlet

handbills we discover packed in our mailboxes, unsolicited. While the Gore and Bush campaigns express differences over "school choice," vouchers, funding levels, degrees of "federalism," limits of testing, and so on, they share the same underlying dog-eat-dog assumption: that education is about ensuring that your family's children have the best shot at getting ahead in the lifetime struggle of each against all. And they hold in common an even more fundamental, unstated assumption: only the children of the propertied rulers and professional middle classes

really need an education—as opposed to mind-deadening "training"—and that, with a few individual exceptions, only those children will receive an education in any meaningful sense.

This pamphlet approaches education from the opposite, working-class point of view—as a *social* question. As the fight for the transformation of learning into a *universal* and *lifetime* activity. It presents education as part of preparing workers and farmers "for the greatest of all battles in the years ahead—the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society, as we collectively educate ourselves and learn the exploiters in the process."

A matter of social solidarity

Each capitalist candidate and her or his paid promoters in the big-business press wrap proposals for Social Security "reform" in the same assumptions as education "reform." Everything is centered on "looking out for number one."

Gore and Bush present slightly differing views as to how individuals from the middle class or better-off layers of working people can realize a superior return on retirement nest eggs used for speculation in stocks and bonds. Both the Democrats and Republicans, with different emphases, advocate private savings accounts for those individuals who can afford them, plus, in some combination, reduced pension benefits, increased employee taxation, and an older retirement age.

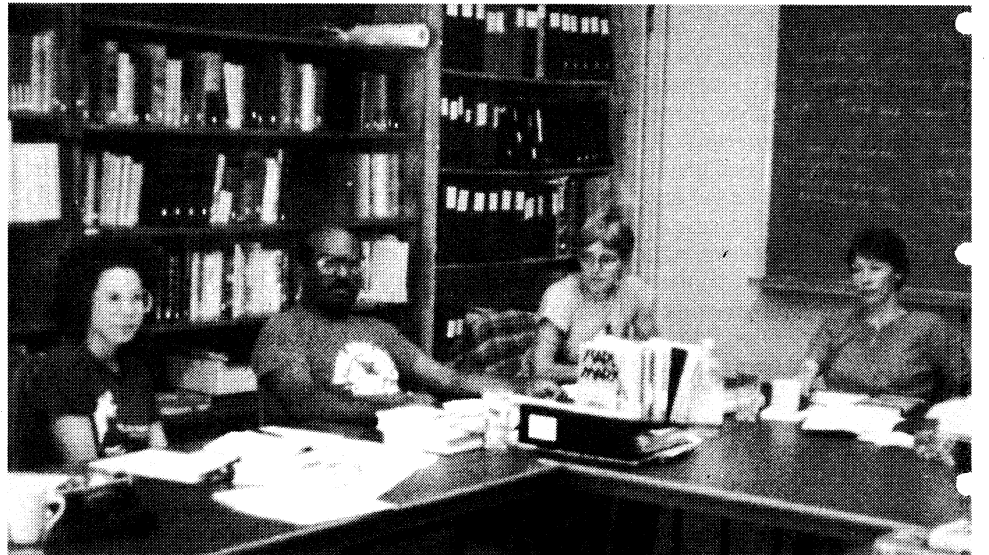
In contrast, class-conscious workers and labor and farm militants approach Social Security as a matter of *social solidarity*. The toiling majority in city and countryside, whose labor transforms nature and in the

process produces all wealth, have a *right* to a *social wage*, not just an individual wage. We have a right to lifetime health care, disability compensation, and a secure retirement. These measures are for all, and thus in the interests of all. We fight to push back the omnipresent "devil take the hindmost" assumptions pervading bourgeois society in order to establish collaborative working-class space—a place for confidence-building.

Schools under capitalism are not institutions of learning but of social control, aimed

During that same period, 312 people across the United States were killed in prison death chambers. Not only on death row but also in "civil society," the noose still haunts a land for which "Strange Fruit" would be a more appropriate national anthem than the "Star-spangled Banner."

Both Gore and Bush are champions of these weapons of class terror, calling for more cops, restricted rights of appeal and parole, and stiffer penalties, including capital punishment. During the 1992 presidential campaign, Democratic aspirant Clinton



The Militant
Until the capitalist system is overturned, "the only 'liberal education' available to any fighter who wants one is political education within the workers movement." So says Jack Barnes in the new pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. Above: Socialist Workers Party leadership school in session, 1986. Organized around an intensive study and discussion of the political writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, founding leaders of the modern communist workers movement, the leadership school was launched as an integral part of the party's turn to the industrial working class and unions at the opening of the 1980s.

at reproducing the class relations and privileges of the prevailing order. The deference and obedience the rulers seek to inculcate in the classroom are backed up on the streets by cops' clubs and automatic weapons.

Executions on the street

Far more working people are executed by a policeman's bullet, chokehold, or hog-

"Schools under capitalism are aimed at reproducing the class relations and privileges of the prevailing order."

tying than by lethal injection or electrocution, even with the unrelenting climb in state-sanctioned murders since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment in 1976. Although local, state, and federal governments keep no accurate records on individuals killed by cops, a recent survey based on a search of U.S. newspapers from 1997 alone turned up accounts of some 2,000 deaths at the hands of police and prison guards between 1990 and the opening of 1998—clearly just the tip of the iceberg. (How many unreported killings, to cite just one example, were carried out by *la migra*—the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service's hated Border Patrol?)

made a public spectacle of his return to Arkansas to oversee the execution of Ricky Ray Rector, one of four in that state during Clinton's years as governor. Subsequently, the Clinton-Gore administration has been responsible for two major federal laws expanding capital punishment as an instrument of terror: the 1994 Federal Death Penalty Act, which made some sixty additional federal offenses punishable by death; and the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (even the name speaks volumes!), which further restricts federal court appeals rights of those in state prisons.

For his part, Bush has presided over 136 prisonhouse state killings during his five years as governor—fully one-fifth of all those in the United States since 1976. A shroud of silence prevents an accounting of how many more working people were killed in that state during those years by Texas Rangers, local police, *la migra*, sheriffs and their deputies, and rightist thugs—often including the former list in civvies.



Photo: Charles Peterson, courtesy of Don Peterson
Billie Holiday at a 1939 recording session of "Strange Fruit": "Southern trees bear a strange fruit, blood on the leaves and blood at the root. Black body swinging in the Southern breeze. Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees."

¡Sí se puede!

ACTIVE WORKERS CONFERENCE

July 27–29 at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio

Workers, farmers, and fighting youth involved in the resistance of working people that increasingly marks politics in the United States and worldwide are making plans to attend an Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio. Participants in these fights will exchange and generalize their experiences, and draw on the broader lessons and continuity of the international working-class struggle to chart a road forward and help in building the communist movement.

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- ♦ Structuring the revolutionary party through mass work
- ♦ Class-struggle politics in Cuba and the United States
- ♦ Labor resistance from the Midwest packinghouse organizing campaigns, to the Western coal miners strikes, to the fights by garment and textile workers
- ♦ Farmers fight for their land
- ♦ Supporting the working-class campaign in the 2000 elections
- ♦ Building a proletarian youth organization
- ♦ Using the growing leverage of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books
- ♦ Producing the books workers of the world need



L.A. march for labor, immigrant rights

transformation of learning

italism

State-sanctioned, or state-encouraged, murders on the streets and in the prisons combined, however, still fall far short of the numbers of workers killed each year as a result of the employers' profit-driven speedup, brutal intensification of labor, and lengthening of hours. Both life and limb of workers in the United States are being sacrificed on the altar of sharpening competition for markets among U.S. capitalists, and between them and their rivals worldwide.

More than 6,000 workers died from fatal injuries at work in 1998, the latest year for which U.S. government statistics are available. Another 50,000 died from job-related illnesses that year. And 5.9 million workers were injured or made sick on the job—including more than 75,000 reported cases of carpal tunnel and other repetitive-motion injuries and more than 250,000 related illnesses. (These "official" figures are grossly understated, moreover, since they are based on uncorroborated employer reports and exclude 21 million federal, state, and local government employees. And every worker in a factory, mine, or field knows how many millions of injuries go unreported due to fear of lost wages, disciplinary action, or other management retaliation.)

As throughout the history of capitalism, the brutal intensification of labor and stretching out of the workday and workweek drive down the hourly wages of the working class, as well. In 1993, when the talk from which this pamphlet is excerpted was given, the working-class movement in the United States was in the initial years of a retreat, after some half a decade of a modest revival in union struggles in the latter 1980s. Real wages on average were still well below what they had been at the opening of the 1970s.

The "union movement has gotten weaker and real wages have been pushed down," the opening paragraphs of the excerpt reprinted here emphasize. "The price of our labor power has been driven down by the bosses." Within limits set by the exploitation of labor by capital under bourgeois social relations, the pamphlet notes, what workers get paid is conditioned by the success of labor, through struggle, in raising the wage level of workers on the lowest rungs of the ladder.

Workers show capacity to resist

Today, in mid-2000, workers in the United States are in the third year of an accelerated, if still uneven, upturn in resistance to the employers' assaults. The buying power of workers' wages has still not recovered its level of thirty years ago, and the renewed struggles have initially ended more often in standoffs than substantial gains for working people. But where workers stand together and fight, they are demonstrating their capacity to push the employers back, take some ground, and change themselves enough in the process to arrive in better shape for the next battle.

As this pamphlet was being prepared for publication, a powerful example of such resistance exploded in South St. Paul, Minnesota. On June 1, 2000, packinghouse workers at Dakota Premium Foods carried out a seven-hour sit-down strike against the company's cranking up the speed of the production line all the way from the kill and out through packaging. By the end of the day, plant management agreed, among other things, to slow the line, permit workers' representatives to monitor line speed, and stop forcing injured workers to stay on the job.



Rob Amberg/Impact Visuals

Workers at S. Carolina BMW auto plant. "It's a lie that the capitalist class needs for workers to be educated. They need for us to be obedient, not to be educated. Do you have to be literate to work on the railroad? In an auto plant? I don't think so; everything is color-coded, or number-coded."

That very same day, these workers at Dakota Premium, the majority of them immigrants from Mexico, launched an organizing drive to bring in United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789. The results of this initial effort to win a majority

for union representation will be decided by a vote in late July.

At about the same time, also in the Twin Cities, more than 400 members of Teamsters Local 792 struck the Pepsi Bottling Group over health and pension benefits and

management's wage offer. Strikers are deploying roving pickets that follow trucks that leave the plant driven by management, and then picket outlets where deliveries are being made. Pepsi has hired some 100

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Capitalism's World Disorder

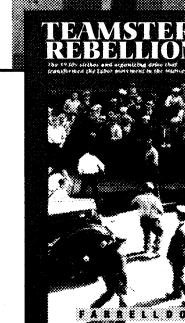
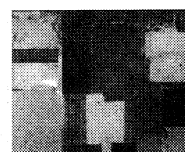
Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

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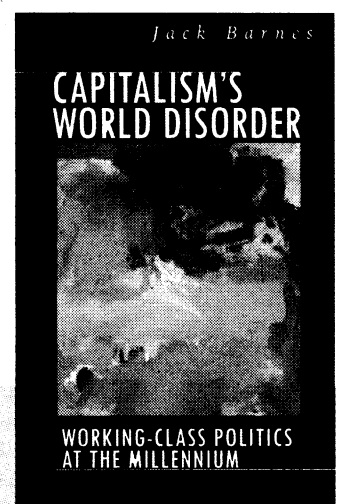
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The working class and the transformation



Che Guevara, a leader of Cuba's revolutionary government and Communist Party, presents award for voluntary work at August 1964 union gathering. "Work should be the way Che Guevara talked and wrote about it," says Jack Barnes in new pamphlet. "Factories and other workplaces should be organized to promote continual requalification and ongoing education. When that day comes, then there will be something that can truly be called education."

Continued from previous page

Huffmeister Security thugs in an effort to intimidate the Teamsters, who remain on strike as this is written.

Simultaneously, some 1,500 housekeepers, dishwashers, cooks, and other members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 17 in the Twin Cities organized a strike beginning June 16 that over a two-week period shut down services at seven of nine major hotels in the bargaining unit. The strikers—the majority immigrants from Bosnia, Somalia, and various countries in Latin America—won substantial wage increases and other employer concessions.

Underlining the point made at the opening of this pamphlet about the determination of wage levels, the lowest-paid workers in these unionized hotels in Minneapolis and St. Paul will now make nearly a \$1.50 more per hour than starting workers on the

cut or kill floors of a major union packinghouse in Los Angeles. That's quite a turnaround from the situation even a few years ago. What's more, at the opening of the 1980s, just prior to a major assault by the meatpacking bosses on working conditions and pay, packinghouse workers' wages were 13 percent higher on average than those in other manufacturing jobs.

Coal miners fight concession demands

Some 530 United Mine Workers (UMWA) members are currently on strike at two Western mines owned by the Pittsburgh and Midway Coal Co. (P&M), a division of Chevron. Members of UMWA Local 1332 at the McKinley mine in Tse Bonito, New Mexico, 90 percent of whom are members of the Navajo nation, are fighting a company assault on overtime pay, while members of UMWA Local 1307 in Kemmerer, Wyoming, are resisting management efforts

to impose a twelve-hour workday, seven days a week, with no overtime pay for weekends. P&M is demanding concessions on medical and pension benefits from workers at both mines.

Fights such as these, whatever their initial outcomes, are shattering myths about the working class and labor movement in the United States promoted by the bosses and their media pitchmen over the past decade and echoed by middle-class radicals as a rationalization of their own political, and individual, course of life and work.

What about the self-serving and reactionary notion that immigrants are a barrier to unionization, hired and permitted to stay in the country by the bosses in order to divide the workforce and turn the shopfloor into an atomized Tower of Babel? These workers are showing in practice, to the horror of the

employers, that they are not only Mexican, Somali, or Chinese, but are also part of the U.S. working class—"American workers," if you please—fighting shoulder to shoulder with fellow packinghouse workers, sewing machine operators, hotel employees, construction workers, auto assemblers, janitors, and many other U.S.-born workers who are African-American or whose skin color happens to be classified as "white."

How fares the illusion of the coal operators and their class brethren that the UMWA, long looked to as an example by other fighting workers and unionists, is now on its last legs? That is belied not only by strikes and other miners' resistance on both sides of the Mississippi over the past couple years. It also ignores the beginnings of a social movement building in coal communities across the United States today to defend federally-guaranteed health care benefits won through decades of union battles. UMWA-initiated rallies in Alabama, Utah, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Indiana—and a national demonstration of 8,000 in Washington, D.C., on May 17—have mobilized thousands of working and retired miners, family members, high school students, and others.

This increasing resistance is bringing together workers fighting the employers' assault on hours and working conditions, and farmers struggling to hold on to the land they till in face of rising indebtedness to the banks, falling prices for their produce from monopoly distributors, and discrimination by federal agencies. It is bringing together a vanguard of working people who are male and female; who speak different tongues; of all skin colors and national origins; from younger and older generations; union and currently nonunion; and with varying levels of formal education. The toilers are speeding up this process as they fight together, side-by-side—before they agree on many questions, and often with minimal initial ability to speak with one another. These vanguard proletarians, in town and country, are being impelled to consider new ideas, to read more widely, to broaden their scope, to begin expanding the limits of what they previously believed they, and others like themselves, were capable of.

It is to these labor and farmer militants, and the revolutionary-minded youth drawn to their line of march, that this pamphlet is directed.

✦

The talk on "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder," from which the following question and response are drawn, was prepared for regional socialist educational conferences held in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Des Moines, Iowa, in April 1993. The conferences featured reports that highlighted the interrelationship between the class struggle in the United States and the battle being waged by working people in Cuba to defend their revolutionary government during the difficult years following the abrupt end of favorable trade and aid relations with the former Soviet Union coupled with stepped-up economic aggression by the United States government.

At the Greensboro gathering, workers and youth participated from Pennsylvania to

Florida, and from Texas to Washington, D.C. During the discussion period, Gerardo Sánchez, a packinghouse worker from Pittsburgh, asked the question that led to the answer developed in the pages that follow. Less than a year earlier, before moving to

“Where workers stand together and fight, they are demonstrating their capacity to take some ground.”

”

Pennsylvania, Sánchez had worked at the plant in South St. Paul, Minnesota, that later became Dakota Premium Foods. He was there during a period when the UFCW lost an employer-promoted decertification vote in the plant after failing to secure a contract.

The issues raised by Sánchez were not ones that had been addressed in the talk, and I had no notes or clippings with me related to them. But the fraud of education under capitalism, and especially the revolutionary transformation of learning by the working class, are questions that have been with the communist workers movement since its origins, and I had thought about them and listened to other veteran Marxists who had thought about them over the years.

Hypocrisy of capitalist education

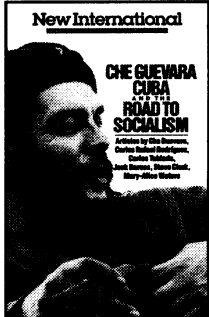
At the conclusion of the discussion period, I was pleased when two long-time teachers from North Carolina who were in the audience, the parents of a young socialist, approached me to say how much they appreciated the answer. Neither of them was active in the workers movement, much less a communist, and both were highly dedicated to their work. But they told me that the more effort they had put into trying to impart learning and habits of study to their students over the decades, the more they had become convinced of the hypocrisy and failure of the education system as it currently exists. What I had explained rang true to them, even if from a very different life perspective than mine.

Six years later, in early 1999, the Greensboro talk plus four others from mid-1992 through December 1998 were collected and published by Pathfinder Press under the title, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. It is a companion to *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, first published in 1981 and reissued in a second, expanded edition in 1994.

In March 2000 Mary-Alice Waters and I spoke at a West Coast meeting in San Francisco celebrating some new steps forward by the Socialist Workers Party as well as the growing interest in Pathfinder books—first and foremost, those such as the ones noted above dealing with changes in the working class and class struggle in the

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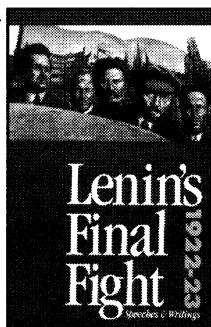
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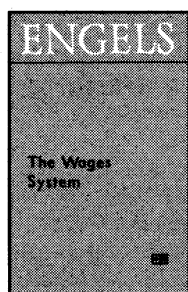
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The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism
By Jack Barnes

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity. That is the historic truth."

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

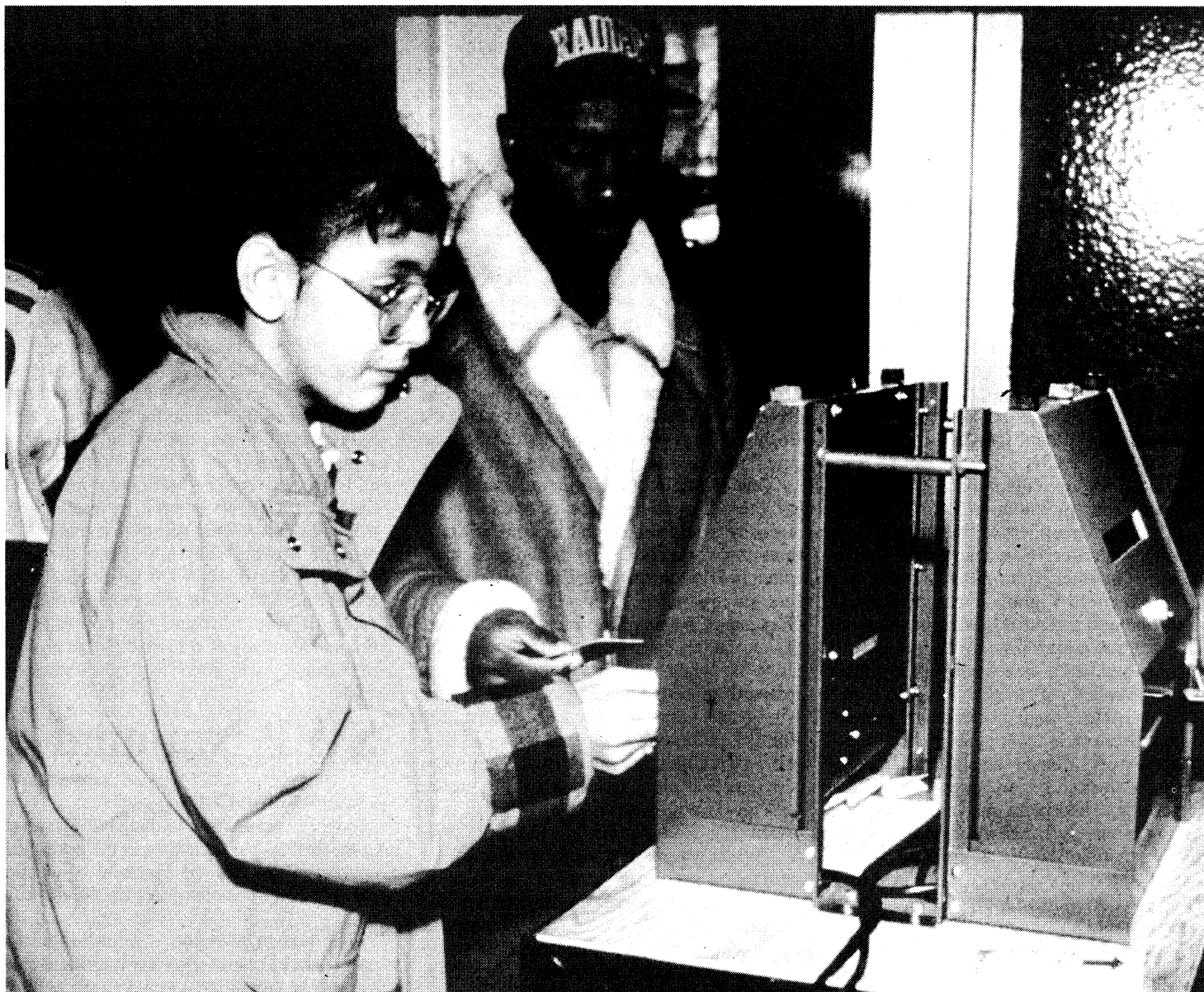
of learning—new Pathfinder pamphlet

United States—that had been shown by participants in what has now become an annual international book fair in Havana, Cuba. During the reception that preceded the program, Harry Ring—a veteran of the communist movement, with more than sixty years of unbroken activity—made a point of seeking us out. He said he knew we were loaded with political responsibilities, and, since that wasn't about to change, he urged me to put other things aside for a few days sometime soon to prepare this excerpt from *Capitalism's World Disorder* as a pamphlet that could be sold widely to working people and youth. I can't say for sure that this effort would never have been made if it weren't for an insistent suggestion from this longtime worker-bolshevik. But it certainly would not have reached fruition so soon.

A short time later, Robin Maisel, a veteran of some thirty-five years in the communist movement, expanded Harry's campaign. He sent a letter proposing that this and several other sections of *Capitalism's World Disorder* be turned into pamphlets that could be inexpensively produced and broadly circulated. Robin, a member of the team of almost 200 supporters of the Socialist Workers Party who have taken on the task of preparing every single Pathfinder title in digital form so they can be kept in print at less cost, utilizing the most advanced computer-to-plate technology now being run by Pathfinder's print shop, offered to take the lead in working with other party supporters to raise the funds for this particular publishing project. That pushed it over the line, and we got to work preparing this pamphlet—simultaneously in English, Spanish, and French.

We hope readers benefit from the results of the initiative taken by these two stalwart pamphleteers of the revolutionary workers movement.

Jack Barnes
July 12, 2000



High school students herded through a metal detector in Bushwick, a section of Brooklyn, New York. "The deference and obedience the rulers seek to inculcate in the classroom are backed up on the streets by cops' clubs and automatic weapons." Tom McKitterick/Impact Visuals

Pathfinder Reprint volunteers step up output, hone skills

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEWYORK—Workers in the Pathfinder printshop here, and supporters of the communist movement across North America and around the world, will be registering their accomplishments at the upcoming July 27-29 Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio. Organizers of the international Pathfinder Reprint Project plan to win new forces to their efforts.

A highlight of the conference will be a big sale of the nearly 100 basic works of Marxism and other revolutionary books and pamphlets that have been put in digital form since mid-1998 (see ad on this page).

The volunteers are taking big strides forward in their work to keep all 350-plus of the publisher's titles in print. "Production is up more than 53 percent over last year," Peggy Brundy explained to a recent meeting of the Pathfinder Reprint Project steering committee in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the 11 months from August 1999 to June 2000, volunteers completed 50 books, compared to 36 in the preceding 12 months.

The project is an international effort involving some 200 supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and communist organizations in other countries. These volunteers are turning into digital form all of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets on the revolutionary struggles of working people and continuity of the communist workers movement. Using state-of-the-art computer-to-plate technology, the printshop produces books quickly and economically, directly from the digital files turned in by volunteers in the field.

The increased pace of this campaign in recent months is the result of careful organization, intensive training, and political explanation to integrate many new volunteers—and redeploy veterans—into various stages of book production. These include proofreading, formatting, preparing indexes, and working with photos and artwork to recreate the covers, internal graphics, and photographs in each book.

Detailed attention to standardizing each team's work—from how to deal with "loose lines" in the formatted text, to how to match the colors of the covers—has been essential. As a result, Tom Tomasko, a leader of the project, noted, "We now have a larger

pool of active volunteers and more skill at what we are doing."

The workers who volunteer in Pathfinder's printshop are working hard to keep pace with the project. The shop's goal is to print each title turned in by the volunteers within 30 days. In addition, the shop reprints titles that have already been digitized whenever stock gets low, and is responsible for printing and reprinting new titles that Pathfinder publishes, such as *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*, which will be available in English, Spanish, and French this month.

The shop is well on its way to making the 30-day goal a reality. So far this month, it has printed 6 newly digitized titles, with 3 more scheduled before the end of the month. Counting the 3 new pamphlets, the shop will produce 21 Pathfinder titles this month—a record.

Often the newly printed books barely touch the shelves in the warehouse before

they are boxed up and sent out to customers around the world. For example, 300 copies of *What Is Surrealism?*—completed by the volunteers in June and delivered by the shop earlier this month—have already been shipped out, bringing in more than \$5,000 in sales.

A new Stahl ST90 stitcher, a machine that staples and trims pamphlets and magazines, was recently installed in the shop, improving its ability to produce Pathfinder titles. Printshop workers have used the new machine to stitch four of the pamphlets produced this month, as well as the July-August issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* magazine.

"The new machine can be learned much more quickly than the old stitcher, and it doesn't require prior mechanical experience," explained Ellen Brickley, one of the new operators. "Laura Garza and I are still learning. But we can run it on our own after a few weeks, and our competence increases every day."

With a little more experience, one of the

two operators will be able to move to night shift, allowing the shop, for the first time, to maintain two shifts of stitcher operation. This will not only speed up the turnaround time in producing revolutionary literature. In addition, by helping to win new commercial jobs, this advance in the organization of the shop schedule can increase sales revenues by tens of thousands of dollars in the next half year.

A record month for book production

July is shaping up as a banner month for producing books, reports Peter Thierjung, a worker in Pathfinder's printshop. A total of 18 reprints plus three new pamphlets will come off the presses before the month is out. These include nine books newly digitized by volunteers in the international Pathfinder Reprint Project:

En defensa del marxismo by Leon Trotsky
In Defense of Marxism by Leon Trotsky
Marxism and the Working Farmer, an Education for Socialists bulletin
Nothing Can Stop the Course of History by Fidel Castro
Portraits, Political and Personal by Leon Trotsky
La revolución traicionada by Leon Trotsky
Thomas Sankara Speaks
W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks, vol. 1

What Is Surrealism? by André Breton

Nine more titles—all previously digitized—will be reprinted this month for a second time*by pulling a CD out of a drawer and going to printing plates (the lasting fruits of this entire labor-saving, cost-saving international effort):

American Labor Struggles: 1877-1934 by Samuel Yellen
At the Side of Che Guevara: Interviews with Harry Villegas (Pombo)
Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara
Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War by Ernesto Che Guevara
The History of American Trotskyism by James P. Cannon
Marxism and Terrorism by Leon Trotsky
On the Jewish Question by Leon Trotsky
Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

Big Sale!

Renew your library
of revolutionary
literature!

History of the Russian Revolution

By Leon Trotsky

By Any Means Necessary

By Malcolm X

Problems of Women's Liberation

By Evelyn Reed

Plus each of the nearly 100 other titles newly digitized by Pathfinder Reprint volunteers over the past two years will be on sale at the July 27-29 Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio

30% off on 1 book

40% off - 5 or more

50% off - 10 or more

Bring your checkbook and
Pathfinder Readers Club card!

N. Ireland protesters push back rightist march

Continued from front page

Catholic repression and upholding the Protestant privileges that have been central to London's rule in the north of Ireland. During these parades, nationalists have often been assaulted and their homes attacked. But in recent years, opponents of the rightist marches have made gains. In 1998, for the first time, residents of Garvaghy Road prevented the rightists from going through their neighborhood.

This year it took just 12 minutes for the 2,000 Orange Order members and supporters to pass by, prevented from going down Garvaghy Road. Marching in military formation with many Union Jacks and other pro-British regalia, the turnout was lower than in any previous year, according to all onlookers this reporter spoke with. As they passed the assembled Garvaghy residents, many of the rightists hurled abuse and threats to kill Breandan MacCionnaith, a spokesperson for the community. At one point, masked members of the paramilitary Loyalist Volunteer Force appeared and a banner of another paramilitary faction, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, was displayed. MacCionnaith and other leaders ensured no one was drawn into these provocations.

That evening a few hundred of these rightists clashed with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police outside Drumcree church, overlooking Garvaghy Road. In the previous week, after an Orange Order march had been blocked from Garvaghy Road on July 2, there had been similar clashes involving relatively small numbers of people in others parts of Northern Ireland.

On the afternoon of July 10 a protest was called by Portadown Orange Order leader Harold Gracey in support of their efforts to march down Garvaghy Road and seeking to bring the Northern Ireland Assembly to a standstill. Orange Order members and loyalist (pro-British) paramilitaries blocked many roads that evening.

In 1996, in a similar action, farmers had joined with their tractors to block roads, and broader pro-British forces had backed the

week-long action, bringing Northern Ireland to a virtual standstill. In response, the British rulers imposed a virtual curfew on Garvaghy Road and forced the parade through. This time the rightist actions were much narrower and marked more by the role of the paramilitary groups.

"They think this is their town," said Pamela Wilson after the Orange Order parade had passed by. She has lived on the Garvaghy Road for 20 years. "They don't want us to have equal rights, instead they herd us in this area, harassing us whenever we go to the town center. Eleven have been killed in the last five years as a result of their marches."

Geraldine Driscoll added, "They should go home, because we'll never go away." She emphasized her support for the stand of the local residents coalition calling for talks with the Orange Order to resolve the issue.

One example of the growing confidence of the nationalist residents of Garvaghy Road was described to this reporter by John, a young worker at Denny's food processing plant in Portadown. The plant has 350 workers, divided evenly between Catholic and Protestant. John, who preferred not to give his surname, described what happened on June 16 when workers found reactionary placards placed at the factory entrance. One sign read "Paras shoot to kill," referring to the 1972 Bloody Sunday murders of 14 Irish civil rights marchers by British paratroopers. Another sign, referring to the murder of a local Catholic man, Robert Hamill, read "Hamill's dead—ha ha."

"When we got into work, we didn't start work and sat in the canteen for an hour. Eventually the management came and agreed to get the RUC to take the placards down," John reported. The Protestant workers continued working. "Some supported us, while a few laughed about it."

He said that since then, gangs of loyalists have been outside the factory when they leave, "so we've got the management to open the gate that leads into our area." He also reported enthusiastically that workers in the plant have just secured a majority vote to be organized into a trade union.

"We've seen the true face of the Orange Order in the last week when Harold Gracey refused to condemn the violence and the loyalist paramilitaries," MacCionnaith stated in an interview.

The Orange Order, an exclusively Protestant organization, has been a key pillar of British rule. But along with the broader

Unionist forces—those that support the "union" of Northern Ireland with the United Kingdom—it has been seriously divided and weakened by the last 30 years of unbroken nationalist struggle.

Significantly, no major figure from the Ulster Unionist Party, the largest pro-British party, was at the July 9 parade this year. And former Orange Order leader Martin Smyth took his distance from the Portadown actions.

The *Newsletter*, a pro-Unionist Belfast daily, editorialized that the Orangemen of Portadown "are exhibiting all the signs of consigning themselves to the wrong side of history." Likewise, an editorial in the *London Times* was headlined "The Orange Order must stop marching towards the fringe."

The British rulers took advantage of this high point of the "marching season to send 2,000 extra troops, deploying them once again on the streets in Portadown, Belfast, and other areas. The razor wire and other barriers had been erected by the British troops to enforce the ruling that barred the Orange Order from marching through Garvaghy Road—in what residents leader Breandan MacCionnaith described as a "ring of steel" around the community. Francie Molloy said nationalists "do not see the British government as their protectors.

At this point the troops are here as a necessary evil, but we want to see the whole security presence removed."

A few days after the government-run Parades Commission ruled against the Garvaghy parade, it said that an Orange Order parade could go through the nationalist Springfield Road area July 12. "It's a trade-off," said Robert McClenaghan as he and 120 other residents mounted a protest July 7. Residents there already confronted a June 24 Orange march through their area.

McClenaghan pointed to a high wall separating this predominantly Catholic area from the predominantly Protestant area. Over the wall you can see several flags of the paramilitary Ulster Freedom Fighters flying. "They come through a gate at the top of the road which is only ever opened for these marches," explained McClenaghan. "On June 24 there were 100 RUC jeeps [armored Land Rovers] to protect the 1,000 Orange marchers. We had 3,000 on our counterprotest."

Pete Clifford is a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Julie Crawford, a member of the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers, contributed to this article.

SWP National Committee meeting

Continued from Page 7

and we are on the way to that goal. We want to do this in every fraction in the party and harvest in practice the potential of what a party of hundreds of worker-bolsheviks can do."

The branch executive committees of the party now have an especially important role to work with members to help get fractions of two in plants and mines. This was a key factor in ensuring the success of the moves decided by the UAW national fraction, Sandler said.

The party's traditions, norms, institutions, and constitution—products of decades of class-struggle experience—become more and more invaluable as the class struggle heats up and the party becomes deeply involved in day-to-day struggles and union battles, a number of participants in the meeting emphasized. They allow the party to apply revolutionary centralism as a nationwide organization, to be trustworthy to fellow fighters wherever they find it, and to be

a disciplined and effective vanguard in the increasingly sharp struggles of today and tomorrow.

CORRECTIONS

In the July 10 issue of the *Militant* the article entitled "Actors win support in strike for contract," should have described the main issue in dispute as follows: "A key demand in the strike is 'pay-per-play'—to maintain the practice of paying actors each time a commercial is shown instead of a one-time fee for unlimited use of a commercial."

In the July issue, the photograph that accompanies the page 4 article on the United Mine Workers of America strike in Kemmerer, Wyoming, should have noted that the photographer, Larry Linville, is a member of UMW Local 1307, which is on strike at Kemmerer.

— MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

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The Cuban Revolution: An Example for Workers and Farmers. Fri., July 21, 7:30 p.m. 3926 Mission St. Donation: \$4. Tel: 415-584-2135.

NEW JERSEY

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The Cuban Revolution Today. Speaker: Mary Nell Bockman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 21, 7:30 p.m. 237 Washington St. #305. Donation: \$4. Tel: 973-643-3341.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Celebrate the Cuban Revolution. Sat., July 22, 7:30 p.m. 711 E. Passyunk Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: 215-627-1237.

BRITAIN

London

Ireland: An Eyewitness Report from Garvaghy Road. Fri., July 21, 7:00 p.m. 47, The Cut, Waterloo, SE1. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Cuban Revolution Today: An Example for Workers and Farmers. Fri., July 21, 7:00 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: 9-379-3075.

— CALENDAR —

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Rally for Justice! Demand a Federal Investigation into the Killing of Frederick Finley at Fairlane Mall Center. Mon., July 17, at 12 noon. Federal Building, Detroit. Tel: 313-831-5631.

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That's capitalism—A new study finds: "America's longest economic expansion has failed to benefit all workers as poverty levels among full-time employees have changed little since the early 1970s."



Harry Ring

That's also capitalism—That study also confirmed that non-

whites are 1 1/2 times more likely to be poor.

Meanwhile, of course—A study led by Wall Street's Merrill Lynch says the world's richest people became 18 percent richer on the global stock market, thanks to runaway high tech stocks.

Verily—"Tobacco firm to buy Nabisco for \$14.9 billion. Phillip Morris, which owns Kraft, would strengthen its position as nation's biggest food company. Consumers would get more products but probably not lower prices."—News headline

They saw his eye blink—In Sa-

vannah, Georgia, one lawyer is in the pen and his partner on the lam. A judge says they face jail terms unless they return the \$2.4 million they allegedly took, without approval, from a comatose client.

The can-do system—"Million letters a week go astray, mail chiefs say."—London headline.

What a deal—Richard Gere is a busy person, what with screen acting and heading up Tibet House, an anti-China operation. So he's unloading his summer spot at Malibu Beach in the Los Angeles area. A mansion and guest houses are perched on a cliff overlooking the

Pacific.

Another guest pad is down on his private strip of beach. If still vacant, rent it in July and August for \$75,000 a month. Or, grab it up for \$10 million.

Busted heads don't count?—In Fargo, North Dakota, the police chief imposed "performance expectations" on the ranks. They will be expected to have at least five "contacts" a day with people, and write a minimum of 25 tickets a month.

What price sexism—"Although the 20th Century has seen women enter the professions at an impressive rate, their average earnings are

still 40 percent lower than men's, figures show."—The Times of London.

Big Greyhound in the sky—Natively, we liked the plebeian sound of Airbus, name of the European consortium of airplane builders. Now we feel a bit foolish. Airbus is building the world's biggest "cruise ship" one that will seat up to 650 passengers.

But no more of that "first-class passengers, unaccompanied children and the infirm" first. First-class folks will board the top deck through a separate entrance. AP reports that's so "they need not mingle with people below."

Revolutionary literature gives political leverage

The excerpt below is taken from the discussion period following a talk presented at a Militant Labor Forum in New York City on Nov. 7, 1992, four days after the presidential elections. The entire presentation titled "The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 Elections Revealed" appears in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The excerpt can be found on pages 370-376. Copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

One thing for sure is changing. Each six months, more workers and youth in these countries [the former Soviet Union] will become interested in politics. And layers of them, over time, will be interested in the same books, the same questions, the same arguments as fighters anywhere else in the world: the same discussions will occur in Vilnius, or Moscow, or Prague as in Johannesburg, or Havana, or Tokyo, or Hong Kong, or Tehran, or Los Angeles, or Montreal, or London, or Mexico City. There will be a growing demand for books by Marx and Engels, by Lenin, by Trotsky; by those

from the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder*

who have been leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States; by leaders of revolutions in Cuba, Grenada, Burkina Faso, South Africa, and elsewhere; by Malcolm X.

The collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses that had long ago driven workers out of politics through terror, demoralization, and corruption has initiated a process that cannot be reversed. The big-business media focuses all their attention on the elections, so-called privatization schemes and the trickle of imperialist investment, blocs between openly fascist currents and Stalinist outfits that claim to represent the working class, and the blows being struck to living and working conditions. At the same time, however, a slow but sure process begins to unfold—at first simply on the level of individuals seeking answers—as workers in these countries head toward coming into the world and into politics.

Never before in history has there been a bigger disproportion between the current small numerical size and negligible social weight of communist organizations in the mass labor movement, and the leverage of the political weapons we produce, translate, edit, circulate, and get around in whatever ways we can. There is nothing like it in the history of the workers movement. I do not know what better word to choose than "leverage"—it is an easy, physical analogy. Whether we are participating in a book fair in Tokyo or Tehran, a university conference in Cuba, or a meeting of young fighters in South Africa—we have the same experiences everywhere.

Fighters want to get their hands on the Communist Manifesto, on books about the Russian revolution, on copies of *New Internationalist* magazine, on books about politics and the labor movement in the United States, on literature about the revolutions in Cuba

and South Africa, on books about the Black struggle, on works that give a scientific explanation of women's oppression and the road to their liberation....

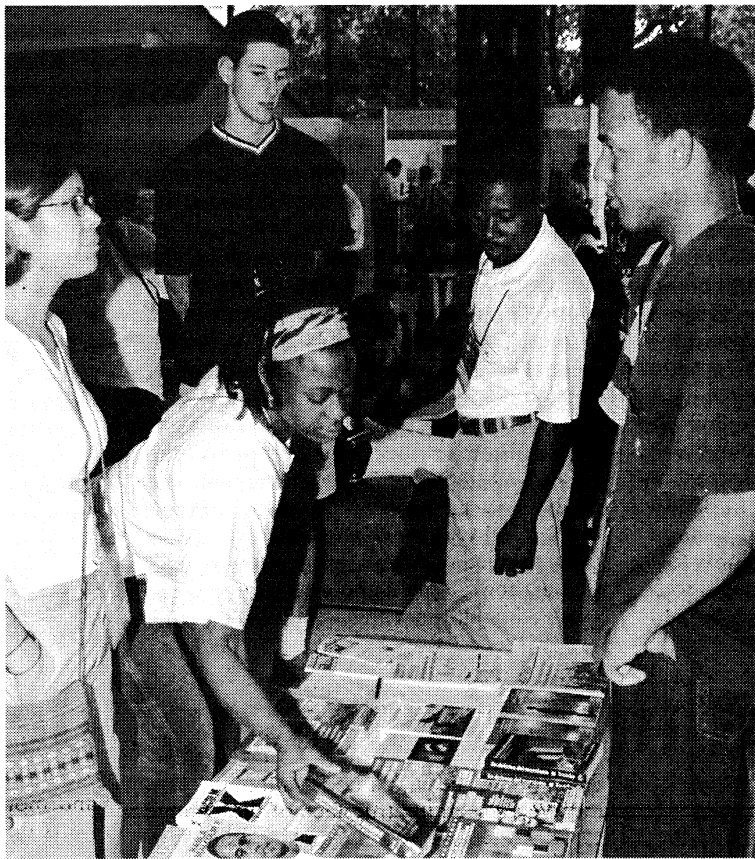
A bolshevik party is not and does not try to be monolithic. It does, however, strive for political homogeneity and common struggle experience to prepare for our inevitable responsibilities. In the crunch, it has had a helluva batting average.

One of the most difficult things for capitalism's propagandists to understand and portray accurately is how a political vanguard of the working class reaches out to others to use and defend *political space*—as we did during the October missile crisis. Communists have no schemas or timetables. But we do know that the tensions inevitably rising from world capitalism's depression conditions and its inexorable march toward fascism and war keep leading not only to unanticipated crises, but also to resistance out of which vanguard workers can build a movement. Right now, we can anticipate that growing interest among working people and youth in radical ideas ignored by them in the past—or rejected without serious study—will keep ahead of the pace of mass popular struggles.

But these political realities cannot even be seen, much less understood, unless we recognize the space that exists inside the working class and the unions—space that can be used by revolutionary-minded workers to practice politics. This space is not seen or registered by anything in bourgeois public opinion. It can only be seen from inside the working class and the unions. It can best be seen by workers who are communists who are using that space to talk politics with other workers, to promote revolutionary literature, to bring co-workers and their unions into fights around social and political issues, and to participate in guerrilla skirmishes around conditions on the job. Without using this political space, the tensions just seem like tensions, the openings are missed, and the space will be diminished over time.

As I was watching those television specials last month, I realized that as a young revolutionist during the missile crisis I had learned a little bit about using political space. I was not fully conscious at the time of everything I was learning, but it turned out to be very useful. That is why I was so struck by the inaccuracy of that aspect of the documentaries. There are people at this meeting tonight—not a whole lot, but not just two or three either—who became different people during those ten days in October 1962, and not because they went out and bought canned goods. They developed a deeper political relationship with others in the YSA and SWP who were working together unflinchingly along the same lines.

During the crisis, I never thought there was going to be a nuclear war. I am not misremembering—I genuinely never thought so. I did know that the U.S. rulers were driving to start a war to crush the socialist revolution in Cuba, and I knew that they would put the future of the world in stupendous danger if they did so. So, like



Young Socialists, left, discuss world politics using Pathfinder books at continental student congress held in Havana in April.

thousands of others, I spent day and night trying to stop that from happening. We saw there was space to do this, and we used it. What is more, as we did so we won some new, young fighters to the communist move-

ment who were strengthened and given greater staying power by the test of fire.

Today there are opportunities to win a new generation of revolutionists to the Socialist Workers Party. Many of them right now will not initially come out of a revitalized labor movement. Through the proletarian party, however, they can be won to join in building a leadership that can organize the working class to make a popular revolution and prevent the fascist devastation and world war that capitalism is dragging humanity toward. Fighters from this generation will reach out to find parties of revolutionists who are workers, revolutionists who have some experience in the class struggle. They will want to emulate communist workers who have learned to defend and use space within the organizations of the working class, and who can show them how to do politics—how to do *working-class politics*, a differentiation most of these fighters will not have thought about beforehand.

This is the kind of working-class experience that nobody will ever get through election campaigns. This is the kind of politics that for bourgeois public opinion does not exist.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

July 25, 1975

Newly released CIA documents on the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, dating back to 1950, prove conclusively that the Rockefeller commission report on the CIA covered up major aspects of the agency's illegal spy operations.

The documents show that the two socialist groups have been the targets of a massive spy campaign by the CIA virtually since the inception of the agency itself.

Several files concerning the YSA also reveal that CIA spying against dissident groups in the United States did not end when the Rockefeller report said it did, and most likely continue to this day.

The documents were released here by the Political Rights Defense Fund, which is supporting a suit filed by the SWP and YSA against government harassment. The CIA, one of the defendants in the suit, has turned over the documents under court order. The suit was filed in July 1973 by constitutional attorneys Leonard Boudin and Herbert Jordan.

One of the items released by the CIA, for example, is a clipping from a 1950 *New York Times* on the SWP's campaign for New York governor. Another report, dated January 26, 1953 states: "Farrell Dobbs polled 10,306 votes in seven states as against Dobbs' 1948 total of 13,613 in twelve states." Dobbs was the SWP's candidate for president in both 1948 and 1952.

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

July 24, 1950

"The stern days ahead." These are the symbolic last words of Truman's radio talk on his new war bill. They are an ominous forecast of what the American people face in the program Truman outlined on July 19 for the prosecution of his undeclared war in Korea and the tremendous expansion of the U.S. military machine.

Truman made clear that a new stage has been entered in American capitalism's preparations for World War III. America is to be put on a permanent war footing. Everything else will be subordinated to the single aim of mobilizing speedily and fully for global war.

Thus the authoritative *N.Y. Times* bluntly described Truman's program as "a long and firm step toward complete mobilization for total war." Arthur Krock, *Times* columnist with a direct pipe-line to Truman said that the President's Congressional and radio messages are "grim confirmations" that the stage of the "cold war" is "ended."

The "good times" are over—except for the war profiteers. The war machine is to take immediately another \$10 billion to be paid by higher taxes. Rising prices and shortages are on the order of the day. Housing, health facilities, schools, automobiles, television sets—all the things the people need and want—are to be sacrificed to the war program.

Meat packers press for union, respond to company moves

Continued from front page

years ago you voted the union in and the union couldn't get a contract. What has changed?

"The union has no power. The only thing the union can do is lead you to strike. Strike action is the only weapon you would have.

"Workers at the Long Prairie plant got a little increase in wages, but things there are worse than here. Your health insurance is paid for, but they have to pay for theirs. If you vote for the union, you will lose your benefits immediately.

"The union is promising it can help get immigration papers for everyone. This is not true."

The Long Prairie plant, a beef slaughterhouse 100 miles northwest of St. Paul, is also owned by Rosen Diversified Industries. The workers at Long Prairie Packing have a union and belong to UFCW Local 789.

Pro-union workers answer propaganda

The issues in this propaganda attack had been discussed at a meeting of the union organizing drive July 6 and in the last union newsletter. According to Francisco Picado, a slaughterhouse worker who is on staff for the organizing drive, there was lively discussion on these points. At the meeting a worker who was a veteran of the union organizing drive of the early 1990s asked, "What will be different this time? We voted for the union. But then a year went by. Some workers were fired, some workers were bought off, but they treated us better. When the union was voted out they went back to their old ways. I want the union. But how

do we get a contract?"

An organizer for the union, Trish Ramirez, stated, "The organizing drive is stronger this time. In the fight for the contract we'll get community support, we'll get churches and the media to put pressure on the company. None of that was done last time."

To this Picado added, "The only force that can determine when and how you will get a contract is the same force that stopped production June 1. It is the workers who will determine the outcome."

"What happens if we lose the union election?" was also a topic of the discussion at the union meeting. A leader of the organizing drive, Miguel Olvera, responded, "We are being forced to make a stand. The company forced us to make a stand when they increased the line speed. If we don't make a stand, things will get worse."

Some 35 workers from the cut department and 5 from the kill department attended the union meeting.

According to workers in the plant, the company has posted a sign in the lunch room. The sign makes the following points, "Local 789 won't represent you adequately—it represents workers mainly at nursing homes. The union constitution says you can be put on trial. Also, Local 789 gets \$1.7 million in dues, which supports the exorbitant salaries of the organizers and also gets sent to the union's Washington office."

This last point was answered by Matias Loya, a worker in the cut department, who told the *Militant*, "I want to be a member of a national union. I want an organization that

Vancouver protesters denounce anti-choice attack



More than 200 people demonstrated July 11 in Vancouver, Canada, within hours after the stabbing of abortion provider Dr. Garson Romalis outside of his clinic. Six years earlier, Romalis was shot while in his home by a rightist thug. "We have deciphered the human genome, we have sent machines to Mars, so when will women have complete control over their own reproductive rights," asked a young woman from Medical Students for Choice.

can have an impact on a national level."

The fifth issue of *The Workers' Voice*, the bilingual newsletter of the workers at Dakota Premium, answered the company propaganda that the union is another company. "The union and the company are very different," stated the newsletter. "The company owns this plant and many others. They make money by hiring us to transform the cattle into the product they sell on the market. The union does not own any factories and it does not exploit workers and their labor to make money. Unions were created by workers out of our need to defend ourselves from the greed of the company owners."

It is not only propaganda that the company is using to try to break the union orga-

nizing drive. For example, it has increased the workload of two workers who are supporters of the union in the kill department and at the same time has cut their wages, in an obvious attempt to provoke them to quit in outrage. At a previous union meeting workers discussed this company tactic and decided to encourage each other to stay and fight. The company successfully employed this tactic a few weeks ago against four workers in the kill.

Company trying to divide workers

The company is trying to drive a wedge between workers in the cut department and the kill department and is using some more aggressive tactics against workers in the kill.

Enrique Flores, a pro-union worker who had recently quit his job, returned to the plant July 5 to pick up his check. He went to the kill to invite his former co-workers and friends to his wedding. He began passing out a few wedding invitations. Management, thinking he was passing out union-organizing material, called a security guard who began yelling insults and pushing him away from the kill floor.

When Obdulia Flores, a worker in the kill department, began defending Enrique Flores, who is her son, the security guard shoved her around also. Company manager Cortinas admitted in the small group meetings July 11 that the company "overreacted."

The company is making a naked attempt to buy off workers in the plant. On July 11 workers in the kill department were served tacos and soda on their break, a move that apparently had little effect. When asked "What is the occasion?" a worker responded, "They are trying to get us to vote against the union."

The following day the company called a meeting at a hotel for all the workers. At the previous meeting at the hotel the company had provided free food and liquor. It was attended by 18 workers.

Leaders of the union organizing drive are intensifying their efforts to win a majority. They have organized house visits to talk through the many issues and questions that workers have on their minds. Trish Ramirez, the organizer for the UFCW, reported that the house visits are having an impact on the discussion.

"For example, we explained that it is illegal for the company to take away benefits during the organizing drive or during the contract negotiations as they are threatening to do." She stated, "The experience of those who are visiting the workers gives us confidence about winning a strong vote for the union on the 21st."

Leaders of the union organizing effort planned a new issue of *The Workers' Voice* for July 13, and those active in the organizing drive are slated to help distribute the newsletter outside the company gates for the first time.

In addition, the union has organized a prayer service and a dinner for workers at Dakota Premium Foods at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in St. Paul on July 16, the last Sunday before the vote. The church has the largest Latino congregation in St. Paul and is a few miles from the plant on Concord St. Many workers at the plant are members of the congregation.

Marchers in Mississippi demand gov't investigate racist lynching

Continued from front page

chapter in McComb County, told *Militant* reporters that some neighbors came forward and said they "had seen trucks gathered down the road from Johnson's house three nights in a row before the hanging."

Lewis Meyers, the Johnson family attorney, told CNN in an interview July 12 that "we have some credible evidence that there is a possibility that a local law enforcement official may have been involved in what we now believe to be a murder."

The July 8 march, four miles long, was called by Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition. The action blocked traffic on both sides of a major road for several hours. The following day, an even larger march of 1,000 people hit the streets at Duckworth Park, in the nearby town of Columbia. Demonstrators came from New Orleans in two buses, Illinois, Tennessee, Alabama, and all over Mississippi. Many families waited in shady spots along the route of the march and joined as it passed. The majority of participants were Black, though there were dozens of protesters who are white present.

Throughout the march, organizers buzzed

up and down the route on quad cycles handing out water to combat the blazing Mississippi sun. Umbrellas lined the streets on the road to the Johnson's house. Ebay Hampton, 22, heard about the action on the TV news. It was his first protest. "The main reason I came is to support the Johnson family. It's a shame in the year 2000 things like this keep happening." A number of people present commented that the killing was part of moves by racist forces to take working people backward toward the days of segregation. Many also pointed to the fact that unlike decades ago, acts like this are intolerable and provoke a response, and not just from Blacks.

Jason Lawrence, a shipping and receiving clerk, said, "I feel like what happened could happen to any of us. No matter how 'great' this country is, they have to answer for this. We have to show support for the family. One of my co-workers agrees that it was a suicide," said Lawrence, noting that another of his other co-workers came to the march.

Carl Galmon, 59, a longtime civil rights fighter, thought racism was behind the death.

"In South Carolina we have these politicians kissing the rebel flag. But it's not part of my heritage. Romancing these racist symbols set the tone for this," he said. Residents pointed to the example of a bridge, spray-painted with "Kill all niggers, Kill all Jews," and police harassment in other counties that pushed them to participate in the day's events.

Activists fighting the cop killing of Mitchell Virgil by Gulfport police also participated in the action. Virgil lived in nearby Columbia and many family members see the two fights as one and the same. The march culminated in a rally held at the pecan tree where Johnson was found hanging. At the rally, his brother and sister spoke, demanding justice for their slain brother.

One of the speakers was Mamie Mobley, mother of Emmett Till, a teenager who was killed in Mississippi in 1955 for supposedly whistling at a white woman. Mobley offered her support to Johnson's mother, Maria.

Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson also spoke, calling for a federal investigation into the death of Johnson. Jackson decried several Republican candidates for their support of the death penalty and mentioned the recent fight in Texas against the execution of Gary Graham. He pointed to the need to improve working conditions in Mississippi and raise the standard of living through unionization, saying activists need to join the Rainbow Coalition as the vehicle that would accomplish this.

The next day protesters marched from Duckworth Park in nearby Columbia to the Marion County courthouse. This two-mile stretch was made up of 1,000 people, many of whom were youth. Rasaaan Powell, a 16-year-old high school student in Columbia, explained why she and other young people joined the march. "Today we're taking a stand. This is for everybody who has been lynched. We must be heard. It is important for us to show solidarity in order to make sure justice is served."

Justin Hovey, a member of the Young Socialists in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, contributed to this article.

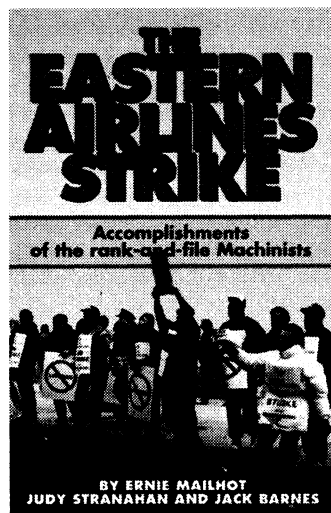
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Miners: 'They haven't loaded one coal train'

BY JACK PARKER

FT. COLLINS, Colorado—The United Mine Workers strikes at Pittsburg and Midway's (P&M) McKinley and Kemmerer mines remain rock solid as production has all but ceased since the walkouts began back in May.

"They haven't loaded one coal train," said Lawrence Oliver, president of Local 1332 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), who was describing the situation at the McKinley mine near Gallup, New Mexico. "They have done no production since the strike began." UMWA staff member Dallas Wolf added, referring to Kemmerer in Wyoming.

There are 330 workers in the bargaining unit at McKinley and more than 230 are represented by the UMWA at Kemmerer. A couple of weeks ago three workers at McKinley and four at Kemmerer broke ranks and crossed the picket lines, but since that time no one else has scabbed. "It must be getting lonely in there," Wolf quipped.

Despite being completely shut down, P&M has not budged. "They refuse to come back to the bargaining table," said Wolf. "They haven't returned our phone calls."

Meanwhile, both locals have begun to reach out for solidarity. Sue Hunzie, whose husband is a miner at Kemmerer, spent from 5:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., July 10, picketing at a three-way stop sign near the mine gate. Forty other people joined Hunzie that day. "They were mainly miners' wives," she said. Hunzie is one of the leaders of a new group in Kemmerer. It is called Miners' Backbone. "One of the wives said we were the backbone of the miners so we came up with that name," explained Hunzie.

"We are organized into several committees—phone tree, public relations, strike activities, and food bank—and we meet every Wednesday night," she said. "We have organized a number of activities including two ladies' picket days and a march from Diamondville to Kemmerer," the two towns closest to the mine. "We are planning to have a booth and float in an upcoming community parade that used to be called Century Days."

"We have found that the four scabs have a hard time getting the courage to cross our picket line when we are there. Two of them are women," she said.

"One of the most important things we are doing is organizing a food bank," continued Hunzie. "We let the local raise the money from other unions and from retirees and other supporters; then we go out and

buy the food. We stock the shelves every week and every week people come in and get what they need."

"They are a great bunch of ladies," said Hunzie, describing the other members of Miners' Backbone. "You couldn't ask for a better group of people."

Leafletting Chevron refinery

In a similar fashion, Lawrence Oliver explained his local's plans to reach out to other unions for more solidarity. "Tomorrow a delegation including myself is going to fly to Los Angeles where we will leaflet workers at the Chevron refinery," which owns Pittsburg and Midway, said Oliver. "That evening we have been invited to speak at their union meeting." The workers at Chevron belong to the Paper, Allied-Industrial and Energy Workers International Union (PACE).

"Next Saturday we will be going to Las Cruces to speak in front of the New Mexico State AFL-CIO," he continued.

One of the most important questions facing the McKinley strikers is P&M's proposal to pay Native American miners a \$100 bonus if they give up their health care and use Indian Health Services (IHS). McKinley is located on the Navajo reservation. Because of a hiring preference more than 90 percent of the miners are Native American. Under the present contract miners' health care is funded 100 percent.

"To me, they [P&M] shouldn't be trying to make a profit off the treaty rights of the Navajo people," said Oliver. "P&M's position is that their proposal is an option to employees, but really they are just trying to get their foot in the door. Once they get there they will try to make it a requirement that we have to use IHS."

"We are fighting not just for ourselves but for smaller tribes who do not have the resources that the Navajo have," concluded Oliver. "If one corporation can get away with dumping medical coverage others can use it as a precedent to force their Native Americans workers to use IHS."

Over this past week the United Mine Workers union upped benefits for strikers at both mines to \$200 per week and support from other unions continues to grow. "We received letters backing our fight from Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa and from the ICEM [International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine, and General Workers], a worldwide union federation located in Europe," said Dallas Wolf. "Donations of food and money have come from locals in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah." Steelworkers in Rock Springs, nearby Kemmerer, "have been big supporters as always."

Indiana electrical workers stand firm in face of power company lockout

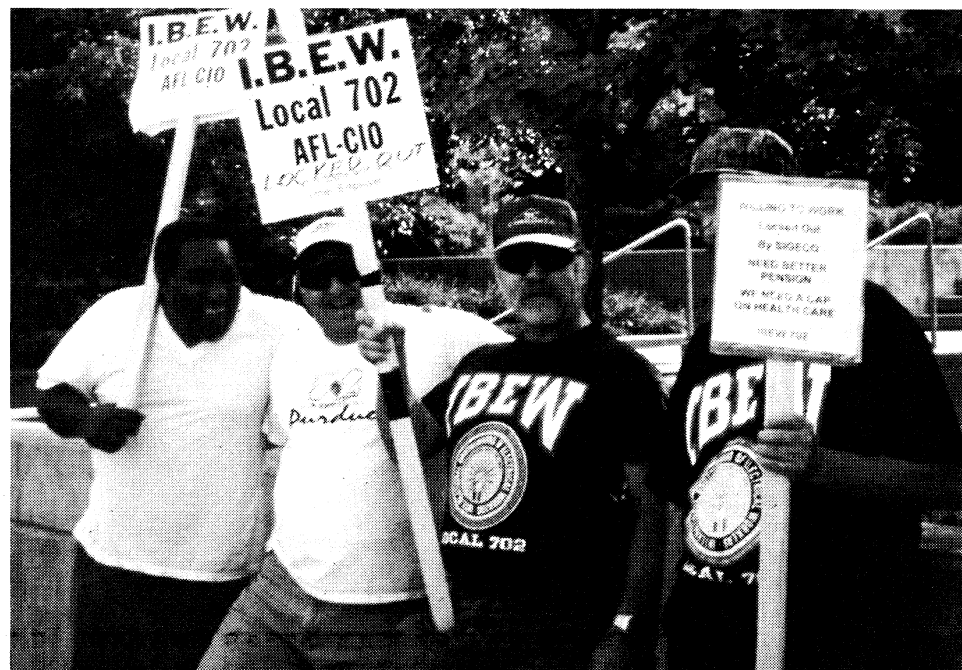
BY JEREMY ROSE

EVANSVILLE, Indiana—"We're taking a stand for what's right," declared Bob Lewis, an operator for eight years at Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co.'s (SIGECO) A.B. Brown power plant west of Evansville. Lewis was one of more than 200 locked-out workers and supporters picketing SIGECO headquarters here July 10.

The lockout began June 30 just hours after members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 702 rejected the company's contract offer. Since then, several mass pickets have been organized to show the unity of the 480 locked-out workers who work at three power plants and a maintenance facility.

The company said that without a contract workers are "unreliable" and claimed it was forced to lock them out. Bosses and those in management are working 12-hour shifts to keep the power plants running. In one incident in Augusta, Indiana, SIGECO bosses broke a water main while attempting to install new power lines.

Electrician David Able, a 36-year veteran of the company who works at the Warrick County power plant, said workers need to stick together. He pointed out that while nonunion truckers employed by unorga-



Militant/Elyse Hathaway

Picket line of locked-out unionists at SIGECO July 10, Evansville, Indiana.

nized coal companies are delivering coal to all three power plants, train crews are refusing to deliver coal to AB Brown, the only plant serviced by rail. Several workers said

supervisors are taking the trains onto company property.

The central issues for workers are the company's attacks on pensions and health care. Unionists also oppose the company's demand for a five-year contract.

"All we want is a modest increase in our pensions. Ranked against other power industry workers, we're at the bottom of benefits, but the company says we're rich and greedy," Tony LaGrone, a maintenance mechanic with 17 years at AB Brown, told *Militant* reporters at a mass picket on July 5.

"Our cost of health coverage has gone up 200 per cent in two years, and the company is refusing to put a cap on it," said 26-year veteran Bob Snow. "With this contract, they want to completely eliminate our health care when we retire. That's outrageous."

Several workers explained they must pay out \$50 a month for medical insurance for themselves or \$100 a month for family coverage. Dental coverage is an additional \$50 a month.

Steelworkers hear tentative proposals to settle lockout by Kaiser Aluminum

BY PAUL DUNN

GRAMERCY, Louisiana—Spirits were high as Steelworkers and their families filed into a meeting at the St. John's Parish Boat Club. They were arriving to hear a presentation on a tentative agreement that could lead to the end of their 21-month labor dispute with Kaiser Aluminum.

The 345 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5702 here are among 2,900 locked out in three states. They will be voting July 12-13 on an Interest Arbitration Agreement that could mean a rapid end to the lockout. Everyone in attendance received handouts that included a 22-page summary of the points where agreement has been reached with the bosses and those still in dispute.

If approved, all unresolved issues will be sent before a federal mediator if a negotiated settlement isn't reached before July 29. The arbitration case would be heard in late August, with a ruling issued no later than 21 days afterward.

Similar presentations have been made to the other affected locals. Kaiser's largest operations are in Spokane, Washington, where more than 2,000 workers are locked out of the Mead smelter and Trentwood rolling mill. Three hundred are locked out in Tacoma, Washington, and 230 at the extrusion plant in Newark, Ohio.

Sam Thomas, vice president of the local here, viewed the recent developments positively. "We have won," he said. "We can now really see an end to this labor dispute. Kaiser has withdrawn some of its worst de-

mands like random drug testing and annual certification testing." These would mean termination if a worker failed either test. Thomas said he thought the gap between the issues that are left is small.

Numerous others, while expressing optimism, reserved their opinions until after the vote. Several workers though did express reservations about the settlement, but didn't want their names to be used. One said, "These proposals look like what the company has been proposing all along."

The initial demands of the company that forced the Steelworkers on strike on Sept. 30, 1998, were the permanent elimination of more than 400 jobs, the contracting out of several hundred additional jobs, substantial pay and pension increases, the gutting of seniority agreements, and a cap on health insurance benefits for retirees, who would be forced to pay the additional cost. If the new agreement is ratified, a total of 456 union jobs will be lost despite the Steelworkers' fight.

While failing to back Kaiser down on the elimination of jobs, a significant number of workers see this as a victory over company attempts to bust the union outright. The company has reportedly agreed to drop 237 out of 264 proposed jobs lost to contracting out, preserve the use of seniority in promotions and layoffs, give an amnesty in all cases of workers discharged for alleged strike-related misconduct, terminate all scabs before the Steelworkers return to work, and provide new language on guaranteeing training on all changed or restruc-

tured jobs, as well as limiting the role of testing in job selection.

Health insurance benefits for locked-out workers and their dependents will be immediately reinstated upon ratification of the agreement. Issues still in dispute have to do with the Supplementary Unemployment Benefits plan, retirement benefits, and wage increases.

The pressure of round-the-clock picket lines has been maintained throughout the lockout—including during the Boat Club meeting—despite the challenge posed by nearly all local members finding other jobs. These efforts, plus the support won through numerous solidarity actions, have forced Kaiser to falter as its losses mount and stock value plummets.

The tentative agreement doesn't affect the USWA's current National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) case. The General Counsel of the NLRB formally charged Kaiser June 30 with illegally locking out the 2,900 USWA members "to pressure and coerce" them into accepting the company's proposal.

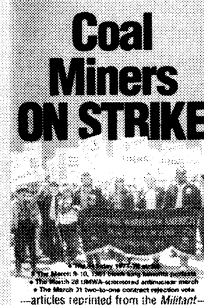
According to a USWA news release, it also charged Kaiser with "unlawfully discriminating against employees to discourage membership in a labor organization, and with failing and refusing to bargain in good faith with the Union as required by federal law."

As part of the remedy sought, the NLRB will seek full back pay and benefits from Jan. 14, 1999, the date the company began its lockout, and has set a hearing for Nov. 13, 2000.

for further reading...

Coal Miners on Strike

Articles on:
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'Independence for Puerto Rico is in the interests of U.S. working people'

SWP presidential candidate James Harris speaks at UN hearings on decolonization

The following statement was presented by James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president, to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. He was among some 30 individuals and representatives of organizations who testified at the committee's hearings on the colonial status of Puerto Rico, held July 12, 2000, in New York City. Harris is a garment worker in Atlanta and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Sub-titles are by the *Militant*.

BY JAMES HARRIS

Distinguished Chairman and Honored Committee Members:

As the Socialist Workers Party's candidate for president of the United States in this election year, I have traveled back and forth across the country.

Last week I spoke with meat packers in St. Paul, Minnesota, who are fighting for a union. The workers there, of many different national origins, are taking a stand for human dignity against the brutal speedup of labor that leads to injuries and the grinding up of workers. I also spoke with farmers who are protesting against the devastating conditions they face, many of them being driven off the land, stripped of their livelihood, even discriminated against by federal agencies because of race. Coal miners are on strike in the Western coalfields, and immigrant workers have held rallies around the country for equal rights and against deportations. This picture of resistance by working people is an increasingly noticeable feature of politics in the United States today.

Yesterday I participated in the convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, one of the sponsors of a national march to protest police brutality planned for August 26 in Washington, D.C. Police brutality is part of the pattern of violence by the rulers of this country against working people. Last week more than 5,000 people marched in Dearborn, Michigan, against the killing of a Black man who was defending his daughter against security guards who had accused her of stealing a \$4 bracelet. This past weekend, defenders of civil rights marched in Kokomo, Mississippi, after a young Black man was found hanging by a belt from a tree in front of his house.

As a participant in these struggles, I point out to others that independence for Puerto

Rico is in the interests, not only of the Puerto Rican people, but of the vast majority of the people of the United States.

Workers and farmers in the United States have absolutely no interest in Washington's colonial rule over Puerto Rico. It is only the tiny handful of wealthy ruling families in this country that benefits from the exploitation of Puerto Rico's labor, land, and natu-

ality of the U.S. rulers to attack the democratic rights of those here who are resisting the employers and their government.

Last year, an international campaign for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners won the release of 11 independence fighters. But today, six *independentistas* remain in U.S. prisons. One of them is José Solís, framed up by the FBI and locked up

small island in defiance of the will of the majority of the people of Puerto Rico, and of large numbers of Puerto Ricans living in the United States.

Mr. Chairman:

A successful struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques will deal a resounding blow to our common enemy. It will show—to use a slogan popularized by a number of working-class struggles led by Spanish-speaking workers in this country today—that *Si se puede*. Yes we can! Yes, it's possible to stand up to the most brutal imperialist power in history and win freedom from its rule. It is possible to win independence for Puerto Rico.

The accumulation of experiences in struggles by working people in the United States, which I referred to earlier, is leading many to become more receptive to the fight against U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico, and to identify with the fishermen, workers, youth, and others battling to get the U.S. military out of Vieques.

The battle to remove the U.S. Navy from Vieques has drawn attention to how Washington uses Puerto Rico as a launching pad for military aggression worldwide. The warships and planes that are now resuming military exercises in the area of Vieques will be sent around the world to protect the interests of U.S. big business and to assault other peoples, from the Balkans to the Middle East. The use of U.S. military facilities in Puerto Rico under the banner of fighting "drug trafficking" in the Caribbean is of a piece with the growing U.S. military intervention in Colombia and other Andean countries under the same pretext.

Example of revolutionary Cuba

Washington has not only covered Puerto Rico with its military bases. It also uses Puerto Rican youth as cannon fodder for its wars of plunder. Significant numbers of Puerto Ricans have opposed being drafted into the army of the colonial power over the years—during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and in between. Their actions set an example for youth in colonies worldwide.

Mr. Chairman:

The people of Puerto Rico and working people in the United States are often told by our common oppressor—the U.S. employers and their government in Washington—that it's useless to struggle, that independence will only lead to degradation and decline. But the example of revolutionary Cuba is proof to the contrary.

The workers and farmers of Cuba have proven that it is possible to struggle courageously and win genuine independence from U.S. domination. The socialist road they have chosen is the course that has made it possible to achieve sovereignty and dignity.

In 1959, Cuban workers and farmers overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship and freed themselves from U.S. control. Since then—despite four decades of a ruthless campaign by Washington to punish them for the audacity of making their country the first free territory in the Americas—the Cuban people have successfully defended their hard-won freedom. Cuba has always consistently championed Puerto Rico's fight for independence and set an example of selfless solidarity.

The condemnation by this committee of Washington's colonial rule of Puerto Rico will serve the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States and those everywhere fighting for the right to self-determination and the future of humanity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, for the opportunity to present these views before you today.



Militant/Martin Koppel

Demonstration in San Juan, Puerto Rico, last August demanding release of pro-independence political prisoners from U.S. prisons.

ral resources.

The Puerto Rican people and working people in the United States face the same exploiters and the same oppressors—those in Washington and Wall Street. As long as the U.S. rulers are able to maintain their colonial domination of Puerto Rico, labor in the United States will not be able to throw the source of exploitation off our backs either.

Some 2.7 million Puerto Ricans are part of the working class in the United States. They are subject to systematic discrimination and second-class status, as are Blacks, Mexicans, and other oppressed nationalities in this country. U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico reinforces racist prejudice and every reactionary force in the United States—to the detriment of the entire working class.

The trampling of the national rights of the Puerto Rican people strengthens the abil-

ity in a U.S. prison only last year. We join with thousands of others in demanding that U.S. president William Clinton release them unconditionally now.

The use of the FBI, marshals, and courts to harass and frame up unionists and independence fighters in Puerto Rico emboldens Washington to use similar methods against working-class fighters in the United States. Puerto Ricans are disproportionately victims of this so-called "justice" system.

'We have a common enemy'

Two months ago, in an imperial show of force, 300 FBI agents and U.S. marshals, backed up by 1,200 marines, landed on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques and arrested 200 Puerto Ricans and their supporters protesting against the U.S. Navy's use of their land. Since then, the U.S. military has resumed war training on Vieques, shelling the

Strikes against austerity rock Nigeria

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Working-class resistance to austerity measures is deepening across Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation. For the second time in a month the country has been rocked by massive strikes when public-sector workers in 12 states walked off the job July 3. They joined striking civil servants in Lagos in demanding an increase in the minimum wage to \$75 a month.

Charlie Onyeagba, chairman of the Anambra branch of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), said the workers would not go back to work until their demands were met. Railway workers have also been on strike and hundreds of retired soldiers have organized protests demanding the government pay their pensions.

The labor actions took place during the first African tour of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) new managing director Horst Köhler, who arrived in Nigeria July 3. Three days later, Nigerian cops assaulted strikers who had gathered outside the main

town hall in Lagos. One worker was killed when a tear gas canister fired by police exploded next to him, as the cops tried to break up the gathering.

The IMF has demanded the Nigerian regime impose "economic reforms," which include eliminating subsidies on fuel prices and deregulating the fuel industry as a condition for granting a \$1 billion loan. The country is already crippled by a \$31 billion foreign debt, the bulk of it owed to imperialist banks and investors.

Despite being a nation rich in oil gas, coal, and iron, one-third of the population lives below the official poverty line and 28 percent of the workforce is jobless. After decades of imperialist plunder of the country's resources, many of Nigeria's 113 million people lack basic services like water and electricity.

"I wonder when our leaders will start taking into consideration the welfare of the people of this country rather than satisfying the doubtful advice of the global finan-

cial institutions," said James Osuwa, a resident of Lagos, responding to a survey conducted by BBC News on the recent nationwide strike against a government-ordered fuel price increase. Attempts to raise gas prices have provoked angry protests in the streets. Last June the NLC launched a five-day strike in response to a 50 percent fuel price hike ordered by the regime of Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo.

The strike paralyzed public transportation, shut the airports in Lagos, and closed down schools, hospitals, shops, and banks in major cities across the country. The main oil workers union also joined the strike, which reflected a measure of growing union power one year after the end of military rule. The regime eventually backedpedaled and reduced the price increase to 10 percent.

"The president was forced into a humiliating climbdown that has strengthened the unions and cast doubt on his government's ability to drive through economic reforms," London's *Financial Times* reported July 5.