

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Need stepped-up efforts on  
'Militant' sales, fund drives

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Fuel price protests spread in Europe

Farmers, truckers, fishermen mobilize from Spain to Ireland

BY GREG McCARTAN

Tens of thousands of farmers, truck drivers, and fishermen have been organizing massive protests across Europe in recent weeks against skyrocketing fuel prices that, on top of the dire situation they already face, are driving many of them to ruin. Blockades of fuel depots, ports, airports, and refineries have marked the actions, along with marches and demonstrations.

In country after country, the actions have won widespread support from other working people, despite the fuel shortages at gas stations and elsewhere—and despite the capitalist rulers' propaganda campaign against the protesters. Demands for relief include cutting or eliminating taxes on diesel and other fuels, which in Europe account for as much as 80 percent of the total price at the pump.

Following mass actions that began in France, and then spread to Germany and the United Kingdom, large mobilizations have taken place in Spain, where farmers and truckers banded together to blockade several fuel distribution points in Castille and Leon.

Fishermen closed the port of Barcelona, Spain's largest commercial harbor, and prevented more than a dozen commercial vessels from entering. In Catalonia and Andalucía farmers blocked highways and fuel depots, demanding the government cap diesel prices at half their current levels. The authorities there have promised tax rebates, saying reducing taxes outright would "distort market prices and give the wrong signal to consumers."

In Finland, Sweden, and Norway similar events unfolded. Farmers and truck drivers

in Sweden, incensed about a planned increase in the tax on diesel fuel, sought to shut down several key ports and threatened to severely disrupt fuel supplies. Truckers in Belgium have tied up the center of Brus-

sels, the capital, and fishermen in Ireland vowed to tie up their boats around the country. Protests have also been reported in Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the work-

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## Workers respond to racist assault against immigrants on Long Island



More than 100 rallied in Long Island community of Farmingville September 19 to condemn murderous assault on two immigrant workers two days earlier. The area has been scene of rightist mobilizations against immigrants, targeting workers who gather on street corners for day labor work, and countermobilizations by immigrant workers and their defenders. The two workers told a press conference they were taken to a deserted warehouse by two white men claiming to be contractors, and assaulted with crowbar, shovel, and knife. See editorial, page 14.

## Rally calls for right to return to Palestine

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON—Chanting "No return, no peace!" and "Occupation has got to go," several thousand Palestinians and supporters of their rights marched through the streets of the nation's capital September 16 and rallied across the street from the White House to demand the right of the millions of Palestinians to return to their homes and land. The event, which attracted many from a new generation becoming politically active, was spirited, enthusiastic, and an expression of the confidence that several generations of Palestinians have in this ongoing fight for their homeland.

The action was organized by Al-Awda—The Palestine Right to Return Coalition—which comprises some 80 groups. Nearly 4,000 people participated, according to organizers, making this one of the largest and most broadly based such actions to occur in the United States. People came from throughout the United States, with large contingents from New York and North Carolina, as well as from Canada, especially from Montreal and Toronto.

The protest was an occasion "to celebrate the resilience and resistance of the Palestinian people," according to the flyer distributed to promote the event, and to mark the anniversary of the massacre in September 1982 of more than 1,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut. Rightist militiamen conducted a three-day killing spree after being let into these camps by Israeli military forces, who at the time

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## Strikers shut down Los Angeles bus system

BY NAN BAILEY

LOS ANGELES—About 4,400 bus drivers, members of the United Transportation Union, went on strike here against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) on September 16. About 2,400 MTA mechanics, custodians, and clerks are honoring the strike, some of them joining the bus drivers on picket lines.

The Los Angeles bus system is the second largest in the country. An estimated 450,000 people in Los Angeles County use the system to commute daily. Support from other workers was strong and spirits ran high at picket lines around the metropolitan area on Monday, September 18, the first weekday of the strike. During rush hour, packed lanes of motorists leaned on their horns, answering picket signs that had been altered from "ON Strike" to "hONk Strike." The noise in parts of downtown Los Angeles was deafening. The drivers are striking to defend the eight-hour day and their right to overtime pay.

MTA-proposed changes in work rules and schedules would impose a four-day workweek of 12–15 hours a day on many drivers. This is one of the key issues the drivers have refused to submit to.

"They want us to work five hours, then take a three-to-five hour split [an unpaid off-the-clock period in the workday] after rush hour, then work five more hours in the evening," said Robert Rodriguez, a bus

driver for five years. "That's totally unacceptable. It's a schedule that those on the extra board do now."

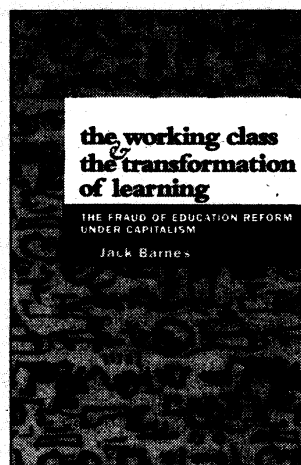
Rodriguez described how many drivers sleep in their cars during their splits because

they don't have enough time to go home and take a nap before they are required to be on duty again.

"I added it up, and that schedule would

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The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism

By Jack Barnes

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## Locked-out Steelworkers at Kaiser win contract

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

SEATTLE—Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) who have been locked in a two-year-long battle against Kaiser Aluminum took down their picket lines and will soon be returning to work with their union and dignity intact. A five-year contract was agreed to by the union and the company after several unresolved issues were sent to an arbitration panel for decision. The panel gave its ruling on September 18.

Included in the new contract provisions are an immediate wage raise of \$1.18 an hour and up to \$2.30 an hour more over the remainder of the contract. Up to 540 jobs will be cut and the company will be able to use more outside contractors. The contract also includes improved pension benefits and eliminates the cap on company contributions to retirees' health benefits.

On September 30, 1998, almost 2,900 steelworkers struck Kaiser's plants in Washington, Louisiana, and Ohio over wages, retirement and other benefits, outside contracting, and the company demand to cut 400 jobs. After three and a half months on

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Anthracite coal bosses destroy environment, jobs — page 10

# Los Angeles strikers shut down bus system

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mean about a 25 percent cut in pay for me," said bus driver Domingo Aguilar. "They want to cut out overtime pay with this kind of schedule. You have to be available for hours you aren't paid for. It's not an 8-10 hour day. It's a 12-15 hour day. I would have to work the same hours for less pay."

"California has a law that workers get overtime after eight hours," said Willie Fulwyali, a shop steward who works out of MTA Division 2 in downtown Los Angeles. "We have to fight to keep it that way."

The MTA is also proposing to cut hourly pay for drivers in half during periods when they must wait for repairs to buses that break down en route, or during "deadhead" time—the time while driving an empty bus to the beginning of a route to begin service on a bus line. Currently the drivers are paid their full wages for deadhead time; one strike demand is that this remain the case.

"They claim we're making \$80,000 a year," said Don, a 52-year-old bus driver, responding to stories in the *Los Angeles Times* that the "middle-class drivers" make that level of income. "That's not true. I've been a driver for 26 years. I work a five-day week, 13 hours a day, and I've never made that much. I have a family to support. The MTA doesn't care about the drivers and they don't care about the public, either."

## Move to sell off bus lines

Another issue in the strike is the union's objection to the proposal by the MTA and Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan to contract out more of the public bus lines, selling them to private companies. The current proposal is to sell the bus lines in the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys in the county.

"This will put about 1,200 MTA drivers, mechanics, and others out of work, because they would fire us or lay us off and hire others and give them less pay and no benefits in order to save money," said Eddie Lopez, a bus driver who is also the secretary of the union committee of the United Transportation Union (UTU) in Sun Valley's Local 1565.

UTU drivers on strike are also fighting the company's attempt to cut pension benefits, curtail the vision and dental provisions in

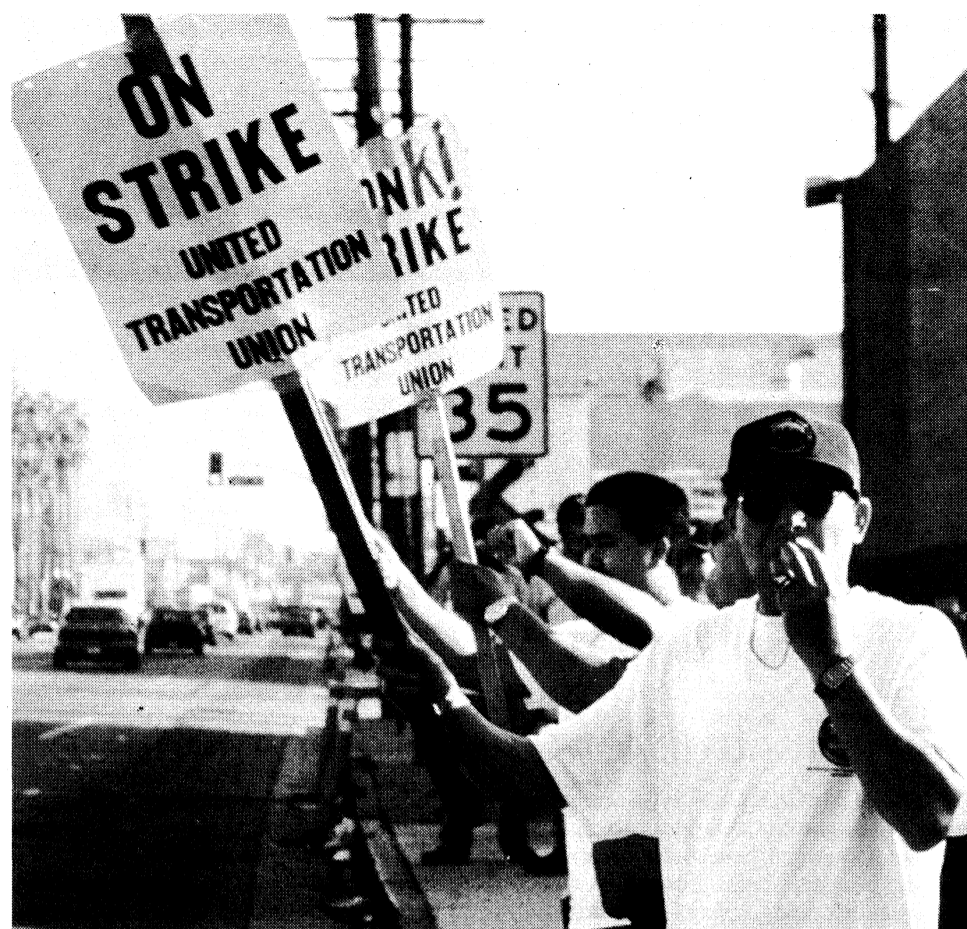
their current medical benefits plan, and increase the percentage of part-time workers.

There are currently three tiers of drivers employed by the MTA. Part-time workers receive lower wages and an inferior medical plan, compared to full-time drivers. Part-timers are not allowed to work a full 40 hours each week. Another category of workers are called BDOF (Business District Operational Finance) employees. This tier is below that of part-time, with no medical benefits at all. Some drivers report that they have been working as BDOF or part-time employees for as long as three to four years. When they become full-time workers, seniority is only counted from the first day of full-time employment.

Other strikers nodded in agreement when Shantell Malone, a driver for two years, said, "We're hardworking people and we want to keep what we've earned. I have a 13-year-old son to support. But this is not even about money. We want to keep our benefits."

"I support the drivers because the MTA is doing them unfairly," Stacy, a regular bus rider, told the *Militant*, explaining why she decided to join the picket line one afternoon. Drivers described other supporters who dropped off water and donuts to pickets in solidarity with the strike.

"When we first talked about striking I thought: What am I going to do?" said Gracie Ayala, a driver. "Now I know. I am



Militant/Elizabeth Lariscy

Bus workers in Los Angeles appeal to rush hour drivers to honk in support of their strike

going to fight."

Nicole Burris, 29, who has been driving an MTA bus for one year, said other working people in Los Angeles have a stake in supporting the strike "because this is about

protecting the rights of all of us. We're fighting for a cause and we should expect other people to support us like we would them."

Elizabeth Lariscy contributed to this article.

## Rightist Buchanan gets campaign funds

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Ultrarightist presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan jumped back on the campaign trail with a speech to some 2,000 people at Bob Jones University September 18. "We need a new fighting conservative traditionalist party in America," he told the audience, "That's why we are building this Gideon's army, and heading for Armageddon to do battle for the Lord." He declared his campaign was "a struggle for the soul of America."

The Greenville, South Carolina speech, Buchanan's first since mid-August, won repeated applause from the audience at the fundamentalist Christian college. The president

of the college, Bob Jones III, issued tacit support for the ultrarightist candidate, heralding Buchanan as "someone who stands up, speaks up, and will not shut up, and really does not care whether he wins an election."

On September 12 the Federal Election Commission recognized Buchanan as the legitimate Reform Party presidential candidate, ensuring his claim to the \$12.6 million in federal campaign money. "There is no doubt here that Buchanan is the party's nominee, and there is no reason to delay the certification," said FEC member Bradley Smith. One commission member opposed the ruling, urging the decision be left to the courts to decide. Two days later the commission issued its final determination and awarded the Buchanan ticket the general election funds.

Buchanan has won ballot status in 42 states, including the 20 states where the Reform Party had already secured ballot access. The ultrarightist candidate asserted that Reform Party founder Ross Perot is financing efforts to keep him off the ballot in other states. On September 19, Michigan secretary of state Candice Miller decided to keep Buchanan off the ballot there.

A month earlier, Buchanan capped his drive to capture the party by defeating John Hagelin for the party's presidential ticket at its national convention in Long Beach, California. Since then Hagelin's supporters have filed a petition with the commission,

which included an affidavit from Perot declaring Hagelin as "the only proper candidate to receive public funding, based on the votes I received in the 1996 election."

Perot had balked at taking the helm of the Reform Party last year and his supporters encouraged Buchanan to join them in seeking the party's presidential nomination. Buchanan subsequently consolidated his control over the organization after ousting his opponents, including Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura.

Back on the campaign scene at Bob Jones University, Buchanan cranked up his anti-immigrant rhetoric, vowing to withdraw U.S. troops from Europe and the Middle East if he was elected, and to deploy them at the Mexican border to stop immigration. Buchanan's rightist views won a hearing among many people in the audience, including several students who said they would vote for him whether he has a chance to win or not. He said the "elites" were "deconstructing our country," and attacked homosexuality, claiming it is an essential aspect of the "social decadence and national decline."

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## THE MILITANT

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# Quebec dairy farmers seek price stability

BY GRANT HARGRAVE  
AND JOANNE PRITCHARD

DRUMMONDVILLE, Quebec—Some 2,000 dairy farmers met here August 23 to demonstrate their opposition to proposals that would affect the way milk is marketed in Quebec. In particular, the changes would jeopardize the ability of small farmers to earn a living. Some participants had traveled up to eight hours by bus to participate.

The Quebec Federation of Milk Producers (FPLQ), an affiliate of the Agricultural Producers Union (UPA), organized the meeting. The UPA membership of 50,000 in Quebec includes 9,500 dairy farmers.

The gathering was called in response to a decision by the Quebec Agricultural and Food Marketing Board, a Quebec government agency, that would open a "breach...in the milk producers' system of collective marketing," according to an August 23 press release by the UPA. Under the present system, called the "joint plan," all milk is purchased from farmers for the same price—currently about \$60 per 100 liters (one liter = approximately one quart). The purpose of the joint plan is to provide the dairy farmers with relatively stable prices for their products. Smaller, less competitive farmers gain a measure of protection from this setup.

The press release explains that the board's changes "put in place two 'channels' for milk destined for export, one exclusively for the use of cooperatives, and the other for the rest of the industry. In creating this parallel channel for the cooperatives," it adds, "this decision brings back the situation that existed 20 years ago," when dairy farmers were more vulnerable to the fluctuations of the market and to competition with capitalist farmers.

## Some small farmers would be ruined

A farmer from the Quebec City area explained that without the joint plan, he and many other farmers would have gone out of business a long time ago. Speakers at the meeting reported that in the neighboring province of Ontario, milk for export is sold for prices in the range of \$33 per 100 liters—below farmers' cost of production.

The reason given for the change was a World Trade Organization ruling that milk produced in Quebec for export is "unfairly" subsidized. At hearings before the board the FPLQ had put forward an alternative to the board's proposal that both maintained the "joint plan" and complied with the WTO ruling. The board rejected this alternative.

## Washington students condemn killing of Black youth by cop

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—More than 300 people, mostly Howard University students, rallied outside the Department of Justice here September 14. The rally, organized by the student government and law school students, demanded a federal investigation into the fatal shooting of 25-year-old unarmed Howard University student Prince Jones by a Prince George's County, Maryland, undercover detective. The previous week 1,000 students had rallied on the campus to protest the killing, and some 500 students had attended a September 15 memorial meeting.

The shooting took place September 1 after Narcotics Detective Carlton Jones, in an unmarked sports utility vehicle, followed Prince Jones from Maryland, through Washington, D.C., and finally into Virginia. The cops claim they had received a tip that Jones's vehicle might be connected to a gun stolen from a Prince George's County police car. No weapon or narcotics were found. According to the detective's attorney, Prince Jones stopped his Jeep Cherokee and confronted the officer tailing him. The cop drew his weapon and told Jones to return to his car. After doing so Jones is alleged to have repeatedly rammed his jeep into the officer's vehicle.

The cop fired 16 rounds into the jeep, striking Jones six times, four of those in the back. Somehow Jones managed to drive away from the scene. His vehicle came to a stop three blocks from the shooting.

"The police story is just that, a story," Robert Caballero, Prince Jones's friend and former roommate told the rally. "If they were following Prince because he had sto-

In fact, at present the amount of milk that will be involved in this parallel market is not a high percentage of total production, since it only affects milk produced above farmers' quotas. But the UPA explains that these changes set a precedent for further measures that would harm dairy farmers. They could also be used to undermine joint plans regulating other agricultural export products, such as maple syrup and pork.

Between 75 and 80 percent of dairy farmers in Quebec are cooperative members. They have contracts to sell their milk to these institutions, which are supposed to simply process the milk. Cooperatives formally belong to the farmers who are members, but today outfits such as Agropur or Groupe Lactel act as huge agribusiness corporations defending their own interests.

"I receive about 50 cents a liter for the milk I produce, but when you buy it in the store you pay \$1.10," reported Pascal Proulx, a dairy farmer in Mirabel, north of Montreal. The difference is pocketed by capitalist middlemen, including those who run the cooperatives.

In the discussion period, a farmer from the Abitibi region in northern Quebec said the changes in the marketing system meant that it would give his employer—the cooperative—the power to set the price he would receive for his milk.

Not all those who spoke opposed the changes. A small number of capitalist farmers—unlike the majority of meeting participants, who were from family farms—think they can produce milk cheaply enough to make a profit under the new system. A speaker who argued that by opposing the changes the Quebec Federation of Milk Producers was standing in the way of efficient "evolution" was roundly booed.

## U.S. bosses stretch out working hours

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Brutally long work hours have helped spark recent or ongoing union battles by Western coal miners, steelworkers in Ohio, nurses in Massachusetts, bakery workers nationwide, and East Coast telephone workers, among others. Virtually every issue of the *Militant* for months has featured coverage on several such struggles.

The lengthening of the workweek in the United States has even been featured in recent reports in the big-business press, which

len a gun, why would the officer have allowed him to return to his car where there might be a dangerous weapon? Do they really expect us to believe that anyone...would get in and just start to repeatedly ram someone whom they know to be armed?"

Sellano Simmons, president of Howard University student government, Jeffery Johnson of the Youth and College Division of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Michael Atkins of the Community Alliance for Youth Action also spoke. "This is another example of the consequences of racial profiling by the police," said Johnson.

Virginia Commonwealth's Attorney Robert Horan, who will decide whether to file criminal charges against the detective, said no officer had been charged in a police-related shooting in his 32 years as a prosecutor. Horan's reported statements implying that Jones may have been involved in drug trafficking angered many at the rally. According to the September 9 *Washington Post*, Horan said the detective "followed Jones for pretty good reasons.... There's a lot more of that story than has been reported." Horan also disputed an autopsy report released by Jones's family, which indicated his vehicle was moving away from the detective's car when he was shot.

In the past 13 months Prince George's County cops have shot 12 people, killing five. Two others died of injuries while in police custody.

The students at Howard University have formed the Justice for Prince Committee. The committee can be reached by e-mail at justiceforprince@onebox.com or by calling (202) 777-2647 x3696.

## Peru president calls new elections



Riot cops confront demonstrators during celebrations in the streets of Peru's capital, Lima, after announcement by President Alberto Fujimori on September 16 that new presidential elections would be held within six months and he will not run. The event precipitating his announcement was a bribery scandal involving his right-hand man, secret police chief Vladimiro Montesinos. While Fujimori's anti-establishment demagoguery and promises to "get things done" won him popular support for a number of years, his usefulness to the capitalist rulers has become exhausted as the capitalist economic crisis breeds growing social turbulence.

An FPLQ request for an injunction from the Quebec courts to suspend the contentious elements of the new regulations was rejected. The government board has not yet indicated when it will issue a ruling.

In the meantime, the federation called on farmers to encourage others not at the meeting to defend the joint plan. It urged farm-

ers to send specially printed postcards to representatives in the Quebec National Assembly (parliament) and to boycott export contracts with their cooperatives.

Joanne Pritchard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

point out that overtime has risen to unprecedented levels.

"Overtime rises, making fatigue a labor issue" was the headline in the September 17 *New York Times*. The August 10 *Christian Science Monitor* carried an article entitled, "Among workforce, a backlash to overtime."

The *Times* story highlighted a recent debate in the Maine legislature on a bill to cap the amount of forced overtime legally allowed in the state. The debate drew particular attention after the electrocution death of Brent Churchill, a lineman in Industry, Maine. He had been forced by his employer, Central Maine Power, to work two back-to-back shifts and then, after sleeping less than three hours, called back out to work almost 24 hours straight. Churchill died instantly on the job when he grabbed a 7,200-volt cable without his insulating gloves.

The *Christian Science Monitor* article reports, "Americans clock more hours at work—45 a week—than any other people on the globe. They surpassed the Japanese in 1998."

A Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) survey shows that in early 1997 average weekly overtime reached close to five hours—the highest level since 1956, when the BLS began compiling such figures.

The report actually understates the reality because it includes only overtime paid at premium rates. Extra hours with no overtime pay—what millions of workers face, especially in nonunion jobs—are not counted. Other government figures average out all jobs, including the large and increasing number of part-time jobs.

Among manufacturing workers, according to the BLS report, overtime is highest in the primary metal industries (including steelworkers), transportation equipment (auto and aircraft assembly), petroleum and coal products, paper and pulp, industrial machinery, chemicals, fabricated metals, and textile.

In an article in the February *Monthly Labor Review*, BLS economist Ronald Hetrick noted that overtime hours started to grow after the end of the 1990–91 recession. In the early 90s, known as the "jobless recovery," employment continued to decline. Beginning in 1993, employment slowly rose again, while overtime hours continued to surge. Hetrick points out, "Employers appeared to rely more heavily on overtime in the current expansion than on hiring new employees." In the period from March 1991

to January 1998, he adds, "If employers had hired new workers instead of increasing overtime, nearly twice as many production workers would have been hired."

## Bills on overtime benefit bosses

Capitalist politicians, especially in this election year, have pretended to be concerned about the lengthening of the workweek. In "regulating" overtime, however, they have usually codified a brutal level of working hours.

In Maine, amid the outcry over Brent Churchill's untimely death, legislation was passed in May limiting the amount of forced overtime legally allowed in the state to 80 hours in any two-week period. The original bill would have limited overtime to 96 hours over three consecutive weeks—which the big-business politicians evidently concluded was too generous to workers and too onerous for bosses.

When the California state legislature passed legislation counting overtime after an eight-hour day, rather than a 40-hour week, employers bombarded the politicians with demands for exemptions in construction sites, hospitals, and other workplaces. Bills in Pennsylvania and West Virginia that would allow workers to refuse overtime without being penalized by bosses have been deferred.

In the U.S. Congress, Democratic and Republican politicians have focused on limiting overtime pay, not hours. As the *Times* put it, the congressional debates on the lengthening workweek have been aimed "not at workers but at helping employers who seek to reduce the associated labor costs."

Several attachments to currently pending minimum wage legislation, which would raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 over the next two years, "would disqualify technology workers, sales personnel, and others from receiving overtime pay. Another provision would allow businesses to reduce overtime payments to virtually all qualifying employees."

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# Youth in New Zealand hear SWP candidate

BY COLIN HEATH

HAMILTON, New Zealand—"We have an international campaign that's linking up with fighting workers, farmers, and youth to build an international movement to take on capitalism and establish a workers and farmers government," said Jacob Perasso. The Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in New York was speaking to students at a public meeting hosted by the Students Union at Waikato University here September 4.

Perasso stated that there were two main lies under capitalism that workers need to understand. "The first lie is that there is real democracy under capitalist rule. Most workers know this isn't true. The second is less well understood, and that is the lie that all rights workers have are given to them, and that workers cannot make gains through struggle."

He explained that the rights workers have today were won in struggle against the capitalist class and must constantly be defended. As well, the employers pay workers as little as they can get away with, he said, which is the source of conflict and struggle, constantly propelling workers to seek to form unions or strengthen existing ones.

Perasso found real interest in the socialist campaign, conducting discussions with a number of students for more than two



Jacob Perasso joins August 26 march by refugees against discrimination in Sydney, Australia. U.S. socialist candidates Perasso and Margaret Trowe also visited New Zealand.

hours. Also joining Perasso was a longtime socialist worker and unionist from the United States, Tom Leonard.

One participant asked how the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists plan to

mobilize workers to overthrow capitalism. "We can't take on the capitalist system with our small forces," he said. "Revolutions can only be made by the majority. Capitalism has begun to drive workers and farmers en

masse to resist and fight the attacks on our rights. We aim to be part of the vanguard that will lead tens of millions of workers and farmers to take on the capitalist system, make a successful revolution, and begin to transform society for the good of humanity."

Perasso related the experience of visiting a picket line in Australia where he was asked by a reporter if there was anything like this strike in the United States today. He said he replied, "If you dropped me in here and told me this was the United States, I wouldn't argue. The accents might be different but the fights are the same. Some of the deepest political discussions are going on at picket lines today. Workers around the world are looking for ways to resist the cutbacks in their pay and conditions on the job, and are standing up for dignity and respect."

There was also discussion of recent events in New Zealand, including a so-called Afghan "terrorist" cell exposed in Auckland. Several members of the Afghani community in Auckland had been smeared through the media by the police for supposedly planning to blow up a nuclear facility in Sydney during the upcoming Olympic games. One of the Afghani immigrants is "guilty of owning a table and a map of Sydney, having military training that many workers around the world also have, and owning a computer," Perasso said. "They use claims of terrorist threats to attack the democratic rights of all."

A student who is Maori asked about how the fight for Maori rights could be linked to union struggles. Perasso extended solidarity to the struggle for Maori rights and told the meeting about the visit he and socialist vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe made to Waitara, where they met Maori fighting for justice after the cop shooting there of Steven Wallace.

Perasso raised that a central effort of workers fighting the bosses today must be to transform their unions into fighting instruments that address the needs and concerns of all the exploited and the oppressed, not just the narrow interests of those currently organized in the union. Through such struggles, he said, more workers see the connection between the antiunion assaults by the bosses and police brutality against working people, especially oppressed nationalities.

Supporters of the campaign set up a literature table with Pathfinder books on campus before the meeting and during the event, selling a subscription and four single copies of the *Militant*, as well as a copy of the pamphlet, *The Long View of History* by George Novack, and Pathfinder's latest title, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes.

Colin Heath is a member of the National Distribution Union and of the Young Socialists in Auckland, New Zealand.

## Steps needed to collect contributions for fund

BY GREG McCARTAN

Focused, consistent efforts to collect contributions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* Fund have generated results in several cities. Overall, \$16,640 was raised in

the first two weeks of the drive, which is now somewhat behind schedule. Supporters of the working-class press are campaigning to raise \$110,000 by November 13.

Leading the way are supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in Atlanta. A big collection this past weekend brought their total contributions up to almost \$2,000—42 percent of their goal.

Atlanta fund director Lea Bockman explained what they did. "A group of supporters were getting together this past weekend, so we asked them all to bring a check. Everybody responded really well." The one-week collection netted \$1,720 for the international goal.

Bockman added, "Another thing we did was to reproduce and mail out the letter by *Militant* editor Martin Koppel asking everyone to contribute to the fund." She said the mailing went out to a number of people who are involved in political struggles in the area and others who have subscribed to the socialist press in recent months. "We included a number of farmers in this area we have gotten to know. Now we have organized people to do two calls a week to follow up on the mailing."

As a result of some of the initial follow-up calling that was done after the mailing an additional \$200 in pledges was received from partisans of the paper in Savannah, Georgia. "One person sent us a check to renew his subscription to the *Militant* and included an extra \$20 donation to the fund," Bockman said.

On October 7 Atlanta will be hosting a public meeting by *Militant* editor Koppel to give the campaign a big public boost. "A couple [of *Militant* supporters] have volunteered to host a house party to raise funds for the plane fare to bring our speaker to Atlanta," said Bockman.

### What is needed now

What the *Militant* campaigners in Atlanta have done in the first two weeks of the drive includes the elements needed in every city to catch up and get the campaign really rolling.

"While the fund campaign is behind in most cities, there are

some basic things that can and need to be done in every local area to turn the fund-raising around," Koppel said in an interview.

"First, there are many supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in every area who have already made pledges—what is needed is weekly organization to solicit and collect payments on those pledges. It's important to point out that the money for the fund—which helps cover the weekly cost of producing the two socialist publications—is needed now.

"Secondly," Koppel said, "reaching out as broadly as possible for contributions is crucial in having a successful and energetic campaign. This includes organizing a mailing of the fund-raising letter and following up with phone calls, as well as approaching co-workers who read the *Militant* and *PM* one-on-one.

### Fund-raising meeting key

"Third, organizing a public fund-raising meeting as soon as possible is key. This meeting can be used so that those who have made pledges can make a large payment on it at the event, and others will be spurred to make a pledge."

Koppel noted, "Where else but the *Militant* will working people find truthful coverage and political answers about the skyrocketing fuel prices and the massive protests against this crisis by farmers, truckers, and fishermen throughout Europe? It's because of big political questions like this that a number of militant workers, farmers, and radicalizing young people who rely on the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* will be glad to be part of financing these publications."

A few other areas have made progress similar to Atlanta this past week. In Pittsburgh, for example, contributions now total more than 30 percent of the goal. Supporters there credit the success to early payments on substantial pledges by workers who are members of the United Mine Workers of America and the Steelworkers union. Work has also begun to follow up a recent mailing of the fund drive letter to readers and others in the region.

As the chart indicates, increases in local goals are needed in a number of areas to raise the cumulative amount to the \$110,000 international goal.

Supporters in each area are urged to send to the *Militant* this week their plan of action to carry out the fund campaign and achieve the goal.

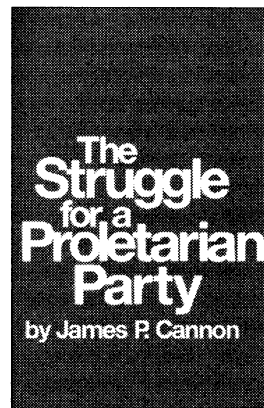
### Contribute to *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* Fund

	Goal	Paid	%
<b>United States</b>			
Atlanta	\$4,600	\$1,920	42%
Newark	\$3,000	\$1,195	40%
San Francisco	\$10,000	\$3,245	32%
Pittsburgh	\$4,000	\$1,250	31%
Brooklyn	\$3,200	\$975	30%
NY Garment Dist.	\$5,000	\$1,240	25%
St. Louis	\$1,800	\$425	24%
Houston	\$6,500	\$1,525	23%
Chippewa Falls	\$600	\$100	17%
Seattle	\$9,000	\$1,350	15%
Charlotte	\$2,800	\$400	14%
Des Moines	\$1,800	\$215	12%
Chicago	\$7,500	\$730	10%
Los Angeles	\$6,000	\$550	9%
Miami	\$2,300	\$205	9%
Birmingham	\$3,200	\$201	6%
Boston	\$4,000	\$220	6%
Washington	\$3,000	\$100	3%
Detroit	\$3,750	\$50	1%
Philadelphia	\$2,500	\$25	1%
Cleveland	\$1,600	\$13	1%
Allentown	\$1,200		0%
Fort Collins	\$1,400		0%
Fresno	\$200		0%
NY Upper Manhattan	\$3,000		0%
Twin Cities	\$3,500		0%
Other		\$175	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>\$95,450</b>	<b>\$16,109</b>	<b>17%</b>
Sweden	530	\$20	4%
United Kingdom	\$870	\$30	3%
Canada	\$5,000	\$101	2%
<b>New Zealand</b>			
Auckland	1170	\$30	3%
Christchurch	520		
<b>NZ Total</b>	<b>1690</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2%</b>
France		\$320	
Iceland		\$30	
<b>Int'l Total</b>	<b>\$103,540</b>	<b>\$16,640</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Int'l Goal/Should be</b>	<b>110,000</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>	<b>20%</b>

For further reading

### The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon



In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic

against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II.

\$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

‘Militant’ gets good response at march for Palestinian rights

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The *Militant* received an excellent response from participants in the march of nearly 4,000 people for the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland, which was held September 16 in Washington. Three sales tables were set up at Lafayette Park, the site of the rally, where partisans of the socialist press sold 11 subscriptions to the *Militant* along with \$430 worth of Pathfinder literature. “I sold one subscription on the bus from New York to a teacher from New Brunswick, New Jersey,” said Brian Williams. “Her father is a Palestinian who wasn’t allowed to return to his homeland. She was born in Colombia and has recently been involved in organizing teachers into a union at the charter school where she works. She also bought the new pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes.”

Williams said, “It was easy to sell the paper. I showed a few of the articles to another Palestinian who is one of the leaders of Al-Awda—The Palestine Right to Return Coalition—which organized the action. He also bought a subscription.” Nancy Rosenstock, a garment worker in New Jersey who attended the march, said she also sold two *Militant* subscriptions to participants at the demonstration.

Sales of Pathfinder’s newest title *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* are well ahead of the pace. Reports from a number of cities suggest showing the pamphlet to everyone who is interested in the *Militant*, and encouraging people to read the political explanation of the pamphlet on its back cover. Supporters in New York are discussing raising their goal.

This past Sunday *Militant* supporters from the Garment District in Manhattan set up street tables and sold seven subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and one to the *Militant*. All the new subscribers except one also took advantage of the special offer of \$1 for the pamphlet with a subscription. Four more copies of the pamphlet were sold by the teams, plus a copy of *Capitalism’s World Disorder* by Jack Barnes. Nelson Gonzalez, a meat packer in Newark, New Jersey, said two of his co-workers bought *Militant* subscriptions that included this special deal.

In Brooklyn, New York, socialist workers are using the sales campaign to deepen their connections with workers who are resisting cop harassment and violent right-wing assaults on their right to earn a living. “We wrapped up our first week of the subscription drive by sending a team to Farmingville, New York, where workers gather each morning to be picked up by local contractors who hire them for construction and landscaping jobs,” said Mark Gilsdorf from Brooklyn. “A number of them

told us about harassment from the local cops for standing on the street corners. They also mentioned the anti-immigrant protests that some right-wingers have organized across from one of the main corners where we were having political discussions.”

Gilsdorf said the team of socialist workers joined with a van load of the workers who were going to picket some of the local contractors who have been refusing to pay some of the workers they hire, often for weeks at a time. “One of the workers, Juan, hooked up with us after the picketing was done and suggested we grab a bite to eat. We spent an hour talking to him while showing several Pathfinder titles. He had already purchased a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* and the Spanish version of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. He then decided to buy *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* in Spanish.” Gilsdorf said a previous sales team had sold two *PM* subs, one copy of the education pamphlet, two copies of *PM*, and one copy of the *Militant*.

Supporters of the sub drive joined a protest march of some 200 people held September 19 against the brutal racist attack on two immigrants by people posing as contractors. “Now we have to get back with the new subscribers like Juan, as well as meet others standing up to the rightist attacks,” said Gilsdorf.

On the other side of the globe, campaigners for the *Militant* set up a stall near the protest against the World Economic Forum in Melbourne, Australia. Most people who came by the table disagreed with the signs they had demanding Canberra get its troops out of East Timor, Bougainville, and the Solomon Islands. The socialist workers had a successful day of sales there, however, selling 38 copies of the *Militant*, 3 copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, 2 copies of the *Communist Manifesto*, 1 copy of *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* by V.I. Lenin, and 1 copy of *Capitalism’s World Disorder*.

As the chart shows we are slightly behind on sales of *Militant* and *PM* subscriptions. The target week in the drive, scheduled for September 30 through October 8, can be used to catch up in every area. This means mapping out plans for daily sales efforts on street corners and going door-to-door in working-class communities, on the job, among workers and farmers standing up to attacks by the employers and the government, on college campuses, and at political events like the National Day of Solidarity with the People of Vieques, Puerto Rico, planned for September 22 in Washington. Supporters in Pennsylvania are planning a team to coalfield communities in the eastern part of the state. Other such regional teams will be a boost to the entire effort.

Steelworkers approve contract with Bridgestone/Firestone

BY SIMONE BERG

DES MOINES, Iowa—As Bridgestone/Firestone’s woes continue to mount due to a massive tire recall, union members ratified a new contract September 15, with ballots cast at six of seven plants. The vote here was 646 in favor and 183 against. According to one local union official, the contract carried by a similar margin everywhere except Russellville, Arkansas where it was voted down.

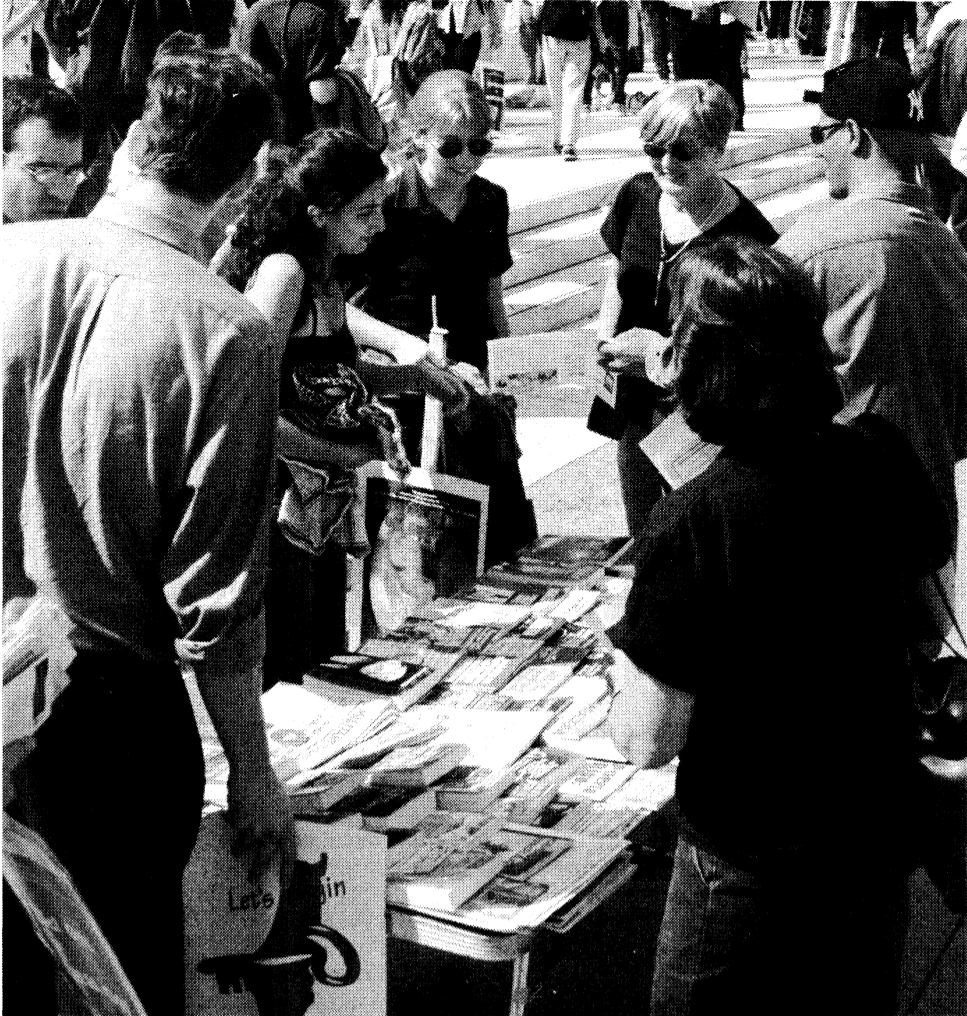
The contract with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) expires in April, 2003. It establishes a common expiration date for all nine local unions, including two that are not now under the master agreement. Other plants covered by this agreement are in Akron, Ohio; Decatur, Illinois; LaVergne, Tennessee; Noblesville, Indiana; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Plants in Bloomington, Illinois, and Warren County, Tennessee, are not.

The new contract provides a wage increase of 65 cents an hour over the life of the con-

tract and \$1.50 an hour raise for warehouse workers. A Performance Based Pay was eliminated in favor of reinstituting a full Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA), which is rolled into hourly wages. This is estimated to be \$1.36 per hour over the life of the contract. The starting wage is now \$10.50 per hour. The contract will also increase pension benefits from \$34 to \$50 per year worked and provides a special early retirement at age 55, or after 30 years of service.

A couple of the major points of discontentment around the contract negotiations were seniority in bidding and the absentee policy. The new contract will make a minor improvement in seniority bidding, requiring the company to post initial job openings long enough so that every shift will see them.

An advance in the attendance program was also won, changing from three absences in six months to five absences in nine months before a worker is placed on “the program,” as it is commonly referred to.



Militant/Lauren Hart

Youth were drawn to *Militant* and Pathfinder books at march for right of Palestinians to return to their homeland held in Washington September 16.

Where we stand

Mil	PM	Pamphlet
Week 9		
Week 8		
Week 7		
Week 6		
Week 5		
Week 4		
Week 3		
Week 2		
Week 1		

Subscription campaign to win new readers: September 9–November 12

Country	Militant			PM			Pamphlet		
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold		
Iceland	8	2	25%	1		12	3		
Sweden	12	3	25%	5		15	4		
New Zealand									
Auckland	15	3	20%	1		20	5		
Christchurch	8	1	13%	1		10	2		
N.Z. total	23	4	17%	2		30	7		
United States									
N.Y. Garment Dist.	65	15	23%	35	8	110	56		
Atlanta	20	4	20%	8		20	18		
Allentown	18	3	17%	3		35	8		
Washington	30	5	17%	10		50	28		
Upper Manhattan	67	11	16%	25	5	100	25		
Charlotte	15	2	13%	5		30			
Cleveland	30	4	13%	6		50	13		
Seattle	30	4	13%	10	3	75	35		
Chicago	45	5	11%	15		50	20		
Newark	55	6	11%	25	1	85	26		
Brooklyn	60	6	10%	30	9	120	34		
Fresno	10	1	10%	6		6			
Boston	25	2	8%	8		50			
Miami	30	2	7%	15		60			
Houston	50	3	6%	20	1	75	12		
Birmingham	35	2	6%	2		50			
Pittsburgh	35	2	6%	2		50			
Detroit	20	1	5%	5		35	5		
Twin Cities	55	2	4%	25		110			
San Francisco	35	1	3%	20	6	75	12		
Los Angeles	40	1	3%	20		60	9		
Chippewa Falls	15		0%	10		20	4		
Des Moines	35		0%	20		50	8		
Fort Collins	20		0%	1		20			
Philadelphia	25		0%	5		50			
St. Louis	25		0%	9		45			
Tucson	5		0%	3	1	8	1		
Other		1							
U.S. total	895	82	9%	343	34	1489	314		
Australia	15	1	7%	3		25	3		
Canada									
Vancouver	30	3	10%	5		40	7		
Toronto	25	1	4%	6		35	4		
Montreal	15		0%	5		30	2		
Canada total	70	4	6%	1600		105	13		
United Kingdom									
London	30		0%	10		60			
Manchester	18		0%	2		18			
UK total	48		0%	12		78	0		
Int'l totals	1071	96	10%	382	34	1754	344		
Goal/Should be	1000	110	11%	350	38	1500	165		
In the unions									
UNITE	30	3	10%	25	1	60	12		
UMWA	18					18			
Total	48	3	6%	25	1	78	12		

# Harris takes socialist campaign to Florida

BY BILL KALMAN

PLANT CITY, Florida—"Conditions of life for working people won't get better unless we fight to make them better," said James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, at meetings in Miami, Plant City, Orlando, and Tampa from September 14 through 18. "And this means fighting for a government of our own—one of workers and farmers. This can only come about through a revolutionary struggle of tens of millions, acting in our own class interests as we resist and oppose the brutality, racism, economic ruin, and unrelenting assaults on the job by the employers."

Many of the 32 Florida residents who signed up to be electors for the ticket of Harris and Margaret Trowe were among those who came to one of these campaign meetings. Because of these electors, the socialist alternative for president will be on the Florida ballot this fall for the first time ever.

Harris began his Florida tour by meeting with Harvey Johnson, a green bean farmer in Homestead, the agricultural center south of Miami. Johnson, who farms 150 acres, is a plaintiff in the Black farmers' lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "When I started here in 1985, there were 12 Black farmers," he told Harris. "Now I'm the last one." Back then, Johnson could get \$8 per bushel for machine-picked beans, and \$10 for handpicked. "Now I get \$6 and \$8," he said. Meanwhile, his cost of production per bushel has risen to about \$7.35. "Another year like last year and I'll have to quit," he told Harris. Like many other farmers who face racial discrimination at the hands U.S. government agencies in addition to exploitation at the hands of the banks and capitalist monopolies, Johnson has yet to receive one cent he is due according to the ruling against the government from the lawsuit.

Harris contrasted the conditions facing working farmers in the United States with that of farmers in Cuba. At a meeting in Miami later that day, he said the Cuban revolution made it possible to guarantee farmers the right to farm. "In the 42 years of the Cuban revolution, no farmer has been driven from the land because of debt. This is because since capitalism was overturned the drive for profit by the capitalist food monopolies has been removed from food production. It has been removed as a factor in society as a whole and in its place the needs and interests of working people have taken top priority."

On September 16 Harris spoke at a reception here in Plant City hosted by Karl Butts, a vegetable farmer. Butts and Harris participated in a trip to Cuba earlier this year by working farmers involved in protests to defend their land and livelihoods. Four other

farmers came to the meeting.

"Our campaign is a campaign of participation in ongoing struggles," Harris said, "and the construction of an organized leadership of working people that can lead those battles to victory." Jo Ann Glavich and her sister Doris, both of whom farm in central Florida, came to the meeting. "It takes a lot of fire in a lot of guts to make a change," she said. "There's a change in the consciousness of working people taking place right now," Harris responded.

The Glaviches farmed about 40 acres of strawberries between them, until they applied DuPont Benlate DF fungicide on their fields in 1989 and in 1990. The chemical left a toxic residue that decreased plant yields, they said, rendering their land virtually worthless for strawberry production. While DuPont compensated the farmers for the two years they used the chemical, the agrichemical giant has refused to pay anything towards crops lost for the rest of the decade. The sisters have been fighting DuPont ever since.

## U.S. intervention in Colombia

One question that came up at a couple of the meetings was Washington's bipartisan drive to provide massive military aid to Colombia, allegedly to stem the drug trade. "There is no war on drugs," Harris explained. "Drugs are big business. The main way drugs come into the country is not through individual couriers who have swallowed balloons; it is on big planes and big ships. International drug trafficking can only be organized the same way as any other capitalist enterprise: with the assistance of the capitalist state. The military aid to the Colombian government—and U.S. moves in the region—are used to help them check the



James Harris (left) meets UNITE members at Tartan Textile during his visit to Florida.

struggles of Colombian working people and are aimed at massive upsurges such as that which occurred in Ecuador earlier this year."

Earlier one morning Harris and several supporters campaigned outside the hiring hall of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), which organizes the workers who load and unload the freighters at the Port of Miami. Harris found widespread opposition to the police beating of a young Black man after he peacefully surrendered after a car chase, shown on TV the previous evening. Thirteen longshoremen bought copies of the campaign newspaper, the *Militant*, with a headline on the march against police brutality in Washington, D.C.

Harris also spoke with workers at Tartan Textile, an industrial laundry in Pompano Beach where members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) conducted a spirited strike earlier this summer. A number of Haitian and Latino workers took information about

the socialist campaign and several invited the socialists to return the following Saturday. Campaign supporters sold three copies of the new Pathfinder pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Education*, at the two plant-gate events.

Harris also addressed meetings at a community bookstore in Orlando and at the University of South Florida in Tampa. His supporters set up a campaign table in front of the student union, selling a dozen copies of the *Militant* along with a number of Pathfinder books, including *Women's Evolution*, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, and the *Communist Manifesto*. Nine people signed up to find out more about the socialist campaign.

Harris was interviewed by the USF affiliate of National Public Radio; WMMF, a community radio station in Tampa; and the *Miami Times*, a newspaper oriented to the Black community in Miami.

Bill Kalman is a railroad worker in Hialeah.

## Cop beating of youth in Miami sparks protest

BY MIKE ITALIE

MIAMI—A meeting of 250 people sponsored by the NAACP here September 14 turned into a speakout against the brutal police beating of Jerome McClellion the day before.

"These police beat and kick our children and get away with it. When we discipline our children they send us to jail," said one participant at the meeting. The Miami-Dade County NAACP-sponsored event, organized as a candidates forum in Coconut Grove, grew in size as people responded to radio notices stating the event would take on the issue of police brutality.

Victor Curry, president of the Miami-Dade NAACP, said each of the candidates

should state their views on the beating of McClellion and police brutality. "If what the cops did was OK, we wouldn't need the judges, attorneys, or court system—the police can act as judge, jury, and executioner," he said.

McClellion, 19, was the target of a savage police beating after a two-county police chase, which ended with McClellion on the ground. TV news cameras recorded a cop on top of him, pushing his face into an anthill, and another cop kicking him in the head. They stopped once they realized TV news helicopters were overhead, but then a third cop arrived and delivered a knee blow to the youth. The three Miami-Dade cops involved—Mike Ramirez, Chris Johnson, and Nathan Johnston—are members of the Robbery Intervention Detail and have been transferred to desk jobs.

Repeated airing of the attack on the TV news that night along with front-page photos of the beating in local papers the next morning, made clear to millions of people in south Florida and across the country that the police had carried out a vicious assault.

## Police cover-up

The cover-up began rapidly. At first the cops claimed McClellion had waved a gun at them, and that a bullet hole in one police car was likely fired by that gun. This story fell apart when the *Miami Herald* reported McClellion was unarmed and the bullet hole in the police car was caused by a shot from another cop's gun. Instead, the *Herald* quoted extensively from Douglas Hartman, attorney for the police involved, who claimed McClellion made a momentary motion downward with his right arm that showed that he was after the policeman's gun. "Anyone who saw that movement, in my opinion, had the right to use deadly force," Hartman said.

The *Herald* also sought to justify the cop violence by painting McClellion as someone who vowed to "go out in a blaze of glory" and highlighted his arrest record. It published letters to the editor appearing under the heading, "McClellion's victim: Police did a good job." The lead letter was from a person who said they were the owner of the Cadillac SUV that McClellion is charged with stealing. The writer applauded "the police in a job well done" against

"worthless punks."

"You can be caught on video—hand in the cookie jar, crumbs around your mouth—and still one of the police attorneys says the victim 'was reaching for an officer's gun' and that's why they had to kick him in the head," NAACP leader Curry said at the public meeting in response to this campaign. Curry stated that no protests are planned, because then "the media could paint us as a bunch of rioters."

## Socialist candidate joins discussion

James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for president of the United States, attended the meeting with campaign supporters. "If something happens one time then it's an accident; twice and there's a problem," he said in the discussion period. "But if it happens everywhere, and consistently, such as is the case with police brutality, then there is a systematic problem. The truth is the police are organized to carry out this kind of violence against working people." He said that what is needed is not more investigations and "sensitivity training" for the police, but that instead "the cops who carry out this kind of beating must be put behind bars."

Some came to the meeting because they had also been targets of police violence and wanted to speak out about it. One man jumped up from the floor to tell the candidates, "You all better stick to the subject: police brutality. This sticks with me because it happened to me and there was no video camera."

James Wallace spoke briefly about his case, in which the police stopped him for speeding and then turned police dogs on him. One ripped at his leg for a minute and a half, while the cops put another barking dog within inches of his face. He continues to receive daily therapy for his injuries and is facing resisting arrest and other charges. He came to the meeting to get together with others who wanted to fight against police brutality. "I want to commit myself to be part of an organization, a national organization, that will fight this kind of injustice," he said.

Mike Italie is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

## CAMPAIGN FOR THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

- ☐ Sign me up as a campaign supporter and keep me informed of protests, picket lines, and other activities.
- ☐ Enclosed is a \$\_\_\_\_\_ contribution. (Make checks payable to Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee.)
- ☐ I want to invite a candidate to speak at my union, school, or organization.
- ☐ Enclosed is \$10 for a 12-week introduction subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly, or \$6 for 4 months of *Perspectiva Mundial* in Spanish.
- ☐ Enclosed is \$20 for *Capitalism's World Disorder*, \$19.95 for *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, or \$14 for *New International no. 11: U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*. (Add \$2 postage and handling.)
- ☐ I am interested in the Young Socialists, a revolutionary organization supporting the socialist candidates. Please contact me.
- ☐ Send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the campaign flyer at 10 cents each.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Union/School/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Socialist Workers Campaign, P.O. Box 20169, New York, NY 10014. Phone: (212) 695-1809. E-mail: [swpcampaign@usa.net](mailto:swpcampaign@usa.net). Follow the campaign at: [themilitant.com](http://themilitant.com).

Paid for by the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee

# Socialist: 'Immigrants strengthen fighting capacity of workers'

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

SEATTLE—A public meeting held here September for Socialist Workers vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe opened with a message sent by Rogelio Montes, organizer of the year-long strike against Valley Manufactured Housing in Sunnyside, Washington.

Montes referred to a house meeting organized by some of the strikers a few weeks ago for James Harris, the Socialist Workers candidate for president. "It gives me and other strikers great pleasure to share with you the fact that we enjoyed meeting James Harris in person," he said. "We had a chance to speak to James about the changes in the U.S. government that we would like to see. We would like to see more respect toward people and our right to organize."

He added, "James and Margaret deserve our support because they care about our struggles. They also know that a struggle is not easy—a struggle is hard, but in the end it will lead to victory as long as people remain united. A struggle today is one of the entire labor movement, not only a few. We have to unite for a better tomorrow for our families and future generations."

Andre Thomas spoke to the audience about his victory over Alaska Airlines. Only a few days earlier he was informed that he had won immediate reinstatement to his job and full back pay. The arbitration panel stated that it would organize monitoring of the airline for a year to make sure the employer didn't go after Thomas further.

A customer service representative at Alaska, Thomas was falsely accused of organizing co-workers to call in sick during a contract fight 18 months ago. More than 500 customer service representatives called in sick the day Thomas was accused of orchestrating this.

He described the response he got from co-workers when he visited the Seattle-Tacoma airport earlier in the day before the campaign event. "It was incredible—people were crawling over the ticket counter to hug me and some were crying," he reported. "It wasn't just a victory for me. It was for all of us."

Thomas thanked socialist campaigners for their support in his long fight.

Those in the audience were eager to discuss a number of political questions that Trowe presented in her talk. One asked what the candidate meant by the term "lawful workings of capitalism." She said this refers to how capitalism works, to the fact that political and economic developments are not haphazard but are governed by basic laws of the class struggle and political economy

that can be understood and anticipated.

"When it works the way it should, it is still a system of crisis," she explained. "The spread of the AIDS epidemic in Africa is an example of the lawful workings of capitalism. It is primarily a political disaster, not a medical one. It's a result of capitalism's organized exploitation and oppression of Africa," Trowe said.

"Our campaign demands Washington cancel the massive debt of the African countries to the capitalist banks, send massive economic aid with no strings, and provide at no cost the medicine and medical personnel needed to deal with the epidemic," she said.

Another questioner asked about Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader. Trowe explained that Nader's Green Party is not a third party of any permanence. They act more as a left wing pressure group of the Democratic Party.

"Nader talks a lot about sweatshops overseas but he doesn't talk much about the ones right here," she noted. "I have worked in sweatshops in the United States. So have many of you. Nader joins with those demanding to 'keep American jobs in America.' But there is no such thing as an 'American job.' Every worker needs a job—here, in Mexico, in Indonesia, in every country. The working-class movement needs to fight for this as we fought for the eight-hour day."

"Nader talks about the desirability of reducing the number of Mexican immigrants coming here," Trowe said. "My campaign welcomes immigrant workers who come here—we see them as strengthening the fighting capacity of working people as a whole."

The day after the Seattle campaign rally Trowe traveled to Spokane, Washington. There she participated with several of her

## Philadelphia teachers rally against concession demands



Hundreds of Philadelphia teachers rallied September 5 at their union meeting to speak out against concession demands by school district and city officials. The district seeks to weaken teachers' seniority rights, extend the workday and work year, and increase their co-payments on health insurance.

campaign supporters in a "Union Appreciation Day" sponsored by the locked-out Kaiser workers, members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). About 1,000 Steelworkers and their supporters attended the event.

After two years in which they struck Kaiser for four months and then were locked out for 18 months, these unionists expect to soon be back to work. They are awaiting a decision on a dozen or so issues that went to arbitration.

Trowe was introduced to many of the USWA members, who stated that they were proud of the fight they had waged. She in turn told them about the many labor fights she had seen on her campaign tour and how the fight against Kaiser had helped to set an example. Trowe also met and spent time talking to strikers from Sunnyside, Washington, who are on strike against Valley Manufactured Housing. These strikers sold out the hundreds of buttons they had brought to raise money for their food bank.

## 'Trowe isn't your typical candidate'

The following article appeared in the September 14 issue of the *Austin Daily Herald*, one of the two daily newspapers in Austin, Minnesota, under the headline "Former QPP worker running as vice president."

BY JANA PETERSON

Margaret Trowe isn't your typical candidate for vice president of the United States. For one, she's not a career politician although she has been active in the politics of protest since she was a teen-ager in the 1960s.

She is by trade a butcher. She worked the offal line at Quality Pork Processors in Aus-

tin for a year, before leaving to hit the campaign trail. Before QPP, she worked at the Swift Plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, for two years.

Nor is she financed by soft money. All \$100,000 that she and the Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate and garment worker James Harris have for their six-month campaign came from \$10 and \$20 donations from regular people, not corporations. To make the money last, the two are sleeping on couches and driving—rather than flying—almost everywhere they go.

Plus she likes hip-hop. "There's a lot of rebellion, a lot of anger in hip-hop," she said. "A lot of young people who couldn't look themselves in the mirror if they joined the system. They see racism, war—they can't happily join in the stock market."

Trowe (rhymes with plow) was in Austin on Wednesday to touch base with some friends and former co-workers at QPP, before she headed to Nebraska early today. She attended a fund-raising dinner here, where she said the cost was to be "more like \$5 a plate."

The ultimate goal for Trowe and Harris isn't to sit at the head of the greatest capitalist nation—it's to topple capitalism and create a society run by the workers and the farmers, not the bureaucrats, the technocrats and the rich.

"I decided when I was young and active in protests about Vietnam, for women's rights, against racism, that the capitalist system was the problem," Trowe said. "You can't fix it—greed is an essential component of capitalism. What we need—and what we're starting to see—is a movement, with the unions at its core, of workers starting to defend themselves against exploitation."

Austin, she said, is a town with a tradition of fighting for workers rights, way back to the 1930s. She credits the Hormel strike in the 1980s—even though the company won in the end—with leading the way.

"Workers almost across the board were accepting deep concessions without a fight," Trowe said. "The P-9 said, 'we'll fight' ... Even though they didn't win, that strike was

the beginning of the end of the retreat in the '80s. The Hormel workers threw down the gauntlet and said 'the buck stops here.'"

She applauded the nurses at St. Mark's Lutheran Home and Austin Medical Center for organizing unions and she said they are part of an international trend among workers: meat packers, hotel workers, farmers, plant workers all over, but especially in the United States are protesting working conditions and inferior wages.

"We're seeing a growing resistance—it can't help but grow," Trowe said. "The capitalist boom that we're experiencing has been financed by all these things: the speeding up of lines in the plants, the cuts in real wages in terms of buying power, the low commodity prices for farmers ..."

She rattles off a list of recent strikes and sit-downs: Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, the Holiday Inn Express, Firestone/Bridgestone, dairy farmers dumping milk over the Labor Day holiday.

"There's a pretty feisty mood out there," she said.

So far in her campaign, she has been in 31 cities and towns in 17 states. Trowe isn't done yet—there's eight weeks to go until the general election and she'll stay on the campaign trail as long as possible.

And, while she conceded that victory in the campaign is unlikely—the pair are on the ballot in 14 states including Minnesota and the District of Columbia—the revolutionary with the silver hair and glasses said she already feels like they've won.

"We've gotten out at an energetic pace," she said. "I feel like we've really contributed to the socialist movement."

After the election, Trowe said she'll go back to work, probably at another meat-packing plant, and continue spreading the word about the Socialist Workers Party. Next time she's in Austin she promised more advance notice and a public appearance—probably before the General Election.

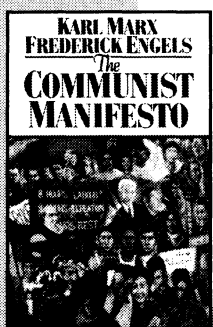
Anyone interested in knowing more about the Socialist Workers Party or the Harris-Trowe campaign can go to <http://www.themilitant.com> and click on Socialist Workers Campaign. The *Militant* is the newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party.

for further reading



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# Farmers speak out on fuel crisis in UK

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON—"Farming is in the most serious depression since the 1930s," said John Lawrence, a cereal farmer, explaining why he was picketing a fuel distribution center outside London. Lawrence and his wife farm 350 acres in Kent. "Now fuel prices have doubled. It's exacerbating the whole thing. What's next?" he asked.

Lawrence spoke to *Militant* reporters three days before protest leaders lifted the blockades they had set up to protest the fuel tax, calling on the government to reduce the tax within 60 days or face further actions.

The consumption tax accounts for some 80 percent of the cost of gasoline here. With prices at over \$4 a gallon, workers, farmers, and small business people have been hit hard. Farmers also face a near doubling of red diesel prices to run tractors. In the short space of a week, the nationwide protests and pickets by truck drivers and farmers, with the active support of oil tanker drivers, won the admiration of working people. They also starkly revealed the vulnerability of the capitalist distribution system today, which is set up with "just in time" inventories as the norm.

The protests caused up to 90 percent of filling stations to run dry, had a serious impact on the economy, and precipitated a crisis inside the ruling Labour government of Anthony Blair. Opinion polls show his ratings slumped 10 points to below that of the opposition Conservatives.

The announcement of the end of the protests was made September 14 by Brynle Williams, a farmers' leader from North Wales, outside Shell's refinery in the northwest of England where the actions had started.

They had been inspired by similar actions in France, which then rolled through Europe. The protests spread to the main oil refineries and fuel depots throughout England, Scotland, and Wales and included truck and taxi drivers staging go slows or "rolling blockades" on motorways and in city centers including London. Fishermen in the southwest of England and in Scotland were also involved.

"Britain comes to a standstill" read the *Daily Telegraph* headline the day the protests were called off. The newspaper wrote Britain stood "on the verge of its gravest period of economic and social disruption since the Seventies," referring to a period of widespread strike action by workers in the UK. Food supplies, mail services, bus and train operations, rubbish collections, schools, and the banking system were disrupted to varying degrees around the country. Amid reports of businesses at risk of bankruptcy and widespread job layoffs, Digby Jones, director-general of the main bosses organization, the Confederation of British Industry, said, "We need this sorted out fast."

Bosses at the Honda car plant in Swindon, west of London, halted production September 14 until parts supplies could be guaranteed. The London Chamber of Commerce claimed 10 percent of all economic output

was being lost daily.

Working farmers began the protest because of the growing crisis in agriculture that threatens their livelihood. Prices for fuel, fertilizer, animal feed, and other costs have escalated, while the prices many farmers receive for their produce have declined steeply.

"I don't know one farmer who has gotten rich through land alone," Lawrence explained at the picket. Belonging to no organization, he had come to the picket after getting a phone call.

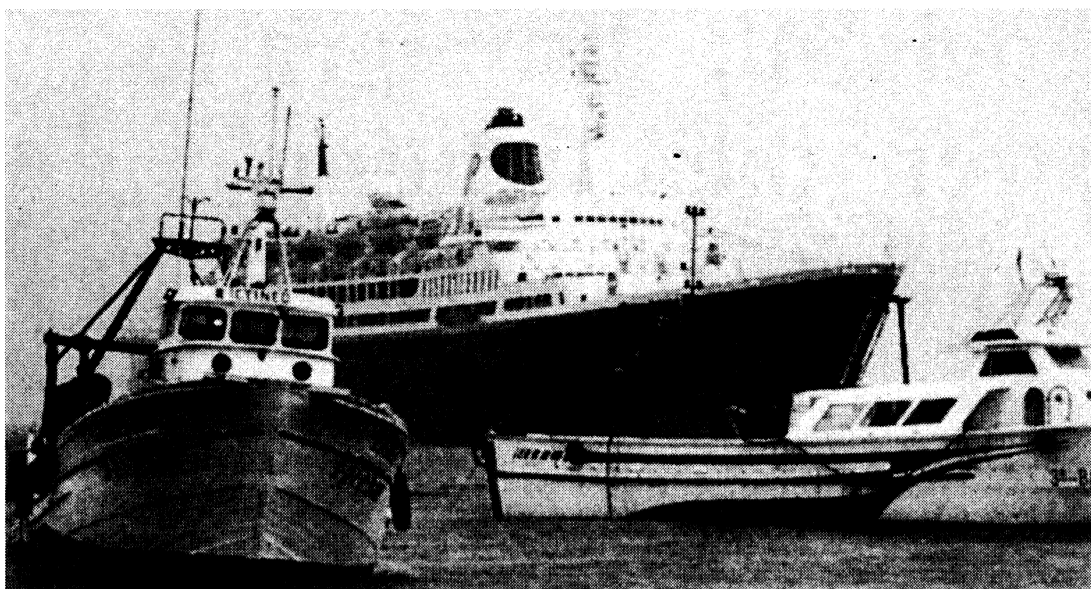
When the call came "me and my wife were shoveling the last 15 tons of wheat out of a silo. She said to me, 'Do you know, we're not earning anything doing this.'"

Truck drivers are having to work longer hours in order to make a living, with rising fuel costs, taxes on their vehicles, and debt repayments. Reflecting the different class forces involved in leading and organizing the protests, truck drivers who participated varied from owner-drivers with just one vehicle to the bosses of smaller haulage companies with fleets of vehicles. A fishermen's leader told the *Daily Telegraph*, "We all see ourselves going to the wall. Fuel is now accounting for up to 50 percent of the cost of our vessels. The figure is growing...enough is enough."

## Support from oil truck drivers

Crucial to the rapid impact of the protests was the active support of the workers who transport petrol (gasoline) to filling stations. Many of these oil tanker drivers are union members, up to two-thirds are either self-employed or work for subcontractors. On the first day of the picket at Stanlow, protesters blockaded the entrance to the refinery to prevent the movement of petrol. The blockade was removed by police. In subsequent visits to pickets in the southeast and northwest of England, *Militant* reporters found protesters had no need to repeat this as oil tanker drivers were not moving their vehicles.

At an Esso terminal in Purfleet, Essex, pickets said Esso drivers had agreed not to cross their line. The *Independent* newspaper reported drivers "from the main companies have been openly giving support to



In Barcelona, fishermen blockaded the port with their boats to protest steep fuel prices, as 100,000 farmers and others demonstrated in Madrid and other Spanish cities. Similar protests have taken place in Germany, Italy, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, and elsewhere in Europe.

the protesters."

Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw whined: "It was weird that by last Tuesday and Wednesday the entrances to the oil terminals were clear...and yet the oil was still not coming out." Rather than precipitate a fight with these workers, oil company bosses did not force them to move petrol, falsely claiming, along with the government, that there was widespread intimidation by the pickets. The oil profiteers most likely favor lower fuel taxes themselves, to allow room for further increases in prices—and profits.

Leaders of trade unions, meeting in Glasgow at the annual Trades Union Congress (TUC), took sides with the Labour government over the actions. TUC general secretary John Monks called them a "bosses' blockade." The protest actions were also condemned by Bill Morris, leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), which organizes tanker drivers.

Union leaders however had to send two high-ranking officials to plead with 70 TGWU members at the Grangemouth oil refinery in Scotland. After a two-hour late-night meeting, they finally persuaded them to resume deliveries. On September 18, the Labour government swiftly retreated from proposals that had been aired to enact laws forcing oil company drivers to move fuel.

There was a nationalist tinge to the protests, with farmers blaming cheap food imports for the farming crisis and signs with Union Jacks common. One issue of concern to haulage company bosses and owner drivers is their ability to compete with haulage firms from Europe who travel to the UK and undercut their prices because of the cheaper fuel available on the Continent.

Meanwhile, different right-wing forces have attempted to make gains out of the actions. Two hundred protesters from the right-wing Countryside Alliance who had gathered to protest a possible ban on fox hunting took up the demands to lower fuel taxes and reportedly trapped Blair in Hull Town Hall September 11.

The right-wing *Daily Mail* newspaper championed the protesters' demands and linked them to other issues such as the government's attempts to repeal anti-gay legislation. Conservative leader William Hague called the farmers and truckers "fine upstanding citizens." Because of this, government ministers sought to slander the protesters as part of right-wing efforts to topple the Labour government.

The press meanwhile contains reports of splits between government ministers, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the finance minister Gordon Brown—refusing to commit to reductions in fuel taxes.

While some big business newspapers expressed support for the actions, others reflected the alarm among the capitalist rulers at the abject failure of their government to prevent a crisis. The *Financial Times*, which vigorously opposed the protests, said Prime Minister Blair had "seriously damaged his reputation for competent government." The *Sunday Times* said the government "blustered, pleaded and lied... Until the pickets staged their tactical retreat, we were on a fast road to even greater chaos," adding, the "reputation of the whole political process has suffered."

Tony Hunt is a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union in London.

## Workers discuss outcome of French protests

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—"I don't think it was a 'bosses strike,'" said Jacques-Louis Kreiss. "These are small businesses and independents. They are in serious difficulty and have to defend themselves." Like many young workers in France, 23-year-old Kreiss has only been able to find employment through temporary work agencies.

"The really big bosses may try to take advantage of the situation," he added, "but their real profits come from the work of others."

In the aftermath of the massive protests of truck drivers, farmers, fishermen, and taxi drivers that blocked the country's oil refineries to protest rising fuel prices, both opponents and supporters of the action are discussing and trying to draw the lessons from the conflict.

The protests, which nearly brought the country to a standstill, were mostly composed of small, independent producers. They also included truck owners who have two or three trucks and had hired drivers

working for them. The action had massive support from wage workers throughout the country. One journalist called the protests "the 1995 of the independents," which is a reference to the strike wave five years ago led by the railroad workers to defend the public health-care system.

The last French oil refineries finally reopened September 10. Since then, a similar movement has spread to Britain, Belgium, Spain, Germany, and other European countries.

French finance minister Laurent Fabius has estimated the cost to the government of the agreements signed with truckers and farmers to be more than 3 billion francs. (1 franc = US 13 cents). Other agreements have been signed with fishermen and taxi drivers.

The government has announced it is considering additional measures to limit fuel price increases and reduce fuel taxes for the general public, not just for independents and small businessmen. They are also considering a supplementary tax on oil company profits.

Farmers have won a 30 percent reduction, worth 0.16 francs per liter, on one of the fuel taxes, the TIPP, retroactive to January 1. The farmers had demanded a 0.52 franc reduction. The Agriculture Ministry announced further measures reducing taxes for farmers by a total of some 500 million francs.

Truck drivers will receive a rebate on the TIPP of 0.35 francs per liter this year and 0.25 francs next year. This measure applies to big fleet owners as well as to independent

Continued on Page 15

## Protests against gas prices sweep Europe

Continued from front page

ers states in Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia. Truckers in Israel have also threatened strike action.

The effectiveness of the protests and the widespread discontent among working people with the cost of fuel has shaken up many of the social democratic administrations, from the Labour Party government of Anthony Blair in the United Kingdom, to the governments of Lionel Jospin in France and Gerhard Schröder in Germany.

An emergency meeting of the European Union transport ministers was scheduled for September 20 in Luxembourg to discuss the crisis. Schröder and his governmental allies in the Green Party have refused to reduce taxes, defending them as necessary to protect the environment against excessive use of polluting fuels. Officials of the French Communist Party, part of the Jospin government, said they would call a protest

march to demand swift cuts in gas prices. This infuriated the Greens there, who denounced any such move as a handout to polluters.

With the continued expansion in the capitalist economy, monopoly control of this key energy resource by the oil companies has sent the price of oil futures to \$37.10 a barrel, the highest levels since the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

As winter approaches, reports of short supplies of heating oil raise a daunting specter for working people of not being able to heat homes in the months ahead. An article in the *International Herald Tribune* of London noted that "energy producers are concentrating on getting the best prices for their commodities rather than fighting each other for market share."

Oil prices shot up \$1.18 a barrel September 18 after Iraqi president Saddam Hussein said oil exporting countries should not bow

to pressure from "superpowers" to increase output. Under such pressure, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), whose members produce 40 percent of the world's oil, agreed to raise its target output for the third time this year.

Hussein also accused the government of Kuwait of stealing oil from fields in southern Iraq, something oil companies operating out of Kuwait did by angle drilling prior to Iraq's invasion of the country in 1990.

His statements led to a new round of saber-rattling by Washington, which said it was prepared to use military force against Iraq, supposedly to prevent it from taking any action against Kuwait.

Iraq produces about 3 million barrels of crude oil a day under terms of a United Nations-supervised "food for oil" scheme that is part of the continued imperialist intervention against the sovereignty of that country.

# Cuban revolution is stronger today, with eyes fixed on coming battles in the world

## From 'Ours is the epoch of world revolution' in 'New International' magazine

Printed below is an excerpt from "Ours is the epoch of world revolution" by Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, which introduces issue 11 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. The issue features "U.S. Imperialism has Lost the Cold War," a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at its 1990 convention. The following excerpt, dealing with the Cuban revolution, also refers to a presentation by Cuban Communist Party leader José Ramón Balaguer, titled, "Socialism: A Viable Option," which appears in this issue. Copyright © 1998 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES  
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

"A Havana-Washington axis of conflict will be at the center of world politics in the 1990s. It is the most direct manifestation of the international conflict between imperialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat."

With the implosion of the bureaucratic castes, regimes, and parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the U.S. imperialist rulers hoped the government of the workers and farmers of Cuba would become easier pickings. They failed to understand—as they have from the days of the revolutionary war against the Batista dictatorship—that the leadership of the revolution in Cuba is not a tropical variant of Stalinism, but a truly revolutionary internationalist party that is blood and bone of the Cuban toilers.

The U.S. rulers anticipated that the sudden, brutal slashing of the standard of living in Cuba—the result of the abrupt end in 1990-91 of preferential trade agreements with the Soviet Union and Eastern European workers states, accounting for 85 percent of Cuba's foreign trade—would starve Cuban working people into submission, or at least create fertile conditions for the overthrow of the revolutionary government.

The world political perspective presented by Cuban Communist Party leader José Ramón Balaguer in "Socialism: A Viable Option," published in this issue, confirms the error of this view. "In the present international conditions, we reaffirm that socialism is a necessity," Balaguer told participants in the international conference on "Socialism on the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century," held in Havana, October 21-23, 1997. "Not only is it the logical result of the development of the productive forces on an international scale, it is the only alternative to guarantee the survival of humanity."

Referring to the "collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the USSR," Balaguer noted "it is not socialist truth that failed." Rather, what occurred there was "the crumbling of a dogmatic and vulgar type of Marxism, which in those countries was raised to the status of official theory, burying many of the central principles of our classics and elevating to the position of universal law certain doctrines that served only to rationalize political positions and had virtually no scientific basis."

The international conference of representatives of political parties at which Balaguer spoke, and in which some of the editors of *New International* participated, including the authors of this article, was hosted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. It was one of several events over the past two years that confirmed the Cuban revolution has conquered the worst days of what they refer to as the Special Period—the economic and political crisis precipitated by the abrupt disintegration of the governments and parties with which they had maintained the closest ties for more than a quarter century. A crisis deliberately compounded, of course,



Cuban militia members during October 1962 missile crisis. The political weight of the Cuban revolution as "the only living example of a fighting, confident dictatorship of the proletariat has grown not diminished... The real history of the Cuban revolution—the stories of the men and women who overthrew the Batista dictatorship, stood down the Yankee empire at the Bay of Pigs and during the October 'missile crisis,' and served in volunteer internationalist missions from Latin America to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East—is a vital link in the revolutionary continuity that must be traced."

by intensified economic warfare waged against Cuba by the U.S. rulers.

Other events have included:

- The fifth congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, held in Havana, October 8-10, 1997, which reaffirmed the political course of the revolution, knitting the lines of continuity between the rectification process begun in the mid-1980s and the policies of the Special Period. Among other decisions by the delegates, the congress strengthened the party leadership, resolutely cutting the size of the Central Committee from 225 to 150 members, while incorporating some 50 new members from the younger generations bearing the direct weight of day-to-day leadership in every arena. The congress registered the reality that the transition in leadership in Cuba, the topic of much speculation by the revolution's enemies abroad, lies not in the future, but is ongoing in the present.
- The commemoration in the fall of 1997, and throughout that year, of the thirtieth anniversary of the revolutionary campaign waged by Ernesto Che Guevara and his comrades in Bolivia, reaffirming the proletarian internationalism that has been and remains the heart and soul of the Cuban revolution.
- The solemn and unifying welcome home given what Cuban president Fidel Castro in October 1997 called Che's reinforcement brigade, as the mortal remains, along with the "immortal ideas" of Che and his comrades returned to Cuba "to reinforce us in this difficult struggle we are waging today to save the ideas for which you fought so hard, to save the revolution, the country and its socialist conquests—the part of your dreams that have been fulfilled."
- The hosting in August 1997 of the 12,000-strong World Festival of Youth and Students by the Union of Young Communists and other youth organizations of Cuba, as part of the political battle to reach out and find the new generation of fighters around the world attracted to the example of the Cuban revolution.

• The "Declaration of the Mambises of the Twentieth Century," initiated in February 1997 by the generals of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and signed by 250,000 officers and troops, as well as, over the next few months, by more than 5 million other Cubans. Linking up with the continuity of the Mambises—the Cuban independence fighters of the late nineteenth century who fought Spanish colonial rule—the declaration repudiates the crude and insulting attempts of U.S. president William Clinton to foment divisions among the officers and ranks of the military with offers of aid in

return for overthrowing the revolutionary government through which Cuba's workers and farmers exercise their political power.

- The welcome extended to Pope John Paul II on his state visit in January 1998, during which the revolutionary leadership set an example for working people the world over of courtesy towards religious believers and nonbelievers alike—while taking the moral high ground for the proletariat and speaking the truth to the world about the historical role of the Catholic Church hierarchy as an instrument of scientific obscurantism, racial prejudice, oppression of women, colonial conquest and slavery, and reaction in all its forms. The pope's visit was an event from which the working people of Cuba emerged more confident in themselves and their leadership, and more certain that their class, not the representatives of capitalism or feudalism, will be the bearers of culture in the forward march of humanity.

• The seventeenth congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), held April 27-30, 1996, which registered the confidence of the working class in Cuba as it brings its direct weight to bear in determining the future of the revolution, and its capacity to surmount the enormous obstacles to increasing production under the conditions imposed by the Special Period. As the theses adopted by the delegates expressed it, the organized working class of Cuba met to determine what they could do "to assure, under whatever circumstances, the revolutionary power of the workers, by the workers, and for the workers."

"One day we may have to erect a monument to the Special Period!" Fidel Castro noted in remarks to congress delegates. In meeting the challenge of the most difficult years of the revolution, the Cuban working class has emerged stronger and more self-confident than at any time since the Special Period began.

### Meeting Special Period challenge

Each of these events required substantial material and leadership resources that would have been impossible to muster in Cuba during the darkest hours (literally as well as metaphorically) of the Special Period. Taken together, as Cubans jokingly remark, they clearly demonstrate that the revolution is now out of the intensive care unit—that it is no longer necessary to devote every fiber of being to the battle for survival alone. Cuban working people can now enjoy the luxury of directing some energy to thoughts of recovery and how to advance the international revolutionary struggle in today's world.

"Socialism on the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century" was perhaps the most important such gathering to take place in Havana in more than thirty years—since the international leadership initiatives in the 1960s that culminated in the Tricontinental conference in January 1966 and the OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) gathering in August 1967.

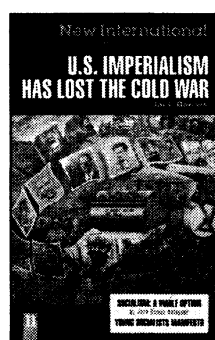
Political conditions were vastly different

Continued on Page 14

## For further reading

FROM PATHFINDER

### In *New International* no. 11



• **U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War**  
Jack Barnes

• **The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today**  
by Mary-Alice Waters

• **Socialism: A Viable Option**  
by José Ramón Balaguer

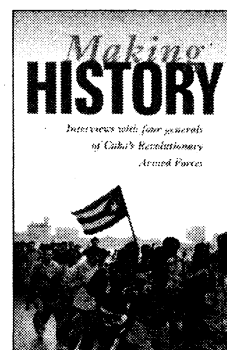
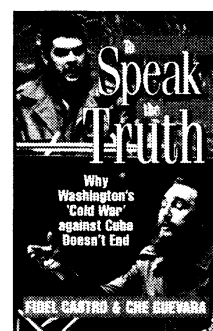
• **Young Socialists Manifesto**  
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<sup>1</sup> From part 2 of "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War."

# Miners: anthracite coal bosses destroy the environment

BY TOM MAILER

POTTSVILLE, Pennsylvania—"His attitude is, 'It's my land, my coal, my equipment and I'll do what I want with it.'" That's how one laid-off miner described the attitude of Ronald Lickman, president of Harriman Coal and Kocher Coal, toward the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of Pennsylvania when it comes to running his mines.

Nearly 150 miners were forced onto unemployment June 13 after DEP shut down Lickman's two mining operations, Harriman Coal and Kocher Coal. The state agency refused to renew the mining licenses, citing the company's unwillingness to resolve longstanding violations of environmental laws.

## Acid water runoff from mine

Harriman Coal and Kocher Coal together make one of the larger nonunion strip mining operations in northeast Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region. They face citations and fines over acid mine water runoff from the Porter Tunnel Mine. Kocher Coal has been in violation of administrative orders to treat or abate acid mine drainage from the Porter Tunnel Mine for some time. Harriman's license was also denied initially in March 1999 over this pollution. It was granted when the company agreed to a consent order with DEP.

According to DEP, Harriman has not adhered to the provisions of that order. He has amassed fines totaling \$158,000 as a result. DEP states that the acid mine discharge flows into the Wiconisco Creek at a rate as high as 2,500 gallons per minute.

This year, when the same problems were raised again, Lickman refused to sign DEP's consent order, which lays out a specific timetable and fines for continued violation of its terms. According to the Pottsville *Republican Herald*, Lickman stated, "They attempt to coerce you to sign agreements that are so onerous.... I'm not the only person in the business that's been subjected to these terror tactics."

Lickman's counterproposals were rejected by the state agency. He plans to challenge DEP's actions by filing suit either in commonwealth or federal court.

Lickman bought the Kocher/Porter tunnel mine in 1994. No coal has been mined there since March 1, 1977, when an underground stream flooded the mine, killing nine miners and trapping another for five days.

Ninety others escaped unharmed. This same stream is the source of the acid discharge today.

The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co., another large anthracite stripping corporation, has also been cited twice by DEP in a three-month period for polluting local rivers.

In early August, the source of the pollution was overflowing collection pools, where water runoff from the mining operations is held to allow coal particles and dirt to settle out.

The Pottsville *Republican Herald* carried a report, a week and a half earlier that Panther Creek, which feeds into the Little Schuylkill, was a greenish-brown color. The article quotes Michael Perry, a local resident, saying, "I've seen it black, green, orange—almost like an orange oxide color. I've seen it purple. I've seen it red. I've never seen it clear."

Jeff Zalsak was quoted as saying that his high school class tested the water last year to see if the pollution was acid mine water. "It was real base," he said. "It was like three points below seven. I don't know how fish can live in it." There are also reports that the water often has a foul sulfur smell.

Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co. was previously cited May 5 for allowing acid mine drainage into the Little Schuylkill River. This runoff came from the high water levels in the bottom of the huge 111 stripping pit between Tamaqua and Coaldale. The

## Truckers in Chile demand fuel tax cut



Members of the National Confederation of Truck Owners (CNDC) parked more than 500 rigs in the Chilean capital of Santiago September 2 to back up their demands for relief. The owner-operators called on the government to cut taxes on diesel fuel by half. As of September 9, the social democratic government had offered a 30 percent cut. As we go to press, the truckers were planning a mass meeting to vote on a proposal to hold a strike in October. More than 90 percent of freight in the country is moved over the roads.

water was about 300 feet deep in the pit then and needed to be lowered about 37 feet to be in compliance with LC&N's mining plan. Lehigh is anxious to get the water level down so it can mine about 70,000 tons of anthracite coal covered by water.

The DEP gave LC&N 90 days to get in compliance by building a water treatment plant for the drainage from the pit. The plant wasn't finished by the August 4 deadline, and the coal company has asked for a three month extension.

# Florida mineral mine strikers hold firm

BY RACHELE FRUIT

PALATKA, Florida—Workers at a surface mineral mine here are waging a determined fight to defend their union. The members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1098 have been on strike for two years against Iluka Resources, Inc.

They are fighting against company practices such as "threatening an employee with legal action for making a safety complaint to the Mine Safety and Health Administration," as their fact sheet explains.

On August 2, a group of workers and one farmer returning to Florida from an Active Workers Conference in Ohio visited the picket line. We were from Plant City, Land O'Lakes, St. Petersburg, and Miami. One team member, this reporter, was a member

of IAM Local 1126 in Miami and had been part of an effort by unionists there to send a contribution to the toy fund for children of the strikers last Christmas.

The picket line is located five miles north of Bostwick, between Palatka and Jacksonville, with a blue school bus for a strike headquarters surrounded by hand-stenciled plywood signs. One of the signs says, "Those who thought we were down for the count will have a rude awakening. UNION WINS."

Strikers Dyal Bowman and Greg Looney greeted us warmly and explained that their strike is about defending the right of workers to a union.

Workers at the Iluka mine excavate minerals such as zircon or zirconium silicate and

ilmanite and rutile, both sources of titanium oxide. These minerals are used in making tires and other essential products.

Bowman explained that "the company started splitting the workers. We were used to working in both places. If things were slow in one area, we'd go over and work in the other. We all worked together. Then they imposed shift work in one mill and not the other, violating seniority."

The pickets reported the company made one union employee a boss who reported back what happened at union meetings. Management called this "monitoring" union meetings. They fired the chief union steward in June 1997 and then wouldn't let him onto company property to meet with or represent union members.

The contract ended Aug. 1, 1997, and the union negotiated more than a year until the strike was called. Meanwhile, the company organized "parking lot meetings with all of the workers to explain that they were losing money and had to cut costs or else shut the gates," Bowman said. "But this place is a gold mine. They sell trainloads of minerals."

CSX engineers have honored the picket line. They bring railroad cars to the edge of the company property, but no further. "For the first year of the strike, CSX supervisors brought the trains in, but they got tired of it," said Bowman. "Since then, Iluka has paid \$500 three times a week to get a scab outfit from Jacksonville to bring the trains in."

There were 78 IAM members who went on strike, but 32 crossed the line during the fourth week when the company started hiring replacement workers.

On Nov. 5, 1999, administrative law judge Howard Grossman ruled that the replacement workers should be fired. He ruled that union members should be awarded back pay and benefits with interest, as well as all the overtime pay the replacement workers received. The company appealed the ruling, and the case has been before the National Labor Relations Board since January.

"We've got a strong case, but it's up there in Washington and you never know," Looney told us. The strikers expect a ruling in September. "If all the workers in the country would stick together, we'd have them."

# Workers protest plans to close D.C. hospital

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Some 250 hospital workers, doctors, and health-care advocates, many wearing union T-shirts, packed a city council meeting here September 18. Seventy-five of them held a picket before the meeting. They demanded that the city's one remaining public hospital not be closed. D.C. General is the only one that treats patients regardless of their ability to pay.

This was the most recent in a series of rallies here since the Public Benefit Corp. Board, which administers the hospital, announced plans to eliminate the hospital's remaining 250 beds and lay off 550 employees.

All items in the Washington municipal budget must be approved by a financial control board that was appointed by the U.S. Congress and the White House in the mid-1990s. The board has stepped up pressure on the hospital to "live within its budget."

Many workers mingled in the hallway and discussed plans for further protests as city health officials attempted to defend their proposed health-care cuts.

The previous week 200 hospital workers and their supporters picketed the mayor's office. "A dollar bill is more important than human life in this city," exclaimed Ted King, a taxi cab driver who joined the rally.

Pickets confronted D.C. General's health director Ivan Walks, as he attempted to enter the building. Walks argued that by converting the hospital to a smaller emergency care facility, more funding could be diverted

to primary care in the city's eight clinics.

In a tense exchange, Dr. Michal Young, a pediatrician, scolded Walks, saying, "How dare you counterpose better primary care to that provided by the hospital." Young called Walks's promise of better primary care a fraud. "The clinic system in this city is in disarray and they don't have the facilities to replace this hospital. We will continue to support the community and not give your action our blessing," she added.

Faced with growing anger at plans to close the hospital, most council members expressed "skepticism" at plans to close the facility and have delayed taking action.

The board plans to convert the hospital into an emergency facility that would transfer patients to other hospitals within 23 hours after being treated. City officials have been mute about how they would pay for stays at private hospitals.

There is concern throughout working-class areas of the city that private hospitals will turn away those without health insurance. According to the Urban Institute, most of the city's private hospitals don't provide the legally required level of free health care—equivalent to 3 percent of their revenues.

In the weeks leading up to the council hearing, members of Healthcare Now, a coalition of union workers, doctors, nurses, and staff who work in the hospital and supporters throughout the city, released the results of a survey showing that the city's private hospitals routinely referred uninsured

patients to D.C. General Hospital.

During the hearing, Robert Malson, president of the D.C. Hospital Association, conceded that D.C. General serves one third of patients in the city without health-care insurance, while the other 19 private hospitals together serve the remaining two thirds.

The first phase of the board's plan calls for the layoffs and shutdown of the hospital's pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, and substance abuse departments. Colin Dias, a graduate of Howard University Medical School, is doing his rotations in the pediatrics department of the hospital along with Brenda James. Early in the week, they said, letters were sent to hundreds of parents advising them to make alternative plans for the health-care needs of their children.

According to the State Center for Health Statistics, infant mortality in the district rivaled that of third world countries—14.9 percent as of 1996. For Blacks, the big majority of the city's population, the rate was three times that of the country as a whole, at 17.6 percent. Only 64 percent of women in the district received prenatal care in the first trimester, 20 percent less than in the U.S. Deaths from HIV/AIDS infection in the district stands at 46.1 per 100,000 as compared with 6.2 nationally.

Sam Manuel is the Socialist Workers candidate for D.C. delegate to the House of Representatives. Janice Lynn contributed to this article.

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# Rally demands Palestinians' right to return

Continued from front page

had occupied the western sector of the Lebanese capital.

The day of the demonstration in Washington, protests occurred in the West Bank town of Bethlehem where 2,000 demonstrators in the Balata camp and about 300 in the Dheisheh camp rallied. Actions also took place in Lebanon and the United Kingdom.

The state of Israel is built on the dispossession of the Palestinian people and territorial expansion. Some 800,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and land by Zionist military units when the state of Israel was proclaimed in 1948. Since then the Israeli rulers have displaced many more, including when they seized the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem in a six-day war in 1967.

The many varied signs carried by the protesters here highlighted this brutal reality and the resistance to it. They stated facts such as, "Israel is built over destroyed Palestinian villages," "52 years of injustice," "452 villages destroyed," and "5.9 million Palestinians demand the right to go home." One of the banners carried in the march listed more than 100 names and stated, "We Israeli and American Jews Support the Rights of Palestinian Refugees."

"This is not a one-shot deal," said Jess Ghannam, a member of the steering committee of Al-Awda, who was among several people from San Francisco participating in the march. "The Palestinian struggle is always there." Actions like this help "put it in the consciousness of every day Americans."

## New generation

Mary Nazzal, 21, is a leader of Turath (Heritage), a group at Columbia University in New York that she described as the "Arab voice on campus." She described this action as "the biggest Palestinian demonstration I've been to. There were many Palestinians from everywhere, including people who had never been to Palestine." The action provided a "sense of solidarity among all of us—in Palestine, in refugee camps, and in the United States and Europe," Nazzal stated.

A number of the young activists at the action spoke about the experiences of their parents and grandparents being uprooted from their villages and lands by the Zionist regime. These youth, many of whom have been radicalized growing up in the United States where they have had to confront the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim campaign of the U.S. government and big-business media, expressed their determination to see this fight through until the Palestinian people have won their right to self-determination and can return to their homeland.

Mahmud Hamideh, from Yonkers, New York, who works in scaffolding, carried handmade signs that stated, "Palestinian Workers Made the Desert Bloom" and "Remember the Massacre at Deir Yassin." In an interview he described the experience of his father, who as a young boy living in the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin had to "run out of his sixth grade class because of militants shooting up young boys and men" and was forced to emigrate to Jordan. On April 9, 1948, Zionist military units murdered 254 unarmed inhabitants of this town, in what is now Israel.

Hamideh was born in Jordan, spent his childhood in Puerto Rico, and now lives in the United States. "I'm three of a kind—Puerto Rican, Arabic, and American. I have no choice but to think equally about the three things that I am," he said. "This demonstration is great," he added. It shows that the "Palestinian community is more powerful than ever."

## FBI frame-up in North Carolina

Bilal Shammout from Charlotte, North Carolina, had helped organize 70 people to attend from that city. An even larger contingent came from Raleigh. He also was involved in organizing a press conference to protest the arrest in July of 17 people living in Charlotte, mostly of Lebanese origin, whom the U.S. government is seeking to frame up as "terrorists."

The 17 were formally charged with "smuggling" cigarettes from North Carolina to Michigan, and most were also accused of "fraudulent marriage." Meanwhile, the government has been looking for further charges to concoct against them, while smearing them in the media as dangerous individuals by associating them with



Militant/Lauren Hart

Many young people helped organize and took part in the Washington march supporting the Palestinian fight for a homeland.

Hezbollah, which is smeared as a terrorist group. Hezbollah is an organization with a mass following in Lebanon that led the struggle that forced Israeli occupation troops to withdraw from southern Lebanon earlier this year.

"Eleven of them are still held in prison," said Shammout. "If they're guilty sentence them, but don't label them as terrorists, don't label the community as terrorist."

Hani Razeq, a student at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, commented on the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory. "Since the Lebanese got their land it has given the Palestinians the confidence that, if they can do it, we can. It just requires struggle," he said.

Among those from Chicago were several high school students whose parents are refugees from Palestine. Nasri Mansour, 14, commented, "I feel [the land] it's still mine." Diba Rab, 22, who attends the University of Illinois, expressed concern that Palestinians' homes "are still being taken away" by Israeli authorities. The U.S. government is giving the Israeli regime money and remains its "biggest financial supporter," she pointed out.

A number of other people joined the march and rally besides those of Arabic descent. One Palestinian youth, for example brought his friend from Bosnia.

Karissa Loewen, 20, a student at Goshen College in Indiana, said she came because "I don't feel like I can sit at home in my house when my country is supporting the creation of refugees in Palestine."

"It's really exciting to see people coming together," said Jennifer Jajeh, 27, who is going back to live in the town of Ramallah, on the West Bank. She pointed to the daily "horrible conditions" of life facing Palestinians living in the occupied territories every day. They have to "carry permit cards that say, 'undefined nationality.' They have no freedom to go to Jerusalem, and need permits to travel in Israel."

Dalia Ahmed, from Albany, New York, whose family is from Egypt, thought the demonstration was significant because for the first time Arab-Americans "are making a presence that can be noticed."

"The rally was exhilarating," said Amira Solh, 23, one of the main organizers of the 500-strong New York/New Jersey contingent, and a leader of Al-Awda. "This march was not just about the refugees but about the right of all Palestinians to return."

"This is the very beginning of a new movement," Solh said. "The Right of Return Coalition is part of the rising of the Palestinian resistance movement in the United States."

She added, "Mobilizing on the right to return is so critical because the [1993 Israeli-Palestinian] Oslo accords only legitimize the occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people. They have made legal what was illegal. These negotiations have sidelined the refugees into oblivion."

At a 1993 meeting in Oslo, Norway, the

Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization reached an agreement establishing limited autonomy for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Since then, several rounds of negotiations have followed, but fundamental questions remain unresolved. Talks in July, which revolved around Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem and the return of refugees, collapsed.

A range of speakers addressed the rally. The talks were interspersed with music, dancing, and poetry readings. They included Palestinian Legislative Council member Abdul Jawad Saleh, Jim Zogby of the Arab-American Institute, and a representative of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

"Our right to return is not theirs to deny. We shall regain that land," stated one speaker, Dr. Imad ad-Dean Ahmad. "Our children are being raised every day of their lives to remember" their Palestinian homeland.

Duha Mohammed Zeidan, who lives in the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon, spoke about the massacre that took place there 18 years ago. "We are committed" to this fight, she said. "Unless Palestinians are allowed self-determination and the right to live in their own independent state, there will be no peace."

Rania Masri of the Iraq Action Coalition spoke about her visit to south Lebanon after it was liberated from Israeli military occupation. She went to the Lebanon-Israel border and "saw the fence that separates our land, that separates us from each other." She called for "tearing down all fences that divide us." There must be "no divisions between Lebanese and Palestinians."

Lauren Hart and Autumn Knowlton contributed to this article.

## BY CELIA PUGH

LONDON—Some 1,000 people marched here September 17 in support of the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland.

Among those in attendance was Ruden, 18, a student here. "My family lives in the Homs refugee camp in Syria. They were driven out of Palestine in 1948 and we've never been able to return," he said. "Palestinians like me live in Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, and Lebanon but we're stateless. We have no rights in these countries. I'm too young to have lived in Palestine, but my nationality is in my heart. I want to return."

Ruden added, "My friends and brothers are conscripted into the Syrian army at 18 for two and a half years. 'Syria is not my country so why should we be in its army?' He noted that one of his brothers had been killed while conscripted.

Most marchers were Palestinians and others of Middle Eastern origin. They were joined by other supporters of the Palestinian struggle.

A striking number of the demonstrators were in their teens and 20s, many born here to Palestinian parents. Many enthusiastic

youth wearing "No Return, No Peace" T-shirts helped lead all aspects of the demonstration—distributing flyers, collecting funds, and marshalling the action. Palestine solidarity groups are active at many colleges around the country.

Speakers at the rally urged the crowd to continue campaigning, including for the release of Samar Alami and Jawad Bolmehe, who are in prison here. The two young Palestinians were framed on conspiracy charges after the bombing of the Israeli embassy in London. They have already served four years of a 20-year sentence. An appeal of their case and a protest picket line will take place here October 24 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand.

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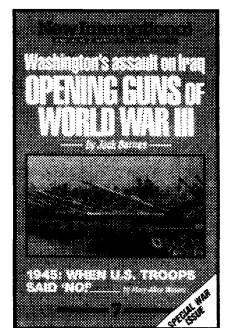
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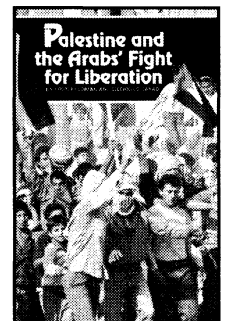


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# Cops assault protesters in Australia

BY DOUG COOPER  
AND ALASDAIR MacDONALD

MELBOURNE, Australia—Thousands protested the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting held at Melbourne's Crown Casino, September 11–13. The three-day demonstration was modeled after the 1999 protests in Seattle at a meeting of the World Trade Organization. Most news coverage focused on cops roughing up people who attempted to blockade the entrances to the casino where the meeting was being held.

Student, environmental, community, political, and religious groups participated from all over Australia. The action was marked by the protectionist and Australian nationalist political perspectives of the main organizers of the event. Many individuals who did not necessarily support these views came to protest the brutalities and social crisis arising out of the world capitalist economic crisis. Estimates of the crowd ranged from 6,000 to 10,000.

In existence for some 30 years, the WEF meets at the beginning of the year in Davos, Switzerland. Heads of state, capitalists, and academics attend. It also organizes a mid-year forum in either Singapore or Hong Kong. This year the Asia Pacific Economic Summit of the WEF was moved to Melbourne to tie in with the September 15 opening of the Olympics in Sydney.

In addition to the hundreds of cops surrounding the casino behind concrete and steel barricades, many more patrolled the nearby central business district. The will-



Cops attack demonstrators September 12 in Melbourne at World Economic Forum

ingness to use force was summed up by Deputy Police Commissioner Neil O'Loughlin after blockaders prevented about one-quarter of forum participants from entering on the first day. "The city was held to ransom yesterday and we'll use whatever force is necessary to maintain public order."

Police attacked with batons and trampled blockaders with horses to clear the gates on the second and third days. Few arrests were

made and about 200 were roughed up or injured. Away from the gates, the protest had an almost festival-like air.

A few individual unions supported the blockade, but the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) took its distance from the civil disobedience tactics. Instead, the VTHC organized a rally and march September 12 from its hall to the protest site. Publicity for the rally put forward a nationalist and procapitalist view, calling for "Austra-

lian jobs and the human rights of workers all over the world." It stated, "We must speak out about the lack of regulation of global capital, the damage of free trade and the irresponsible behavior of Multinational Corporations."

Some 5,000 workers joined the march, chanting "Fair trade not free trade." VTHC Secretary Leigh Hubbard joined in condemning the cop brutality, calling it "the worst savagery by police in 25 years."

Sharan Burrow, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, addressed the World Economic Forum and then the union rally on September 12. The overall perspective of reforming capitalism advanced by protest organizers was summed up in a report from the Melbourne Age. According to the paper, Burrow told the WEF the solution is a "worldwide corporate code of conduct to ensure human rights are upheld and basic standards of health, education, and nutrition are met. Ms. Burrow suggested this could be funded by a tax on international currency transactions." This view was shared by many protest organizers.

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia. Alasdair MacDonald is a member of the Young Socialists.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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#### Boston

**Eyewitness Report from Vieques: U.S. Navy Out Now.** Speaker: Tim Craine, member Todo Connecticut Con Vieques. Sun., Oct. 1, 5:00 p.m. 683 Washington St., Codman Square. Donation: \$4.00 Tel: (617) 282-2254.

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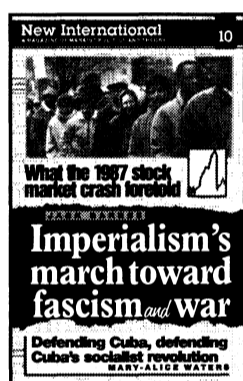
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**Hizzoner**—Unlike other California judges, the ones in Los Angeles



Harry Ring

County enjoy “double dipping.” Like, for instance, they receive

health coverage from the state, plus \$22,400 in cash benefits from the county. Other perks include retirement benefits from both the county and state.

**Stop by Sunday, when we pass the plate**—A survey of Protestant Church phone service found that 40 percent did not respond to personal inquiries even after several calls. Among the unresponsive churches some 44 percent didn’t even have answering machines.

**Sorry, right number**—In the United Kingdom, a consumer association did a check on the National Health Services crisis phone program. One test researcher called with a potentially heart threatening situation 10 times and got the right answer once. Six calls were dealt with by phone operators with no medical training.

**A test, dummy, a test!**—The airport at plush Martha’s Vineyard was

evacuated when cops found a piece of luggage containing a dummy bomb intended for security training.

**Better take a cab**—In a test run on one area of London, the number of traffic tickets soared from 10 to 200 a day. The cops get to pocket the loot.

**Or maybe just walk**—Kenneth Livingstone, the recently elected “left independent” mayor of Lon-

don, plans to impose a fee of about \$7 on car drivers entering Central London, and truck drivers about \$21.

**Philly doesn’t rank?** As the Democratic convention drew to a close and the texts of the speeches were being hauled off to the garbage bin of history, the federal environmental agency declared Los Angeles the most polluted city in the nation.

# Forging a class-struggle course in the unions

Printed below is an excerpt from *Teamster Power* by Farrell Dobbs, which tells the story of the 11-state over-the-road campaign that organized tens of thousands into the union in the 1930s. It is part of a four-volume series that includes *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*. These books describe the battles waged by working people to win a union and through their struggles transform it into a powerful fighting instrument to defend workers’ rights. This excerpt can be found on pages 32–35. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

Workers who have no radical background enter the trade unions steeped in misconceptions and prejudices that the capitalist rulers have inculcated into them since childhood. This was wholly true of Local 574

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

members. They began to learn class lessons only in the course of struggle against the employers.

Their strike experiences had taught them a good deal. Notions that workers have anything in common with bosses were undermined by harsh reality. Illusions about the police being “protectors of the people” began to be dispelled. Eyes were opened to the role of the capitalist government, as revealed in its methods of rule through deception and brutality. At the same time the workers were gaining confidence in their class power, having emerged victorious from their organized confrontation with the employers.

To intensify the learning process already so well started, the union leadership now initiated an educational program. Study courses open to all members were organized. The curriculum included economics, labor history and politics, public speaking, strike strategy, and union structure and tactics.

Wherever practical, officers’ reports at membership meetings were given with a view toward making them instructive as well as factually informative. Articles of an educational nature were printed in the union paper. The themes varied from analysis of local problems to coverage of events and discussion of issues in the national and international labor movement.

These endeavors stood in marked contrast to the policies of bureaucratic union officials. Bureaucrats don’t look upon the labor movement as a fighting instrument dedicated solely to the workers’ interests; they tend rather to view trade unions as a base upon which to build personal careers as “labor statesmen.”

Such ambitions cause them to seek collaborative relations with the ruling class. Toward that end the bureaucrats argue that, employers being the providers of jobs, labor and capital have common interests. They contend that exploiters of labor must make “fair” profits if they are to pay “fair” wages. Workers are told that they must take a “responsible” attitude so as to make the bosses feel that unions are a necessary part of their businesses. On every count the ruling class is given a big edge over the union rank and file.

In carrying out their class collaborationist line, the union bureaucrats exercise tight control over negotiations with employers. They try to avoid strikes over working agreements if at all possible. When a walkout does

take place, they usually leap at the first chance for a settlement.

Once a contract has been signed with an employer they consider all hostilities terminated. Membership attempts to take direct action where necessary to enforce the agreement are declared “unauthorized” and a violation of “solemn covenants.” In fact the bureaucrats often gang up with the bosses to victimize rebel workers.

Local 574’s leadership flatly repudiated the bankrupt line of the class collaborationists. There can be no such thing as an equitable class peace, the membership was taught. The law of the jungle prevails under capitalism. If the workers don’t fight as a class to defend their interests, the bosses will gouge them. Reflecting these concepts, the preamble to the new by-laws adopted by the local stated:

“The working class whose life depends on the sale of labor and the employing class who live upon the labor of others, confront each other on the industrial field contending for the wealth created by those who toil. The drive for profit dominates the bosses’ life. Low wages, long hours, the speedup are weapons in the hands of the employer under the wage system. Striving always for a greater share of the wealth created by his labor, the worker must depend upon his organized strength. A militant policy backed by united action must be opposed to the program of the boss.

“The trade unions in the past have failed to fulfill their historic obligation. The masses of the workers are unorganized. The craft form has long been outmoded by gigantic capitalist expansion. Industrial unions are the order of the day.

“It is the natural right of all labor to own and enjoy the wealth created by it. Organized by industry and prepared for the grueling daily struggle is the way in which lasting gains can be won by the workers as a class.”

As these views set forth in the preamble affirm, there was no toying with reactionary ideas about stable class relations in the trucking industry. Stability was sought only for Local 574 itself, so that membership needs could better be served. Relations with the employers were shaped according to the realities of class struggle. The concepts involved are illustrated by the union’s approach to the question of working agreements with the trucking companies.

It was recognized that contracts between unions and employers serve only to codify the relationship of class forces at a given juncture. More precisely, they merely record promises wrung from employers. If a union is poorly led, the bosses will violate their promises, undermine the contract in daily practice, and put the workers on the defensive. Conversely, a properly led union will strive to enforce the contract to the letter. It will also undertake to pass beyond the formal terms of agreement to the extent this may be practical in order to establish preconditions for improved written provisions when the contract comes up for renewal. In every case, either the unions will press for greater improvement in the workers’ situation, or the employers will be able to concentrate on efforts to nullify gains the work-



Teamsters Local 574 leader announces first settlement at 1934 rally in Minneapolis after workers won strike. With seasoned revolutionary socialists playing a key role, and through the course of battles with the bosses and government, workers began to transform their union into a fighting instrument.

ers have made.

On the question of making employers keep their promises, the handling of grievances becomes vital. Here again class-collaborationist policies entrap the workers. Union bureaucrats are quick to include a no-strike pledge in contract settlements and refer griev-

ances to arbitration. The workers lose because arbitration boards are rigged against them, the “impartial” board members invariably being “neutral” on the employers’ side. Moreover, the bosses remain free to violate the working agreement at will, as grievances pile up behind the arbitration dam.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



October 3, 1975

NEW YORK—Seven thousand students and faculty massed in front of Gov. Hugh Carey’s offices here September 18 to protest the threatened imposition of tuition at the City University of New York.

State Commissioner of Education Ewald Nyquist has called on the city’s board of higher education to charge tuition of up to \$800 a year at the traditionally tuition-free CUNY campuses.

The protest rally, sponsored by the University Student Senate of CUNY and the Professional Staff Congress, the union of CUNY faculty, was the first city-wide response this fall to already-announced cuts of \$87 million in the CUNY budget.

Another \$64 million in cuts are threatened by the city in an effort to balance its budget.

The September 18 rally was the culmination of two weeks of protests and demonstrations held on individual CUNY campuses since school opened and the cuts took form in larger class sizes, cancellation of courses, and drastically cut programs.

The cutbacks were especially hard-felt in Black and Puerto Rican studies. The entire Puerto Rican Studies Institute at Brooklyn College was eliminated.

The largest of these previous actions was held at Queens College on September 16, when 2,000 students and faculty rallied against the cuts.

Queens brought an impressive contingent of twenty busloads to the citywide demonstration.

Cheers rang out from the picket lines as

each bus pulled up and demonstrators poured out.



October 2, 1950

“We will fight this Nazi-like law to the last ditch,” declared all candidates of the Socialist Workers Party today after Congress enacted the McCarran-Kilgore police-state law. In a joint campaign pledge, the 1950 candidates of the SWP called on the American people to force repeal of the law and “to drive from public life every scoundrel who has helped—directly or indirectly—to impose it.” Their statement said:

“Congress has ordered the American people to shut up or go to jail. Congress has commanded all of us not to think and not to speak except as the ruling plutocrats and their political gangsters dictate. Congress has demanded that we submit in servile silence to war, militarism, wage freezing, price-gouging, profiteering and Jim Crow. This is the real aim of the catch-all ‘Internal Security Act’ rushed through Congress over Truman’s feeble veto.

“Both capitalist parties—Democratic and Republican—criminally conspired to subvert and destroy the Bill of Rights in order to suppress all dissent.

“We—the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party—openly and unequivocally declare: We will not submit. We will not be intimidated. We will not be silenced.

“We predict that the American people, particularly the militant working class, will not submit and will not be silenced.”

# Support protests for oil crisis relief

The protests by farmers, independent truck drivers, fishermen, and others that have swept across Europe deserve the support of every working person and labor union. Independent commodity producers such as working farmers and fishermen, and workers who seek to eke out a living driving their own trucks, have been hit the hardest by the escalating cost of fuel and by government policies that gouge working people through massive taxation on gas and oil. Fuel comprises a large part of their expenses, and the sharp price hikes are becoming the final straw in their already precarious situation.

The solidarity of workers at fuel depots and refineries in the United Kingdom shows the potential for widening this solidarity and common action.

The protest actions, including marches and blockades of ports, refineries, fuel depots, and roads, reflect the potential power of those who labor for a living. Far from having moved beyond the “old economy” to a “new economy,” the capitalists depend on the working people who produce and transport food and fiber, industrial and consumer goods, and the means of transport and communication. Those who labor create all the wealth in society, and hold enormous economic and social power in their hands when organized to wield it.

By backing the demand of the protests to end taxes on fuel, the labor movement will strike a blow in favor of elimination of all taxes on working people—whether direct, such as income taxes and sales and licensing taxes, or indirect, such as gambling, lotteries, and value-added taxes. Instead, a sharply graduated tax on the income of the wealthy minority should be instituted immediately.

In addition, demands need to be advanced to force capitalist governments to release major oil reserves they hold, to relieve and undercut the price gouging by the oil monopolies. Making these demands on London, Paris, Berlin, Washington, and other imperialist governments will

help push back attempts to scapegoat the semicolonial countries in OPEC—the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries—for the crisis. The biggest beneficiaries of this price squeeze are Exxon, British Petroleum, Shell, and the other big monopolies based in imperialist countries. Such companies are taking advantage of the increased demand for oil products—generated by the economic expansion—to rake in superprofits.

Working farmers, fishermen, and independent truckers are exploited under capitalism, as are wage workers. They more and more face the proletarian condition of being stripped of all means to make a living other than selling their labor power to a boss. They are allies of the working class, which has an interest in fighting to prevent their ruin by the bankers and capitalist monopolies and their governments.

The reprint by Teamsters union leader Farrell Dobbs, who was also a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party (see page 15), explains a working-class approach to independent truckers that can advance the struggle of all working people against our common exploiters. As well, the bosses reap billions in profits from the labor of independent commodity producers such as farmers and fishermen. These working people must purchase material such as fuel, equipment, seeds, and fertilizer to their disadvantage at monopoly prices from capitalist concerns. In turn, they sell the products of their labor to grain and other monopolies who hold prices down to maximize their returns. In addition, they must borrow funds at high interest rates from banks that demand land and equipment as collateral, holding the threat of foreclosure or repossession over their heads.

Joining in these protests, advancing the alliance of workers and farmers, and taking a step forward to organize and extend the independent actions of all working people in their own interests will strengthen the labor movement as a whole.

# Condemn assault on immigrants

The labor movement needs to speak out strongly and join with those protesting the brutal assault on two immigrant workers, Ismael Pérez Aruizú and Magdaleno Estruda Escamilla, on September 17 near the Long Island town of Farmingville, New York. The racist thugs who perpetrated the attack, apparently with intent to murder, should be arrested, tried, and put behind bars for a long time. Labor should also call for a halt to all deportations, factory raids, and harassment of immigrant workers by the immigration police.

The responsibility for the racist violence against immigrants lies first and foremost with the U.S. government, which has spearheaded a bipartisan anti-immigrant campaign on behalf of the wealthy employers. Under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996, the Clinton administration has increased the powers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to deport people, and has hired a record number of immigration cops. Their job is to terrorize working people born outside U.S. borders. Washington has stepped up INS factory raids, including in meatpacking and other plants where immigrant workers are helping lead fights to organize unions.

The capitalist rulers of the United States scapegoat immigrants for unemployment and other problems caused by their own system. Their goal in stepping up deportations, and their attempts to terrorize workers born in other countries is not to drive out immigrants. Just the opposite. U.S. capital keeps drawing in immigrant labor for its own economic needs, both in agriculture and industry. In

coming years it will do so at an accelerated pace. The employers’ goal is to maintain immigrants in a permanent second-class status of superexploitation and fewer rights, while using this setup to pit working people against each other.

Ultrarightist groups like “Sachem Quality of Life” get a green light for their chauvinist poison and thuggish behavior from the actions and “America First” policies of the Democrats and Republicans in the government. This outfit has waged an aggressive campaign against workers of Mexican and Central American origin who live and work in Long Island. They blame immigrants for crime, disease, the housing crisis, and other social ills of capitalism.

Such rightist thugs are a deadly threat not only to immigrants but to the entire working class. The courageous stance by workers in Farmingville in standing up to the ultrarightists and capitalist politicians by organizing demonstrations, press conferences, and other protests, sets an example for all working people.

The protest actions by these workers underscore why the labor movement should embrace—and organize—workers coming from other countries as new potential battalions in the struggle against the U.S. employers. Immigrants have strengthened the working-class movement, as can be seen in numerous union-organizing and other battles around the country today, from California, to Washington State, to the Midwest and Florida.

Arrest the thugs who assaulted Pérez and Estruda! Stop all deportations and INS factory raids! Equal rights for all immigrants!

# Steelworkers at Kaiser win contract

**Continued from Front Page**

strike the union offered to go back to work. The company’s response was to illegally lock out the unionists and hire replacement workers. The company demanded even more job cuts—up to 700.

John Walston, vice president of USWA Local 7945 in Tacoma, commented on the final settlement: “The contract is bitter sweet. We were not able to set the pace for the aluminum industry. But overall it is a major victory for organized labor because some people were betting that the union would be broken. An important reason why this didn’t happen was the solidarity shown by many groups that made it possible to endure this.”

In the two-year battle the steelworkers at Kaiser kept up their picket lines daily and reached out to the labor movement and beyond to build solidarity for their fight.

As well, they often were seen offering their support to others at picket lines and labor actions around the country. Their activities included this summer’s eastern Washington rallies for the farm workers demanding decent wages for apple pickers and amnesty for immigrants, the picket line of the locked-out steelworkers at AK Steel in Ohio, and much more.

The union is continuing to pursue a \$337 million back-pay claim against Kaiser. A hearing on this is scheduled to occur November 13 in Oakland, California. Last July the National Labor Relations Board regional office in Oakland, California, filed a complaint accusing Kaiser of failing to bargain in good faith after they locked out the steelworkers.

*John Naubert contributed to this article.*

# Cuban revolution is stronger today

**Continued from Page 9**

then, of course. The heroic example of the Vietnamese national liberation struggle was galvanizing millions into action worldwide, as hatred for U.S. imperialism’s murderous war against the Indochinese peoples deepened and spread. A wave of anti-imperialist struggle was rising throughout Latin America, borne on the crest of the Cuban revolution. Support for the Palestinian people and their struggle against dispossession by the state of Israel was exploding throughout the Arab world. The forces attracted to Havana’s initiative then were substantially larger. In their big majority they were young and ready for action. Despite the political disparities, however, the objective place and weight of the leadership initiatives taken thirty years apart are similar: to reach out around the world and find the forces ready to chart a revolutionary strategy to move forward and to apply it.

In Balaguer’s opening presentation to the delegates, there was no talk of tragedy having befallen Cuba or other revolutionary forces in the world. There was no bemoaning globalization, nor cowering before the relationship of class forces that has allowed the implementation of neoliberal policies throughout Latin America. Instead, there was a scientific examination of the world class struggle in the closing years of the twentieth century—with eyes fixed on the coming battles being born of the imperialist reality—and a program that constitutes a necessary and sufficient starting point for revolutionary action:

- No, to any variant on theories of globalization and superimperialism that lead to undervaluing the struggle for state power against our own bourgeoisies. “Socialism will not appear on the historical scene through a modernization of present society, but through a revolutionary transformation of its dominant structures. In this sense, the question of the seizure of power remains a basic requirement...”

- Yes, to the political course of rectification and the Special Period, as opposed to the “model of economic management copied, in large measure from the Soviet experience...that diverted the construction of socialism onto paths that had nothing to do with being revolutionary.”

- No, to any policy of alliances that is not built “from, by, and for the ranks,” or that demands revolutionaries renounce “conviction and firmness of principles.”

- Yes, to the fight to take the moral high ground, to “show not only the possibility and viability of socialism but also its desirability.... For us, socialism is the only possible, the only valid option for placing social relations on a moral footing,” said Balaguer. “We cannot relax our efforts to demonstrate—on a theoretical level, and on a practical level—its clear superiority in shaping the highest of human values: justice, equality, fairness, freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, national sovereignty, solidarity. This socialist society continues to be a clear alternative not only to capitalism, but also to the failed experiences of Eastern Europe and the USSR.”

The Socialist Workers Party resolution, “U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War,” underscores that “the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba is the first since the Bolsheviks to give communist guidance to the development of a workers state.” At the helm of the Cuban government, and in the face of U.S. imperialism’s unrelenting economic, political, and military pressures, they have maintained a revolutionary course for forty years. “This ‘subjective factor’—the genuinely internationalist character of the proletarian vanguard guiding the workers state in Cuba—is the most important *objective* outcome and contribution of the Cuban revolution.”

## Objective weight in world politics

This is even more true today than it was in 1990. The objective weight in world politics of the only living example of a fighting, confident dictatorship of the proletariat—one with a seasoned combat leadership that has proven its capacity year after year for more than four decades—has grown not diminished. For revolutionary fighters the world over, it is not enough to recognize that imperialism really has lost the Cold War. That alone does not allow revolutionists to chart a way forward. They need the living example of Cuba, as well.

This is just as true for new generations of revolutionary-minded fighters inside Cuba as for young people elsewhere in the world. The real history of the Cuban revolution—the stories of the men and women who overthrew the Batista dictatorship, stood down the Yankee empire at the Bay of Pigs and during the October “missile crisis,” and served in volunteer internationalist missions from Latin America, to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East—is a vital link in the revolutionary continuity that must be traced.

A *strategy* of attempting to build socialism in one country—even in a country as vast and rich in resources as the Soviet Union, let alone a Caribbean island with a historical legacy of centuries of colonial and imperialist domination—can only mean the abandonment of proletarian internationalism, the demoralization and demobilization of the fighting vanguard of the toilers, and certain defeat. But communist workers assume no a priori limits on the capacity of Cuban working people to resist and survive, to hold off the imperial enemy until reinforcement brigades of the international class struggle arrive, to maintain the foundations of their state power, and to keep strengthening their internationalism and advancing their class interests.

That is a practical question, not an analytical one, where the example of Cuba itself weighs heavily in the balance.

# How Teamsters organized owner-drivers in '30s

The protests in Europe led by truckers, farmers, and fishermen against skyrocketing fuel prices have sparked debate on the role of drivers who own their trucks. Political forces opposed to the protests have tried to undercut widespread working-class support to the protesters by dismissing the owner-operators as "bosses." Class-conscious workers approach independent truckers as fellow toilers and seek to win them as allies of the working class.

The following excerpts are from the appendix to *Teamster Politics* by Farrell Dobbs, entitled "How the Teamsters Union organized independent truckers in the 1930s." Dobbs describes how the class-struggle leadership of the Minnesota Teamsters worked to win owner-operators to the labor movement, and in the process differentiate them from fleet owners and other exploiting layers in the trucking industry. The article was first published in the *Militant* in response to the February 1974 strike by owner-operators in the United States. *Teamster Politics* is the third of a four-volume series by Dobbs, a leader of the Minnesota Teamsters during the 1934 strikes, the campaign to organize over-the-road drivers, and other Teamster-led battles in the Midwest throughout the 1930s. Dobbs was also a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. Subheadings are by the *Militant*. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

## BY FARRELL DOBBS

In shaping our overall class-struggle policy, close attention to the independent owner-operator question was included. We began by taking full account of the realities of the existing situation. Drivers owning their own trucks had become a factor of

major dimensions within the industry. To consolidate the union power, they had to be brought into an alliance with the fleet drivers. Before that could be done, however, a course had to be developed that would serve the owner-operators' interests.

Careful examination of all the factors involved convinced us that those owning one truck, who did their own driving, should be approached by the union as fellow workers. Proceeding accordingly, we set out to organize as many of these individuals as possible. They were then extended the democratic right to shape the demands that were made upon their employers, the leasing companies. On that basis the union as a whole followed through by backing them in struggles to improve their take-home pay.

The validity of that policy was confirmed by its results. In the major struggles of that period against the trucking employers generally, the union's owner-operator members served loyally. They volunteered their trucks to transport pickets and shared in the picketing. A significant number of our casualties in battles with the cops were from among this category of workers. After the union had been consolidated, they continued to play a constructive role. Like other members of the organization, they looked upon those of their own kind who took an antilabor stance as finks and dealt with them accordingly.

Our course had checkmated the divisive schemes of the bosses. In Minneapolis the truck drivers and allied workers had emerged as a power, and the union was able to march forward in advancing the interests of all its members.

## Common cause with employed drivers

[In 1938, when the Minnesota Teamsters launched a campaign to organize over-the-



Militant/Stefanie Trice

Independent truckers rallied last February at port of Newark, New Jersey, against rising fuel prices. Class-conscious workers seek to win owner-operators as labor's allies.

road drivers, Dobbs wrote a reply to a leader of a "Truck Owners and Operations Association," who had criticized the Teamsters initiative. In the following excerpts of the appendix to *Teamster Politics*, Dobbs quotes extensively from that reply, analyzing the different class forces that go under the name "owner-operator" and describing the agreements the union wrested from employers.]

"The individual owner-operator is by the very nature of his position a composite in one degree or another of the two distinct factors in the over-the-road motor freight

industry—the owners of trucks and the drivers. There is a more or less clearly defined category of individual owner-operators, and there are other categories called by that name but who are in reality something entirely different.

"There is the individual who owns one truck which he himself drives. Ordinarily he operates under lease in the exclusive service of one operating company. He represents the owner-operator type of driving service in its purest form and deserves the fullest measure of consideration for his special problems....

"Even the most clearly defined type of owner-operator has a general tendency toward expansion, and the individual frequently becomes the owner of additional units of equipment. During this gradual process of accumulation he will first acquire one or two more pieces of equipment and will employ men to drive these while he continues as a driver of one of his units. As he continues to accumulate units he hires more and more men. This process transforms him into a combination owner-driver-employer.

"Finally he acquires enough equipment and hires enough men so that he must devote all or nearly all of his personal time to the problems of the management of his operations. He then is no longer in any sense a driver and is transformed into the status of an owner of trucks and an employer of men who does business with an operating company as a small fleet owner who hauls by subcontract under a lease system. Yet he continues to pose as an individual owner-operator and is erroneously poses as such by many others....

"A man who owns the truck which he drives is merely an employee who is required to furnish his own tools as a condition of employment....

"The proper place for the individual owner-operator to get effective results is in the ranks of the IBT [International Brotherhood of Teamsters], shoulder to shoulder with the employed drivers."

## Workers discuss outcome of French protests

### Continued from Page 8

dent owner operators and should average 17,500 francs per truck.

The taxi drivers demand for a reduction of fuel taxes was refused. The government authorized a 4.5 percent fare hike.

In spite of massive workers support—opinion polls showed 88 percent in favor of the strikers—the major trade unions denounced the action. Making an amalgam between the independents and the big truck fleet owners, a declaration by the Confederation Executive Committee of the CGT, which was distributed in many factories, denounced the movement as the work of "bosses pressure groups...in the service of interests which are totally foreign to those of wage earners.... The interests of wage earners are not those of the transportation bosses, nor those of the oil companies." The CGT leadership supports the French Communist Party, which is part of the government of Socialist Party Premier Lionel Jospin.

Nicole Notat, head of the CFDT, a union with ties to the Socialist Party, found the situation "incredible." Jospin's first task was, she said, "to get people back to work and the economy and the country functioning normally."

Inevitably, coffee break discussion in factories throughout the country has turned around the oil refinery blockades. The Renault plant in the Paris suburb of Choisy-le-roi is no exception.

Many workers were impressed by the social force shown by the truckers and farmers—the "independents." When asked what would happen if such actions could be joined with a strike wave like that of railroad and other workers that brought the country to a halt in 1995, the workers answered right away: "You'd have the country in the palm of your hand," and "It would be like the 1968 general strike." A worker said, "You could dictate any solution you wanted for fuel prices," and another answered, "Fuel prices? You could dictate what kind of government we have." The laughter slowly died off, replaced by a long and thoughtful silence.

The recent conflict has deepened divisions in an already weak Jospin government. Earlier in the year, Jospin was forced to retreat when faced with mass protests, first of hospital workers and then of teachers protesting the government's draconian budget cutbacks in health care and education.

Unable to push through his austerity measures, the Education Minister resigned last spring. The Labor and Health Minister has announced she will resign. The Interior Minister resigned in August, disagreeing with negotiations between the government and Corsican nationalists concerning the possibility of granting the island some limited degree of autonomy. And the Environment Minister has threatened to resign in protest of the concessions won by the truck driv-

ers. She says that taxes on diesel fuel are a necessary measure to discourage pollution.

Jospin's new retreat has provoked sharp criticism from Wim Duisenberg, head of the European Central Bank.

For the first time since the European currency, the euro, was launched two years ago, Duisenberg publicly criticized the fiscal policies of the government of a member country. He lashed out at those governments "which give the false impression that the costs of rising oil prices can be avoided by loosening up tight budgetary policies." He said he was worried that Paris's tax concessions to fishermen, truckers, and farmers "would become a tendency for the whole euro zone."

The decline in the euro has accelerated during the conflict as capitalists continued to shift investment from Europe to the United States, with the euro dropping below 86 cents to the dollar. When it was launched on Jan. 1, 1999, the currency stood at \$1.18. The European Central Bank was forced September 14 for the first time to intervene in international money markets to support the euro by selling off parts of its hoarded dollar reserves.

## LETTERS

### 'Literacy tests' in South

Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act in the mid-1960s as the result of the massive civil rights movement, many states, particularly in the Jim Crow South, used so-called "literacy tests" to disenfranchise Black people along with "poll taxes" and general terror tactics of bombing, burning, and lynching.

The argument was that to be able to vote "intelligently" a person had to be able to read and explain such things as the U.S. Constitution to the satisfaction of the local election officials. Black people who dared to try to register to vote were disqualified by use of the "literacy test."

There was a joke in those days about the Black university professor who tried to register to vote and was asked to read and explain the U.S. Constitution. When he did so, he was given a passage in French by Jean-Paul Sartre, the existentialist philosopher which he read, translated, and explained to the local voting inquisitors.

He was then given a copy of a newspaper in Chinese and asked what it said. He picked

it up and said he could only read the headline. The professor said the headline reads "No Black person will be voting in this county this year." It took the massive civil rights struggles of the '40s, '50s and '60s to get rid of the bogus "literacy tests."

Literacy tests for workers, who know the job inside and out because they do it day in and day out, are throwbacks to the same kinds of racist and chauvinist attempts to divide working people. The boss wants you to do the work and he hates it if you read a newspaper or book, no matter what language, especially if it's the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial*, or a title published by Pathfinder Press.

Robin Maisel  
Los Angeles, California

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

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

*from Pathfinder*

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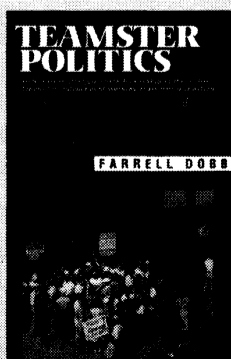
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## Japan's rulers push militarization drive

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

An earthquake drill conducted in Tokyo September 3, dubbed "Tokyo Big Rescue" and involving some 7,000 soldiers, exemplifies the efforts by the Japanese rulers to strengthen their armed forces and loosen restrictions on their use both at home and abroad.

In scenes staged for dramatic impact on the watching crowds, troops rushed in to reinforce civilian rescue squads swamped by the "wounded." Shintaro Ishihara, the governor of the Tokyo prefecture, flew from neighborhood to neighborhood in a red rescue helicopter. The right-wing politician masterminded the exercise, which turned what has been a routine annual civil defense exercise into one of the largest urban military mobilizations in Japan since World War II.

The appearance of thousands of helmeted and armed troops in the heart of Japan's largest city and its capital was particularly significant, given that soldiers customarily wear civilian clothes in public.

Pushing Japanese nationalist themes, the governor has been in the forefront of a drive to refurbish the military. Ishihara scapegoats immigrants as a further rationale for his militarism—an approach consistent with the restrictive and chauvinist policies pursued by Tokyo.

In April he told an audience of members of the armed forces that "third-country nationals and foreigners who have entered Japan illegally have perpetrated heinous crimes. In the event of a major earthquake, riots could break out, and there is a limit to the police's ability to cope with such a situation alone. I want you to carry out your mission, not only to deal with natural disasters, but also to maintain law and order."

The remarks were taken as a reference to events after the 1923 Tokyo earthquake, when a pogrom was unleashed amid the devastation against immigrants from Korea. As many as 7,000 were killed in riots by mobs who included Japanese troops, whipped up by rumors that immigrants had committed sabotage or were even behind the disaster.

Ishihara was forced to apologize in response to the uproar that followed his remarks. But his security adviser resumed the anti-immigrant theme the day before the earthquake drill. "Generally speaking the Koreans have made a good adjustment to this country," said Atsuyuki Sassa, "but we still have many illegal Chinese who are penetrating this country illegally and are carrying out terrible crimes. There are Iranians, and others.... And what Mr. Ishihara was saying is that we must maintain peace and order in the case of a disaster."

So Chungo On, the director of Chosensoren, an association of residents of Korean descent, observed of Ishihara and the earthquake drill that "the right wing in Japan has always been very hostile to Koreans and Chinese. These kinds of people feel that the past history of the military in Japan is glorious."

**A course towards stronger armed forces**  
"Tokyo Big Rescue" comes in the midst of a continuing economic crisis in Japan and restiveness among working people across the region in face of worsening social conditions. It is one of a number of signs of the determination of the capitalist rulers of Japan—the single imperialist power located in Asia—to beef up their military strength and project it abroad.

Washington has been pressing Tokyo to step up its role in policing the semicolonial countries of the world—especially in Asia. But as they comply, the Japanese rulers are also promoting their own interests in competition with their U.S. competitors.

More resources are being diverted to-



Ceremony at Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo. Visit to this war memorial in August by a group of capitalist politicians was part of effort to glorify conquests of Japanese imperialism prior to and during World War II. Wealthy rulers are waging political campaign to increase role of armed forces at home and abroad.

wards the armed forces. Military spending in the 1998-99 fiscal year stood at nearly \$43 billion, among the five highest expenditures in the world. The Japanese "Self Defense Force" numbers close to 250,000 troops.

The armed forces were less than one-third that size when they were established in 1950 as the "National Police Reserve" under U.S. General Douglas MacArthur's orders. MacArthur, who headed the U.S. military forces occupying Japan after World War II, reversed Washington's initial prohibition on the formation of Japanese military forces, as U.S. soldiers in Japan were called away to serve in the imperialist invading forces in Korea.

MacArthur's order violated a constitution imposed by Washington on Japan, which stated that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained." There is more open discussion among the Japanese rulers on the need to amend the so-called "peace constitution," but it has been met with widespread opposition in Japan and unease throughout Asia.

Opposition to Tokyo's military ambitions led to an outcry against deploying forces as part of the U.S.-led aggression against Iraq in 1990. Tokyo was humiliatingly reduced to helping bankroll the onslaught to the tune of \$13 billion. But the Japanese government pushed ahead and won majority backing for the dispatch of four minesweepers and two other vessels to the imperialist presence in the Gulf in April 1991.

Further steps have been taken. Japanese troops are assigned to United Nations forces in the Golan Heights, which was seized by the Israeli armed forces from Syria in 1967. They served under the same flag in Cambodia from 1992 to 1993, and in Zaire and Mozambique in the mid-1990s.

### Militarization stepped up

In 1998 the government raised a scare over a missile launched by north Korea. The missile flew over Japanese territory. The Diet, or parliament, passed a resolution urging the government to "take all measures to ensure the security of the people of Japan." Four surveillance satellites were launched. In March of 1999 Japanese naval destroyers fired on two ships in Japanese waters, accusing north Korea of having sent them to spy on Japan. This was the first such action by the Japanese navy since World War II.

The following month the Diet adopted bills opening the way for Japanese forces to join the U.S. military in action in "situations in areas surrounding Japan." The bills, prescribing a backup role for the Japanese

military, drew criticism from Moscow and Beijing.

"If this goes ahead, Japan will be involved in a war before it knows it," said Katsumi Takeoka, a former Japanese defense minister, who commented that "the guidelines are clearly written to justify Japanese participation in a second Korean war." The parliament has begun debating a constitutional amendment weakening the document's prohibitions on military intervention abroad.

In the aftermath of north Korea's missile test, Washington and Tokyo sped up a joint program—under discussion since 1993—to develop a missile defense system aimed at giving them the ability to knock out enemy missiles in flight.

The system is a variant of the Theater Missile Defense (TMD) research by the Pentagon. The business-oriented *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that "it's an open secret in Tokyo that China's burgeoning missile programme also is considered a long-term threat."

### The record of Japanese imperialism

To try to build an ideological backing for their course, the Japanese rulers regularly turn to appeals to the monarchy and the country's feudal past. In May, Prime Min-

ister Yoshiro Mori said, "Japan is a divine nation with the emperor at its core and we want the people to recognize this." He refused to retract his words in the uproar that followed. The late Emperor Hirohito was head of state and a key figure in the government during Japan's invasion of China and expansion through Asia in the 1930s and early 1940s. Government statements harking back to that war of conquest provide openings for right-wing politicians like Ishihara, along with extra-parliamentary forces, to stoke up nationalist and militarist themes.

Fifty-five years after the end of World War II Washington stations close to 50,000 troops in Japan, three-quarters of them on the island of Okinawa. For decades working people there have organized protests calling for the bases' removal.

On September 11 U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright and Japanese foreign minister Yohei Kono signed a five-year agreement committing Tokyo to providing \$4.5 billion to the bases' upkeep. The U.S. government had rejected a Japanese proposal to reduce its payments, which are described by Japanese officials as a "heavy burden."

These different contradictions and conflicts play out in a world of increasing rivalry among the imperialist powers—and a world in which long-term prospects for capitalist economic growth are bleak.

On August 15 Shintaro Ishihara joined eight cabinet ministers in a symbolic visit to a shrine in the city erected as a memorial to the 2.5 million Japanese who have died in wars since the mid 19th century. This year's ceremony marked the 55th anniversary of the end of World War II. Protesters have targeted the annual visits, explaining that their real intention is to glorify such wartime leaders as the prime minister General Hideki Tojo.

"China is almost certain to make vehement protests because it sees the shrine as a rehabilitation of Japanese militarism," said Yasushi Isobe of the Japan Institute of International Affairs.

The politicians who carried out the visit in a blaze of controversy and publicity are consciously setting out to whip up nationalist fervor and smooth the way for more military spending and more use of the armed forces. As experiences from the Gulf to the streets of Tokyo on September 3 illustrate, the target of a stronger military is working people, at home and abroad.

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