

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE

Communism and labor's transformation of nature

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Bosses get small fine in western mine deaths

BY ALICE KINCAID

GRAND JUNCTION, Colorado—Almost one year after a fire killed two miners and injured eight others at the Willow Creek Mine, near Helper, Utah, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) issued an investigative report July 17. Killed in the blasts were Cory Nielson, 28, a prop man who had worked in the mine for 16 weeks, and Shane Stansfield, 29, a mechanic who had been employed there for 24 weeks.

Even though the MSHA report says that the ventilation system for the D-3 longwall mining section was not adequate and the approved ventilation plan for the mine was not being complied with, the report concluded by slapping Willow Creek's owner, the RAG American Coal Company, with only two violations. Each citation can carry a fine ranging from \$55 to \$55,000. The section of the D-3 longwall panel where the fire took place produced coal during two 10-hour shifts, seven days a week.

Willow Creek is a nonunion mine. It is managed by Cyprus Plateau Mining Corp., a subsidiary of RAG American Coal, one of the world largest coal producers. When in operation, the mine employed 325 workers and produced 5 million tons of coal annually. Shortly after the explosions all five mine portals were sealed with dirt to extinguish the fire. The mine remains sealed to this day.

MSHA reported that on July 31, 2000, at 11:48 p.m. the first of four explosions ripped through the D-3 longwall section of the Willow Creek underground mine. The first

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U.S. farmers promote forum on 'food sovereignty' in Havana

BY JOEL BRITTON

CHICAGO—The Family Farm Defenders, the American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association, and the Wisconsin Rural Development Center have endorsed the "Call to the world forum on food sovereignty" issued in May by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) of Cuba.

Farmers in Wisconsin and elsewhere are organizing to ensure that a delegation of U.S. farmers and workers are present in Havana for the forum, slated for September 4-7.

ANAP's call for the conference highlights "the right of the people to food!" It notes: "In recent years concerns about the problems of hunger and poverty in the world have been expressed in many ways and places by nongovernmental mass political organizations, religious institutions, and governments. At the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996, a goal was set of reducing in half by the year 2015 the number

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'Out with the Navy! Vieques is ours!'

After vote, residents press fight against colonial occupation

BY RÓGER CALERO

"Twenty years ago I didn't think this could happen. They oppressed us so much, and we fought them alone. This is truly a historic day," said Carlos Zenón, a leader of fisherman and resident of Vieques, Puerto Rico. Zenón was celebrating a victory in the struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of the island, registered July 29 when he and others who live there voted by a 68 percent majority for the U.S. Navy to leave immediately.

"Let the Navy pack their bags and go right now," Lydia Gerena Corsino told a *New York Times* reporter after the referendum. "If they let me on the base, I'll even help them pack. Out with the Navy, Vieques is ours." Washington has used a large portion of the island since World War II as a live-fire training ground and a base from which to threaten the Cuban revolution and struggles of working people in the Caribbean and Latin America. U.S. imperialism maintains colonial rule over Puerto Rico, a key component in its ability to impose the objectionable military force on the people of Vieques for so long.

On July 30 the mayor of Vieques marched with hundreds of other protesters to the gates of the U.S. Navy base to deliver an eviction notice. The day before crowds of people were out in the streets dancing and singing in celebration over the resounding victory, one that opponents of the U.S. Navy never doubted. "The results had been laid out for a long time, and now we only came to ratify them in the voting booths," said Judith



Young woman on Vieques signals victory in referendum. Sign reads, "Vote option 2 for the future of Vieques." Some 68 percent of voters supported U.S. naval withdrawal now.

Conde of the Vieques Women's Alliance in a phone interview with the *Militant*.

The referendum was organized by the government of Puerto Rican governor Sila Calderón, in response to the increasing pressure resulting from a series of mass mobilizations and sustained protests throughout Puerto Rico led by fishermen and other resi-

dents of Vieques. The protests erupted after the killing of a civilian in April 1999 by a 500-pound bomb dropped by a U.S. plane. It was the first time residents of the island had been allowed to vote on the issue.

More than two-thirds of those voting supported Option 2 on the referendum ballot.

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Israel plans all-out war on Palestinians

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Plans by the Israeli rulers for a full-scale military offensive to reoccupy the West Bank and Gaza Strip and crush Palestinian resistance have been reported by CBS News and other sources. Alongside the day-to-day conflict, which has raged unabated in the aftermath of a U.S.-brokered cease-fire, the revelations help to underscore the irreconcilable interests of the Israeli imperialist ruling class and the Palestinian people.

"Israeli generals are planning for a possible massive invasion of Palestinian territories if the current Mideast cease-fire fails, says a published report denied by Israeli officials," announced CBS News July 12. "The goal of the action would be to destroy Palestinian armed forces and the Palestinian Authority, forcing Chairman Yasser Arafat back into exile, as he was for 12 years after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon."

The assault "calls for air strikes by F-15 and F-16 fighter-bombers, a heavy artillery bombardment, and then an attack by a combined force of 30,000 men, including paratroopers, tank brigades and infantry," wrote CBS correspondent David Hawkins.

The report, published by Jane's Information Group, "indicates that Israel expects up to 300 of its troops to die in such an attack, with Palestinian deaths in the thousands," continued Hawkins. The invasion plan "would be launched after another suicide bomb attack which causes a large number of deaths, like the one [on June 2] at a Tel Aviv disco."

The Israeli cabinet discussed the option

of "an all-out military assault on the Palestinians" at its July 9 meeting, reported Lee Hockstader in the *Washington Post*. Some ministers accused Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has opposed the proposal, of showing too much restraint.

Turning reality on its head, the *Post* article depicted the Palestinians as the aggressors. Hockstader wrote that "persistent Pal-

estinian attacks and Israeli retaliation—defying what is supposed to be a cease-fire—have fed an intensifying debate in Sharon's government: Should Israel launch a devastating military attack aimed at liquidating Yasser Arafat and destroying the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank?"

"The argument is raging not only around

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Socialist coal miner is on ballot in Pittsburgh mayoral campaign

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—"Our campaign will be a fighting voice for working people and one that backs every struggle against exploitation and oppression—both here and around the world," said Frank Forrester, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh after handing in nearly 2,000 signatures August 1 to place his name on the ballot. The city's election board certified the socialist's ballot spot the same day.

"Workers and farmers face worsening economic conditions, police brutality, rising unemployment, and attacks on our rights and our unions," said the candidate. "But in country after country, working people are also resisting the assaults by the bosses and their governments, from strikes and protests in Argentina to coal miners and others right here in the United States. Our campaign points out the common interests workers and

farmers have internationally, as well as the common enemy we have in the corporations and in the U.S. government.

"My campaign is part of the effort to forge a leadership in this country," Forrester said, "that can lead working people in a revolutionary struggle to replace the government of the superwealthy exploiters in Washington with one of working people. Such a struggle will be forced on working people who will more and more respond to Washington's deepening war against workers and farmers both at home and abroad. These are questions that are central to what working people here in Pittsburgh face, from fighting racism to union-busting assaults."

Forrester is a coal miner and a member of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). He works at the Robert Murray-owned Maple Creek mine where workers

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Coal bosses in Utah get off the hook for deaths in mine fire

Continued from front page
explosion occurred in the gob area behind the longwall shields, which are huge steel structures that line the coal face of the longwall and protect miners from the top or roof. As the longwall face is mined, the top falls behind the shields, which is called gob. This gob area must have adequate ventilation or methane builds up leading to explosive conditions.

Immediately after the first explosion the MSHA report says that miners saw fire at the bottom of the longwall shields. They attempted to put out the fire with a wash down hose and fire extinguishers. The wash down hose would not reach the fire area. When they ran out of fire extinguishers they could not find any more on the section.

The coal at Willow Creek is "gassy" and liberates a lot of methane. Because of the geology of the strata surrounding Willow Creek, dangerous hydrocarbons can be released as the coal is mined. Hydrocarbons, similar to diesel fuel, were present on the longwall face prior to and on July 31.

The MSHA report states, "The first explosion ignited methane and likely ignited hydrocarbon vapors, resulting in fire around and behind the headgate shields. Parts of the fire remained inaccessible. Water was ineffective in fighting the accessible portion of the fire. An adequate supply of a suitable fire-extinguisher agent was not available. The fire continued to spread through inaccessible areas of the D-3 gob and provided an ignition source for subsequent explosions. Liquid hydrocarbons were eventually ignited."

The D-3 longwall panel began mining on July 16, just 15 days before the mine fire. Willow Creek had received a variance (permit) from MSHA for two-entry longwall development. Willow Creek had also gotten a variance from MSHA to use the belt entry air to help ventilate the longwall face. At the time of the fire, however, this air was being routed "outby" and not going to the longwall face.

"This report will provide the mining in-

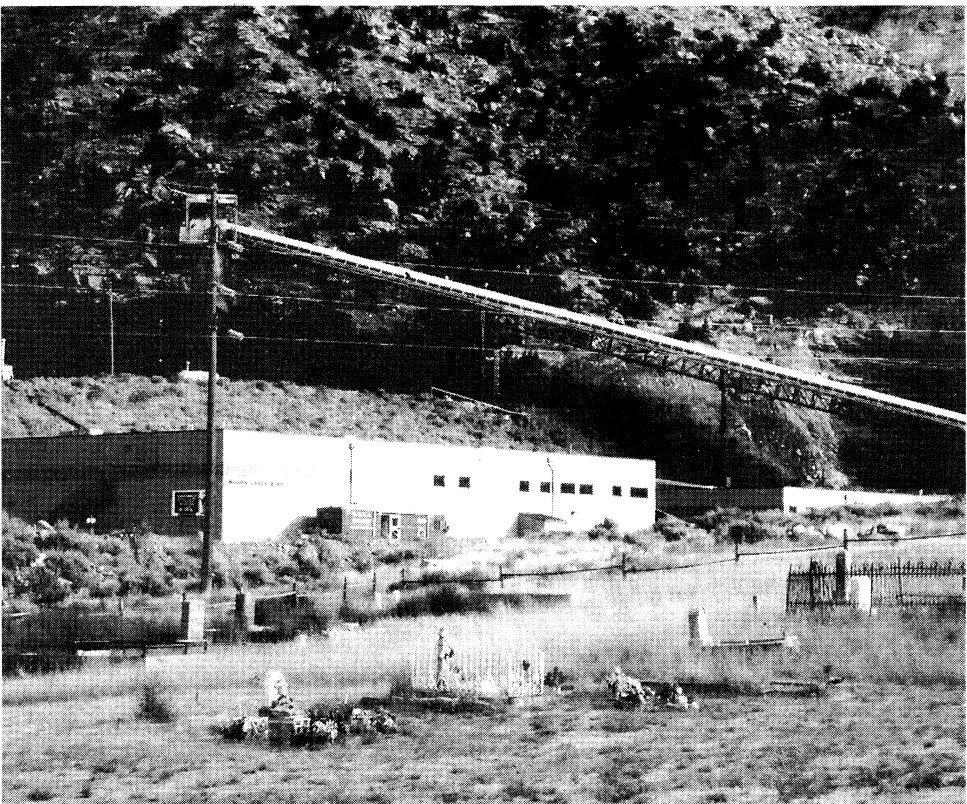
dustry with vital information in order to assist in preventing another such mine disaster," said David Lauriski, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. Lauriski became the new head of MSHA in May 2001. According to *Coal Age*, an industry publication, he was safety director at the Wilberg mine in 1984.

On Dec. 19, 1984, a fire broke out at the Wilberg mine in Orangeville, Utah, killing 26 men and one woman. The mine was organized by the United Mine Workers of America. The disaster is considered one of the most deadly coal mine fires in Utah history. The Utah History Encyclopedia explains, "Investigation of the fire revealed serious failures by the agencies charged with assuring coal mine safety."

The fire at Wilberg began in a fresh air intake, one of three escape routes from the fifth right longwall section. The fire quickly burned through to a second exit escape way, blocking both. The third escape way had been blocked by a cave-in a few months earlier. The miners on the longwall section were trapped. Instead of ordering the owners of Wilberg to clean up the cave-in, MSHA had issued the company a variance. The union cannot appeal a variance. Halfway through the second shift on Dec. 19, 1984, the company was going for the world's record in 24-hour longwall production.

Mine rescue teams worked for three days to free the trapped miners, hoping they would still be alive. Rescuers located 25 bodies but before they could be removed the fire rekindled, forcing the rescue teams to evacuate and seal the mine. The bodies of the miners were recovered in December 1985, nearly one year after the fire. The mine was sealed and continued to burn until July 1986, when MSHA entered the mine and began its investigation. MSHA issued 34 citations against Utah Power and Light and Emery Mining Company.

At a Dec. 24, 1984, press conference UMW international safety director Joe Main explained, "These things don't just happen. Usually when fires and explosions



Militant/Jack Parker
Willow Creek mine in Helper, Utah, where fire killed two miners last year. The non-union mine had been cited for numerous safety violations prior to July 2000 explosion.

occur, safety rules have not been complied with or they have been altered." He pointed out in particular the inadequate number of escape routes at Wilberg.

History of safety violations

MSHA spokespeople quoted in a July 18 *Salt Lake Tribune* article titled, "Feds Hand Out Minor Penalties in Willow Creek Mine Blasts," claim that the citations against Willow Creek were not more severe because "there was no evidence that Willow Creek's operators were aware of the dangerous conditions before they sent the crew into the mine."

"If we think an operator knew of the conditions, it would be a much more severe penalty," said MSHA spokesman Rodney Brown.

But the MSHA report itself says that the concentrations of methane from July 16 through August 1 at MPL B1, one of the locations for monitoring levels of methane on the longwall, had been increasing far beyond safe levels. "In the days immediately preceding the accident, the trend was accelerated," states the report. These facts were based on examinations of company records and interviews with mine examiners.

This was not the first time that the Willow Creek mine has been guilty of serious safety violations. Back in November of 1998 the mine was closed when methane gas ignited causing a blaze that took 12 months to extinguish. The 46 miners who were working at the time managed to escape without serious injury.

Records show that the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration cited Willow Creek management for 615 safety violations between October 1996 and the mine's last inspection on July 30, 2000. MSHA described 286 of the violations as "substantial and serious," meaning they posed an immediate danger of injury or death. The fines imposed on Willow Creek amounted to more than \$270,000. The vio-

lations included lack of proper roof supports and failure to test for explosive methane gas every 20 minutes where coal is being mined.

RAG bought the mine in 1999 and began mining coal in November of that year. From January 1 until July 31, 2000, MSHA inspectors were on site all but 15 days and cited the company with 256 citations, 183 "substantial and significant." No inspectors were at the mine on July 31.

Washington threatens new military assaults on Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice threatened Iraq with intensified military attacks July 29, three days after the Pentagon reported an Iraqi missile nearly hit a U-2 spy plane patrolling the "no-fly zone" in southern Iraq. She said the administration would consider using U.S. firepower "in a more resolute manner, and not just a manner of tit-for-tat with [Baghdad] every day."

Underscoring the Iraqi government's refusal to recognize the "no-fly zones" imposed over the country, an Iraqi Air Defense spokesman stated, "We confirm our right to defend the sovereignty of our land." Baghdad denied firing a missile at a U.S. spy plane, asserting that Washington is creating a pretext for "a new air raid on Iraqi radar sites and defenses."

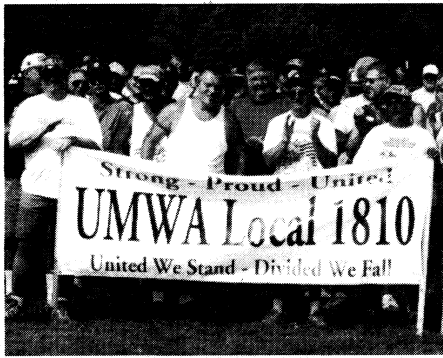
Democratic congressman Richard Gephardt threw in his support for launching an attack on the Iraqi people saying, "I fully back the administration in sending further messages to Saddam Hussein that we intend to keep this policy in place."

According to CNN, Pentagon officials said Washington's targets will include early warning radar sites. U.S. aircraft conduct routine bombing raids on Iraqi territory. On July 17 U.S. and British warplanes struck an anti-aircraft artillery facility in southern Iraq.

THE MILITANT

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Tokyo rebuked for planned war shrine visit

BY RÓGER CALERO

The controversy over a planned visit by Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo that honors Japan's war dead, combined with the recent decision by the Japanese government that it would order no further revisions of school history textbooks, have drawn heavy criticism and protests by its neighbors on the Korean peninsula and China. Governments in those countries have condemned Tokyo for issuing the textbooks because they omit many of the worst atrocities committed by Japan's imperial army during its occupation of the two countries prior to and during World War II.

The *New York Times* reported that Chinese foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan, speaking in Japanese at a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, used an imperative voice usually reserved for children to tell his Japanese counterpart, Makiko Tanaka, to "Stop that!" in reference to the prime minister's planned visit to the shrine. The incident was played up in the Japanese media, which portrayed it as an example of how Tokyo is being pushed around by its larger neighbor.

"If Prime Minister [Junichiro] Koizumi visits Yasukuni Shrine, it will undoubtedly spark strong anger among the people of China," Tang told Tanaka. The Japanese foreign minister subsequently said she advised Koizumi not to follow through on the scheduled visit later this month.

The shrine honors the 2.5 million Japanese war dead and contains the remains of 14 Japanese convicted as war criminals, including Japanese generals executed by the Allied powers.

The textbook has been condemned for making gross historical distortions, such as covering up the brutal occupations of China and Korea and omitting mention of the sex slavery system run by the Japanese military during World War II in which more than 100,000 women, most of whom came from Korea, but also from Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia, China, and other countries occupied by Japan, were forced into serving as "comfort women" for the Japanese military.

So far the Japanese government has refused to either withdraw the textbook or to make 35 changes requested by the south Korean and other Asian governments. This, combined with Koizumi's planned visit to the war shrine, has led to condemnations and increased diplomatic tensions in the region. The south Korean government recalled its ambassador to Japan in April, began scaling back on military and cultural exchanges, as well as canceling greater openings for Japanese goods in its domestic market.

"The Japanese authorities should lend an ear to the voices of the Asian people who suffered immeasurable damage due to the Japanese imperialists in the past," said a

statement cited from a north Korean newspaper by press reports. The refusal to make the corrections, explains the paper, is intended "to cover up Japan's past crimes and...infuse the idea of aggression into the younger Japanese for overseas aggression."

According to a *Financial Times* article, the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, the organization responsible for compiling the book, claims as one of its principles the goal to "portray Japan and the Japanese with dignity" and reject the "self-denigrating view" of Japan's national history. The production of the book has been supported by sections of the ruling class in Japan. Supporters of the book society include companies such as Fujitsu, Canon, Mitsubishi Heavy industries, and Nomura Securities, among others.

One of the authors of the textbook defended it by saying "that much of the so-called Japanese war atrocities were exaggerations created by wartime propaganda." The article in the *Times* highlights a reference in the textbook to the Nanjing massacre, where more than 300,000 Chinese civilians were murdered by the Japanese military, as "nothing like the Nazi Holocaust."

Critics of the textbook inside Japan have warned that this nationalist campaign is dangerous and point to the Japanese government's aims of playing a greater military role in the area as one of the reasons this campaign is being promoted now.

Masao Hamabayashi, an opponent of the textbook and professor emeritus at Hitotsubashi University, told the *Financial Times* that the textbook "places emphasis on pride in the nation, service to the nation and obligation of national defense by giving exaggerated descriptions of international tensions and by glorifying war and distorting historical facts. Their intention is to mobilize Japanese people and children into future wars."

Many in Japan have sought to distance themselves from the government's decision. The Osaka school district announced that 41 out of its 45 school districts will not adopt the history textbook for the next school year. The decision came after the education board council in the Tokachi region had adopted a similar position.

Meanwhile, eight Chinese women have filed a suit with a Tokyo district court against the Japanese government for being deprived of their honor when they were forced to serve as sex slaves for the Japanese military. They are demanding 3 million yen in compensation and an official public apology from the Japanese government.

Similar claims have been filed in U.S. courts on behalf of hundreds of Asian women under a federal law that gives them the right to file federal suits for crimes committed in violation of international law.

The Bush administration has sought to dismiss the lawsuit, claiming that the court

does not have jurisdiction over the case and that Japan has already satisfied war claims through treaties signed decades ago.

"No treaty can be used to pardon slavery, which violates many international treaties," said Yang Li, a lawyer in a suit filed in a California court on behalf of thousands of Asian men who were forced to work as slaves for Japanese companies during World War II. The Chinese, Filipino, and Korean older men worked in coal mines owned by

the Mitsubishi company near Nagasaki in Japan. A *New York Times* article reported that some 50,000 Chinese were used as slaves in Japan and 10 million more worked as forced laborers for Japanese companies in northwestern China, which was occupied by Japan for 14 years.

"I am old and I may die soon," said one of the men in the *Times* article, "but I have asked my son and grandson to continue until this is resolved."

Argentine toilers reject gov't austerity demands



BY RÓGER CALERO

Renewed protests by working people in Argentina followed the passage of President Fernando de la Rúa's austerity program at the end of June. Faced with the prospect of defaulting on \$130 billion in foreign debt, the legislature adopted a package of measures including a 13 percent cut in salaries and pensions of state employees. The opposition Peronists, who control the Senate, abstained on the bill to allow its passage without any changes.

"This demonstrates the political unity behind Argentina's commitment to fiscal discipline," said Horst Köhler, director of the imperialist-controlled International Monetary Fund. British Prime Minister Anthony Blair, on the eve of a trip to the country, said the move was "a very significant step forward."

The "zero deficit" plan, as the austerity package is called by the rulers, is aimed at cutting the annual budget by \$1.5 billion through drastic cuts in wages and social

Top, cops attack demonstration of 500 people during protest in Cordoba July 30. Inset, traders at Buenos Aires stock market watch rally as protesters fill up street below.

pensions for public employees, as well as an increase in gas prices and elimination of tax breaks for the middle class.

Tens of thousands of unemployed workers and their families, joined by state workers, university teachers, railroad, airline, and public health workers, joined actions July 31 demanding jobs, food, unemployment relief, and the reversal of the austerity measures. Workers and the unemployed organized more than 200 roadblocks throughout the country, including in Buenos Aires, Mar del Plata, and the interior provinces of Tucumán, Córdoba, Jujuy, Salta, and Chaco.

"We fight for the dignity of our jobs," Oscar Ruiz told the Argentine daily *El Tribuno*. Ruiz is one of the organizers of the roadblock in General Mosconi, a city in the northern province of Salta near the border with Bolivia. Some 200 pickets there, under the close watch of border cops, blocked the highway for nine hours. The protesters were also demanding the release of Oscar Gil, José Barraza, and César Rainieri, three leaders of the unemployed movement who have been accused of sedition by the Argentine government.

Workers in General Mosconi have been carrying out roadblocks since May of this year and a confrontation in June resulted in the death of two people shot by the police, with 14 wounded and 39 arrested. The Coordinating Councils of the Unemployed Workers of General Mosconi and Tartagal has appealed for support to free the three activists.

In Córdoba, three workers were arrested and at least four were wounded when cops attacked a roadblock that had been set up by 300 workers from the provincial energy company who were protesting the government's plan to privatize the firm.

In the meantime Chrystian Colombo, head of de la Rúa's cabinet, announced that there would be a shortfall in revenue collection for the month of July and that he "hoped that no additional adjustments would need to be made."

South African electrical workers win strike

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Some 21,000 workers at Eskom, the government-run electrical utility in South Africa, ended a three-day nationwide strike July 27 after the company agreed to higher pay raises. The strikers also won four months' paid maternity leave.

Members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), and MWU-Solidarity walked out after Eskom decided to unilaterally implement its wage offer of raises between 7 percent and 9 percent. The unions wanted 11 percent for the lowest paid workers and 9 percent for the highest paid. Inflation last year ran at 7 percent.

The contract settlement included an immediate 9 percent raise for the lowest paid workers and an additional 1 percent in January 2002. The highest paid workers will get 7 percent now and an additional 0.5 percent in January. They also won an extension of paid maternity leave from three to four months. Women can take a fifth month of leave and receive unemployment compensation at about one-third of their regular pay.

The unions reported that 90 percent of the workforce participated in the strike and thousands of the strikers took part in protest marches across the country.

During their strike the unions won an important ruling by the Labour Court in

Johannesburg that the company had no right to unilaterally impose its wage proposal. Eskom also had to back off from an attempt to get a court restraining order to prevent workers involved in "minimum essential service" from joining the strike.

Miners and steelworkers plan strike

Meanwhile, the NUM declared its intention to strike at three major gold mines—Goldfields, Harmony, and Durban Roodoepoort—that have not reached agreement with the unions on wages and annual leave.

The walkout is set to begin August 1 and involves 50,000 miners. The AngloGold and Placerdome mining companies avoided being struck by agreeing to the union's demand to implement a minimum monthly wage of 2,000 rand (US\$240) over the next two years and to increase workers' annual leave.

Most gold miners currently receive 21 days paid leave each year. The union wants to extend this to 30 days over the next two years. This is especially important because most miners live in hostels away from their families most of the year, in a system of migrant labor that was institutionalized under the former apartheid regime.

The NUM had also prepared for strike action against three coal mining companies that had held out against the union's contract demands. The union announced July

27 that it had accepted an improved offer on wages, meal breaks, annual leave, and medical disability payments.

The contract includes an 8 percent raise now and an additional 7.5 percent next year, according to NUM spokesperson Moferefe Lekorotsoana. Workers at the lower end of the pay scale will receive additional raises to bring them up to a minimum of R2,000 per month. The miners won a 30-minute meal break, with the bosses providing food or a cash allowance. The companies agreed to extend medical disability payments to terminally ill workers, with an increased cap.

Severance pay had been capped at two weeks pay for every year of service for up to 10 years. Now workers with more than 10 years seniority will receive a week's pay for every additional year of service. In addition to high rates of terminal illnesses such as AIDS, many workers are permanently disabled from injuries in the mines. According to the *Financial Times*, one gold miner out of every 1,000 is killed every year in workplace accidents.

In other developments, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa has given notice that up to 15,000 members at the steel division of Iscor Ltd. will strike at 6 a.m. August 3. The union is demanding an across-the-board pay raise of 15 percent, while the company has offered 7 percent.

How can Pillowtex textile workers fight layoffs and speedup?

BY DEAN HAZLEWOOD
AND NAOMI CRAINE

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina—Last November the textile company we work for, Pillowtex (formerly Fieldcrest Cannon), filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Company spokespeople claimed that the debt relief they would thereby gain would allow them to “trade their way out of debt.”

This announcement—and the short work hours that followed—has been a great source of discussion on the job, as workers try to figure out what it means for us. We’re beginning to find out. On May 15 company officials announced “restructuring” moves

UNION TALK

to help “save the company.” This included closing a plant in Columbus, Georgia, and one of five plants in the Kannapolis area, affecting 390 workers. In addition, they will permanently lay off nearly 400 workers at Plant 1 in Kannapolis, which produces towels and employs about 3,500 people.

Over the following weeks management also announced job combinations and other moves to impose a speedup for those who remain at Plant 1. For example, machine operators in towel sewing are now expected to do some tasks previously done in packaging. In the slasher department, where warp threads are prepared for weaving, the helpands are being reorganized so that work that was previously done by six people will now be done by five. Similar changes are being pushed through at nearly every stage of production.

After a 25-year unionization fight and several votes, Pillowtex workers in this area won representation by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in June 1999. This was an historic victory. North Carolina has the lowest unionization rate in the country, and the fight of labor to organize here, as in the rest of the South, has been historically intertwined with the fight against racist discrimination.

The local press promotes the notion that the union victory is one of the causes of Pillowtex’s current financial problems. An article in the *Charlotte Observer* shortly after the latest layoffs claimed, “Some Pillowtex workers whisper that union demands for higher pay and better benefits may have helped drive Pillowtex further into debt

and ultimately job cuts.” The author implies that because the company can lay people off having a union is of small consequence.

But we should reject these false arguments. Now is the time to build and use the union, as many recent skirmishes on the shop floor demonstrate.

Over the last several months petitions and grievances in some departments have forced the company to back off demands to meet unreasonable productivity quotas. In one case where the bosses wrote up nearly everyone in a department for not making rate, the write-ups were eventually dropped. On some jobs in both the towel sewing and washcloth departments, workers won better production rates that allow them to take their breaks.

Last November, when workers at three Pillowtex plants in this area were laid off for several weeks, the union negotiated for the company to pay full insurance premiums during the shutdown, and to pay bonuses to workers who returned after the lay-off. The agreement to waive premium co-pays has since been extended to all employees who work less than 24 hours in a week. The usual practice has been to deduct double premiums from paychecks upon a return to work, which hit workers with children particularly hard.

In a number of cases the company has also been forced to take back union activists the bosses tried to fire.

The layoffs at Pillowtex take place in the context of a deepening recession in the manufacturing sector of the U.S. economy. This trend has been sharp in North Carolina, especially in the textile industry. Manufacturing employment in this state fell by 10.4 percent over the last five years; in textile the drop was 26.8 percent. Unemployment figures released in May reveal that among the nation’s 51 largest metropolitan areas the Greensboro/Winston-Salem area recorded the biggest increase in its unemployment rate since last year, and the Charlotte/Gastonia/Rock Hill area was in second place. Among 331 metropolitan areas listed, the rise in joblessness in Hickory—from 1.9 percent to 4.5 percent—was the second highest in the nation. These areas are all textile centers.

In the month of June, North Carolina led the nation in net job losses, with the number dropping by 11,600. Many of these were from textile plant closings. Recent layoffs include 350 workers at Doran Mills in Shelby, North Carolina; 1,000 at two Dyersburg Corp. mills in the eastern part of



Members of UNITE march in the Labor Day Parade in Charlotte, North Carolina in September 2000. The local press promotes the false notion that successful unionization drive in 1999 is one of the causes of Pillowtex’s current financial problems.

the state; and 575 at Cone Mills.

Cyclical downturns such as this are not a new phenomenon. They are part and parcel of the way the capitalist system works. Like many others, the textile industry is experiencing a crisis of overproduction, where the capitalists produce too many goods on the world market to be sold at a profit, leading them to try to cut costs and close plants to remain competitive and avoid bankruptcy. This is not necessarily a result of “bad management” but the lawful workings of capitalism.

Many company executives, politicians, and union officials alike promote the idea that the way out of the crisis is to enforce high tariffs on imported textiles. How often have we heard calls to protect “American jobs” from “going overseas”? In July the governors of North and South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia—the four largest textile-producing states—sent a letter to the White House appealing for President George Bush “to use every tool at your disposal” to limit textile imports, which they blame for the crisis.

Reject calls for protectionism

But fighting to save “our jobs” at “our company” in “our country” is an illusion. The bosses seek to save *their* companies—and the millions of dollars they have invested—by intensifying the exploitation of workers. They try to make us work faster and harder for the same or even less money. They threaten to and often do move plants in search of cheaper labor, and not only in the United States. Many garment and textile plants in northern Mexico have in fact closed recently—while others have opened in the southern part of that country where wages are lower.

This process will continue as long as the production and distribution of goods is carried out for the private profit of a few superwealthy families instead of to meet human needs. It is a permanent feature of capitalism. The solution to this crisis is not to look out for “our jobs” but to fight to defend the working conditions and living standards of toilers everywhere, and to build the working-class solidarity needed to overturn the profit system.

Steelworkers on strike in Alabama

Continued from Page 16

said, “They hired a lot of Mexican workers and tried to turn them against us and each other. The Mexicans are good workers and the company thought they could use that against us to push the incentive plan. But Mexican workers rebelled and 25 of them got written up for low production. They joined the union. That’s why we are strong today.”

Tim Mabry, 30, who has worked two years in the shipping department, noted, “If you put welders on incentive who have to do so much to make the rate, shippers who pull those orders will basically be put on incentive too.”

One young Black worker who asked that his name be omitted, said, “I hope the company knows that we are not budging. This struggle is not just about fighting off a concession contract, but also about regaining some of what we lost in previous contracts.”

There are several demands along those

The unions are the basic organizations that workers form to defend ourselves. As the crisis of capitalism deepens and the bosses’ attacks on us sharpen, we will need to transform these organizations into revolutionary tools that can advance the social interests of the entire working class and other toilers, such as farmers, not just workers in one factory or one industry.

A basic program along these lines is contained in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. Barnes explains why the working class and labor movement in the United States should campaign for Washington to “lift all tariffs and other obstacles to trade and travel erected by the U.S. rulers” against the semicolonial countries as well as their rivals in other imperialist countries such as Germany and Japan. These are simply trade weapons wielded with often devastating consequences by the U.S. government under the banner of “free trade.”

Along with that, we should “demand that Washington and other imperialist governments and financial institutions immediately cancel the foreign debt that has been imposed on the semicolonial countries,” Barnes writes. The total Third World debt today is over \$2 trillion and the effects on the working people of these countries is horrific.

To defend the conditions and solidarity of the working class and other toilers in face of rising joblessness we should also fight for demands such as:

- A massive program of government-funded public works to ensure jobs for all at union scale;
- A shorter workweek and increase in the minimum wage, to be applied universally;
- That all wages be covered by full and automatic cost of living protection and that these adjustments be extended to all pension, health, workers comp, welfare, and unemployment checks; and
- An end to farm foreclosures and guarantees of cheap credit and a living income for working farmers.

This is a program that can unite workers and farmers here and internationally against our common exploiters.

Dean Hazlewood and Naomi Craine are members of UNITE Local 1501.

Strikers hold strong in New Zealand

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

TIMARU, New Zealand—At the end of five weeks on strike against the Sanford fish factory here, workers are continuing their fight for a new contract. Service and Food Workers Union (SFWU) delegate Jane King explained that they have not had a decent offer from the employers. The latest offer by the company was a 7 percent wage increase over 20 months with some minor improvements in working conditions. This was overwhelmingly rejected in a vote of 43 to 2 by the strikers here. It was also resoundingly defeated in Bluff, where 36 workers, the entire factory, are locked out by management.

The mood on the picket line remains confident. Gerald, who is a fish filleter, said, “Make it plain that we’re still strong.” Mal, who has been a general hand for the past 18 months, said, we’re “not going back until we get what we want.”

The workers estimate that in Timaru about half the workers on day shift and three-quarters of the night shift are crossing the picket lines. The night shift was about 20-25 workers before the walkout began. Sanford is one of New Zealand’s larger fishing companies with factories throughout the country. In 2000 it reported a profit of NZ\$54.5 million (NZ\$1=US 40 cents).

The key issues in the strike remain the wage rate and a contract that covers both

the Timaru and Bluff factories. The workers are looking for parity with other fish workers, such as those at the Sealord factory in Nelson. King said that this would mean an increase of about \$2 an hour for fish packers. After eight years as a top grade packer she earns NZ\$10.68 an hour.

Many of those on strike had applied for emergency benefits from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ). But under pressure from Sanford’s South Island manager, Ted Culley, WINZ has withdrawn all benefits. A few who were on casual contracts, which have now expired, can get benefits.

The strikers are winning support from other unions and the community. On July 14, some 200 people marched through the main street of Timaru supporting the strike. Lesley Grieve, the union organizer, explained that in the last seven days they have received NZ\$8,500 in donations from other SFWU locals.

The Council of Trade Unions, the national union federation, has called on affiliated unions to financially support Sanford workers at Bluff and Timaru. Workers in Timaru are organizing a garage sale August 4 and have distributed leaflets around the town asking for donations for the sale.

Annalucia Vermunt is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.

Miami forum responds to cop brutality

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI—"White people, Black people, yellow people are coming together to win justice," declared Minister Germaine, a leader of the Haitian rights organization Veye Yo, as he welcomed 55 people to a Militant Labor Forum here July 14. Veye Yo made its headquarters available for the forum, which was on the struggle against police brutality.

The meeting was called in response to a wave of police killings in this city. The largest demonstrations against the cops have been in the case of Marc Dorvil, a Haitian-American carpenter who died in police custody. Veye Yo has played a prominent part in demanding justice for Dorvil. Numerous Veye Yo members were at the meeting, which was translated into Creole and Spanish.

A student from Edison High School in the Little Haiti community of Miami came and videotaped the program to show at school the next week. Nearly half the forum participants were youth, including a half-dozen activists from Food Not Bombs, who came from as far away as West Palm Beach. Some said they learned about the meeting when a fellow high school student sent an e-mail to them with the forum announcement. Several people planning to attend the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange in Havana also showed up, as well as other members of the Miami Coalition to End the Embargo of Cuba.

Supporters of Brothers of the Same Mind, an organization of ex-convicts, and of the Coalition Against Police Brutality and Harassment, were present. Both groups have been active in speaking out against police violence in the Black community. Members of the Haitian Women's Association came, with a display on the work of their organization. Activists from the Miami Workers Center, currently involved in a fight to raise the minimum wage, also participated.

Argiris Malapanis, a meat packer, chaired the forum and introduced Frances Sesler as the first speaker. Sesler is from Brooksville, Florida. Her family was part of the lawsuit of Black farmers against race discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In April of this year, Sesler's youngest son Demitres was shot dead by Minneapolis police.

Sesler began by passing through the audience a large photograph of Demitres with his daughter. An independent autopsy requested by the family "clearly states my son

was shot and he was shot in the back.... He did not deserve to die a death like this," Sesler told the meeting. The police, she continued, "are only trained to point their guns and shoot you. These policemen should be prosecuted. They continue to build more jails, but I say, let them put the cops in jail!"

Max Rameau, from the Coalition Against Police Brutality and Harassment, was the next speaker. He expressed the view that "a police state has been put in place in the United States.... We need to work on neutralizing the police in our city."

Prosecute and jail cops

Mike Italie, a garment worker and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, also spoke. Italie said as a candidate he is demanding the cops involved in all the recent killings in this city be prosecuted and sent to jail. He noted that another related case is that of five Cubans convicted here of "spying" recently, in a blatant frame-up and violation of democratic rights. The five should be freed, said Italie.

Marleine Bastien, leader of the Haitian Women's Association, was the final speaker. "They want to criminalize and dehumanize" those the police kill, she said, to justify their actions. Several speakers in the discussion related their own experience with the Miami police. Eugene LaFontant, a young Black man, described going to jail for six years on a trumped-up robbery charge.

Leroy Jones, a leader of Brothers of the Same Mind, said, "Crime is up—crime committed by the police against our people." He noted that one of the Miami cops' so-called anti-crime programs, "Operation Clean Slate," resulted in the arrest of 8,400 people in two months, all on misdemeanor charges. "We cannot trust the police to police themselves," said Marleine Bastien, "We need some body to do that."

Rameau proposed the body to do that be a civilian review board of the police, with power to subpoena evidence and fire cops. Rameau said that in his opinion "there is too much support for police programs right now; the majority of the white community supports them." A participant from the audience questioned that, noting that among whites who are workers, police brutality is also a reality. Frances Sesler noted, "If we as a people come together and we are strong, we might find out there are more people behind us."

Italie described his experience at the garment plant where he works at the time of

the funeral of Marc Dorvil. There was considerable discussion among co-workers about attending the service, and he and several others eventually did so. "We need more protests against the police," said Italie, "especially those that can win support of working people and our unions. These are the forces capable of fighting and winning."

Civilian review boards have proven not effective against cop violence, the socialist candidate explained. Demanding the pros-

ecution and jailing of the cops has been effective, as in the case of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima, who was tortured by New York City police. The main cop involved in that case was sentenced to 30 years in prison. "However, we need a political perspective that goes beyond each demonstration," Italie explained. "We need a socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of those who control the cops and places it in the hands of workers and farmers."

Company thugs attack food workers picket site in Chicago



Militant/Cappy Kidd

Teamsters strike leader Mario Pallares surveys damage by thugs at picket site. Refusing to be intimidated, strikers have doubled size of picket lines at each gate.

The following statement was issued July 22 by Joel Britton, Illinois chairperson of the Socialist Workers Party. Britton works in a meatpacking plant and is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

On Saturday, July 21, I joined with members of Teamster Local 703 on strike against V & V Supremo Food Products at Throop Street near Cermak Avenue. A half hour ear-

lier this site had been the scene of a violent attack by five strikebreaker thugs employed by the company. Strikers reported to me that these scabs had stormed out of the company's cheese production plant at 21st Street and Damen Avenue and threatened picketers with a club and beer bottles. The thugs named several strikers and demanded to know where they were, stating, "When we find them we are going to kill them."

When the strikers held their ground and refused to be provoked, the scabs proceeded to the Throop Street location where they smashed three windows of a car parked where the strikers normally picket and trashed the strikers' water dispensing station and literature table.

These threats and violent attacks on the right to organize should be protested by the entire labor movement.

Supremo's attack comes one month after the workers won a favorable ruling by the National Labor Relations Board upholding the validity of recent elections where a majority of the workers voted to join the Teamsters union. And the attack comes one week after brigades of strikers distributed leaflets calling for a boycott of Supremo products at the large gathering that came to hear Mexican president Vicente Fox.

Since the strike began on May 29, strikers and their supporters have faced constant surveillance by camera-toting company guards who video and photograph strikers' activities. Refusing to be intimidated by the spying and the scab attack, strike leaders have decided to double the size of their picket lines at each gate.

Among the strikers' materials that were scattered into the street was a leaflet announcing a "Mass Rally" timed for the kickoff of the annual Fiesta del Sol street fair in the Mexican immigrant community of Pilsen. The leaflet states, "Pilsen Defends the Right of all Workers to Organize" and demands "The Right of all Workers to form a Union, Immigration Reform, and Quality Education and Health Care for All."

The rally is called by the Pilsen Neighbors Council and will take place Thursday, July 26 at 5:30 p.m. at Carpenter St. and Cermak Avenue. I will participate in this rally and join the strikers' picket lines, and urge my co-workers and other unionists to do likewise.

Solidarity with the V & V Supremo strikers! Condemn the pro-company's brutal thug attack! An injury to one is an injury to all!

'Lumumba' sparks interest in Pathfinder titles

BY ELIZABETH LARISCY

LOS ANGELES—"Thomas Sankara! I have to have this book, I love him," said a young Nigerian viewing the Pathfinder books on display in the lobby of the theater in Beverly Hills on the opening night of *Lumumba*.

Director Raoul Peck spoke and answered questions about his film after the showing. The movie has received an enthusiastic response from people around the world because of interest in the legacy of Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba, he said, but the story has been repeated many times throughout Africa and Latin America

where "imperialism has organized to overthrow democratically-elected governments."

In an interview published in the *LA Weekly*, which chose *Lumumba* as its "pick of the week" film, Peck said, "It's a film about today, about trying to get a sense that we are on the same planet, that we all have the same hopes. The '60s were really 10 years of hope for everywhere in the world...all those leaders who knew each other—Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Lumumba. Malcolm X repeatedly spoke of Lumumba in his speeches; Lumumba was an inspiration to him. The world was going to change. That was the great hope. The film is about that, too."

Many people who went to see the movie, which is a contribution to the true history of the Congolese struggle for independence, were also interested in Pathfinder books. At two showings at theaters in Beverly Hills and Pasadena, moviegoers bought 32 copies of Pathfinder's newly reissued *Revolution in the Congo*, three copies of *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, and other revolutionary titles by Maurice Bishop, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Jack Barnes. Two people purchased subscriptions to the *Militant*, and others expressed interest in attending the Militant Labor Forum at the Pathfinder Bookstore in Los Angeles to have further discussion on world politics.

Elizabeth Lariscy is a garment worker in Los Angeles.

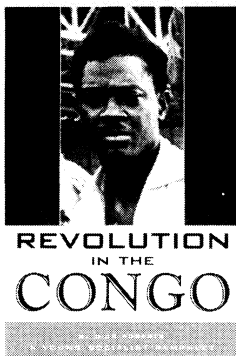
BY SUSAN LAMONT

AUBURN, Alabama—Five socialist workers from Birmingham and Atlanta participated in the Southern Girls Convention, held here at Auburn University June 22. Some 500

Newly reissued by Pathfinder

Revolution in the Congo

By Dick Roberts Describes the struggle against Belgian colonial rule, the 1960 independence victory of the Congolese workers and farmers under the leadership of Patrice Lumumba, the role, under UN cover, of Washington and other imperialist powers in the overthrow and assassination of Lumumba, and the continuing freedom struggles there in the early 1960s. \$3



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

'In Cuba we have confidence in human beings'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND JACK WILLEY

HAVANA—Some 1.2 million people poured into the streets of this capital city July 26 to demonstrate their support for their socialist revolution and condemn Washington's ongoing economic and political war against them. The huge march snaked along Havana's seafront boulevard, the Malecón, demonstratively passing the U.S. Interests Section here.

Among the marchers was a group of 180 young people from the United States, visiting this country to learn firsthand about the Cuban Revolution. They were taking part in the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, a 10-day visit sponsored by the Federation of University Students (FEU), Union of Young Communists (UJC), and other youth groups on the island.

Contingents of workers, farmers, high school and university students, members of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, and others took part in the march, many carrying colorful banners and Cuban flags. The red-and-black flag of the July 26 Movement, which led working people in Cuba to revolutionary victory in 1959, hung from the apartment buildings, factories, and offices throughout the capital.

The rally, which coincided with demonstrations throughout the island, celebrated the 48th anniversary of the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada army barracks in Santiago and the garrison in nearby Bayamo by a group of revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro. The bold attack marked the beginning of the revolutionary struggle that culminated with the overthrow of a U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba and the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas.

The youth from the United States, mostly college students, with several high school youth and a few workers, marched along with other international contingents, including from Puerto Rico, Quebec, and Europe.

Learning about revolutionary Cuba

The July 26 rally was one of many events the U.S. delegation attended. They met with delegates to a municipal assembly of People's Power, the country's legislature; went to the Latin American School of Medicine; and visited Havana's psychiatric hospital, among other sites in Havana.

They also visited the Bay of Pigs, where 40 years ago Cuba's working people inflicted a crushing defeat on a U.S.-organized invasion by 1,500 Cuban mercenaries. Afterward they traveled to Santa Clara, visiting the memorial and museum dedicated to



Militant/Martín Koppel

At School of Social Work, Raidery González, 17, explains how Cuban students work with youth who are neither working nor in school. "We should not solve problems through the police, but by finding social solutions," said UJC leader Javier Labrada.

Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution. Guevara led a Rebel Army column to take Santa Clara in December 1958, the battle that sealed the fate of the Batista regime.

One highlight of the Youth Exchange was a meeting with students at the School of Social Work, established last year in Cojimar, east of Havana. Javier Labrada, a member of the National Bureau of the UJC, explained that the school is part of a campaign launched by the revolutionary leadership last year to organize brigades of youth to go to the worst-off working-class neighborhoods to learn firsthand about their conditions and work together with neighborhood residents to solve some of the pressing social problems they face—above all, the problem of teenagers who are neither going to school nor working.

This revolutionary political initiative, Labrada said, comes at a time when Cuba has been gradually recovering from the severe economic crisis of the 1990s, sparked by the collapse of favorable trade with and aid from the Soviet Union. Having weathered this crisis and emerging stronger, Cuba has been able to take some political steps forward to advance a socialist course.

Youth brigades to poor neighborhoods

The school had already graduated its first class of 513 and was about to graduate 565 in the second class, explained Raidery González, 17, who was going to graduate the

following week. She told the *Militant* that the students are mostly youth like herself who were unable to enter college for a variety of reasons, particularly the curtailed admissions dictated by the shortage of material resources resulting from the economic crisis. The students undergo an intensive six-month course, and then are admitted to a six-year university program of practicing social work in the community five days a week and going to the university on Saturdays.

González explained that a layer of youth today between the ages of 16 and 20 have become alienated and have not completed their education beyond the mandatory ninth grade. The goal of the social work campaigns is to work with these youth, as well as their families, to convince them to enroll in technical, skilled trades, or pre-university schools.

Alexander Valentín, one of the panelists, said, "We've been successful in part because of our age. These youth see we've gone through the same hard times and problems as they have. We visit the families one by one, block by block, and get to know them. As Fidel insisted, we are not interested in issuing statistics on unemployment—we're interested in meeting the human beings themselves and taking action."

In some cases the students have obtained solutions to material problems, such as food supplements for families with low-weight babies, or economic benefits for women raising children by themselves.

"This has been a real learning experience for us," González said.

Meeting with members of the University Brigades of Social Workers after the July 26 rally, Cuban president Fidel Castro said that to build a new society based on solidarity, "we need that new man and woman Che talked about." He stated, "You are helping to create that new man and woman, to build the society we are dreaming of."

The exchange with the youth from the United States covered a range of topics. They asked several questions about problems they were familiar with in the United States, from prostitution—which has re-emerged in Cuba over the past decade, largely around the tourist hotels—to child abuse, which several Cuban participants said was not a social phenomenon as it is in the capitalist world.

Socialism vs. prisons

Jack Willey from New York remarked on the contrast between revolutionary Cuba, where working-class power reinforces social solidarity, and capitalist rule in the United States. Under the Clinton administration the U.S. government eliminated Aid to Families with Dependent Children and chipped away at other aspects of workers' social wage. The bipartisan government assault has also escalated attacks on democratic rights, such as the recent frame-up case against five Cuban citizens convicted on spy charges because of their efforts to infiltrate and expose U.S.-backed anti-Cuba terrorists operating out of Florida. A major political campaign in defense of the five is under way in Cuba.

In reply to a question by Willey, Labrada referred to a current discussion about how to address the problem of crime without relying primarily on police and prisons. Many of those in jail today are there for committing theft, he said, a problem that grew with the economic and social crisis of the 1990s. "We cannot and should not solve these problems through the police, but by finding social solutions," Labrada said.

Agreeing with a young man from Philadelphia who had described how the degrading system of welfare and social workers in the United States treats people like numbers, not human beings, the UJC leader commented, "In Cuba we have confidence in human beings. That is why we are convinced we can work with most youth who today are in jail" and release them.

In an interview in Villa Clara, Miguel Díaz Canel, first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party in the central province of Las Villas, explained that with the initial success of the school in Cojimar, four more schools of social work will be opened around the country, including in Santa Clara.

Commenting on the debate on police and prisons, Díaz Canel said, "We think that socialism must be a socialism without prisons." He described how the social work volunteers are working with alienated youth who are prone to get in trouble with the law; with the families of these youth, which often face problems themselves; and with youth already in prison, including the possibility of early release or moving them to farms as an alternative to prison walls.

For youth in prison, Díaz Canel said, "we try to offer them opportunities to educate

Continued on next page

Farm groups promote 'food sovereignty' forum

Continued from front page

of people who face a situation of permanent hunger, estimated at that time at 800 million. "Barely five years later, not only is that goal considered unrealizable, but the number of starving people in the world has increased.

"This failure to carry through indicates the inadequacy of the policies carried out by many governments that clearly do not guarantee the elementary human right to food."

ANAP calls "on individuals and organizations from around the world to participate in the World Forum for Food Sovereignty...with the aim of denouncing those processes that block food sovereignty for many countries, as well as the use of food as a political and economic weapon to subjugate people."

The ANAP Call says, "Keeping in mind that the exclusionary logic of the markets cannot guarantee food security, the job of the Forum of Havana will be to express the opinions and aspirations of the people in search of food sovereignty."

ANAP "calls on all peasant, indigenous, and cooperative organizations, NGOs [non-governmental organizations], and agencies of the world that are motivated by this important topic to share the dreams and hopes that we have for the new millennium."

The meeting in Havana in September is in preparation for a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) meeting in Rome later in the fall.

The endorsement statement of the Family Farm Defenders is signed by Wisconsin dairy farmer Francis Goodman, on behalf of the board and members of the organization. It states that the group "wholeheartedly supports the concept of food sover-

eignty" and the call for the meeting in Havana. It goes on to state, "Family Farm Defenders supports the position of La Via Campesina, the international small farmers organization, on food sovereignty and together with them we call for food and all of agriculture to be taken out of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreements. Family Farm Defenders rejects the use of food as a weapon to subjugate peoples by starvation and the destruction of their local economy and culture."

The statement concludes, "As an organi-

zation we plan to be represented at the World Forum on Food Sovereignty called by the National Association of Small Farmers of Cuba, to share our ideas, to listen, to learn, and to support an alternative to the globalization and corporatization of food and agriculture."

The Family Farm Defenders has arranged to travel to Cuba on a September 2-9 trip that will be licensed by the U.S. Treasury Department. Other farm organizations and individuals can join this effort by contacting Francis Goodman soon at (608) 489-3104 or by E-mail: fgoodman@mwt.net

MILITANT AND PERSPECTIVA MUNDIAL TAX REFUND

Turn your upcoming federal income tax refund into something the Democrats and Republicans never planned on: a way to deepen the struggle and education of working people against capitalist exploitation and oppression.

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The IRS has begun notifying people of the size of their tax rebate. Your contributions—small and large—will enable us to keep getting these working-class weapons into the hands of those who need them.

Tens of millions of working people will receive nothing because their earnings were so low they did not pay

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Reports reveal Israeli war plans

Continued from front page

the cabinet table," observed the report, "but also inside key Israeli institutions, including the army and the Shin Bet, the domestic security service."

The CBS News report said the Israeli government is prepared for a regional military response. "Israel's Arab neighbors, Syria, Jordan and Egypt are expected to stay out of the fight," the CBS article said, but the Jane's report "considers the possibility that Iraq might try to intervene with troops, who would be destroyed by the Israeli air force. It also states that Egypt could invade the Sinai peninsula, forcing Israel to call up its reserves."

Less than two weeks before the story, Israeli warplanes had struck a Syrian radar installation inside Lebanon, the second such attack since April. The raid was "in keeping with a new retaliatory policy of targeting Syrian military sites in Lebanon," reported the *New York Times*.

The *Economist* discussed some of these developments in an article entitled "Prospects of War" in its July 21 issue. "As Israel's tanks encircled Bethlehem at mid-

estinian struggle has won mass support.

"It's interesting for Americans to watch the evolution of this conflict because this is what happens when one state is militarily and economically dominant over its rivals," Brooks wrote. "The rivals give up even trying to compete on the battlefield or in the marketplace. Instead, they challenge the very idea of the dominant power. And the people in that dominant power have to do something that is very difficult for a bourgeois democracy. They have to remind themselves of the ideals for which their nation was founded...."

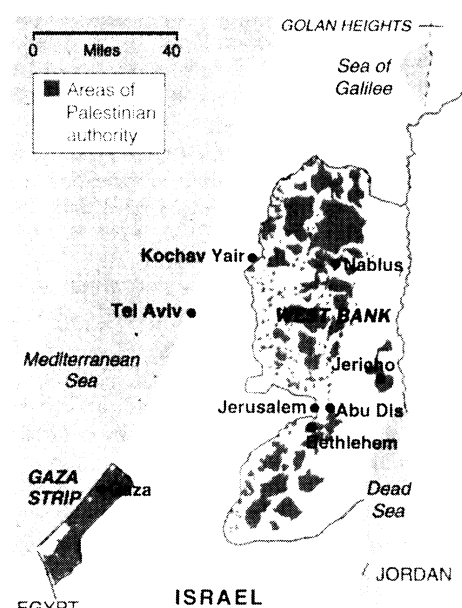
"America, the world's dominant power, may soon face this kind of challenge," stated Brooks. Aiming to supply his readers with arguments for supporting Israel for the long haul, and looking forward to deeper social conflicts and wars involving the United States, he denied that the conflict has anything to do with land or the forcible denial of Palestinian nationhood. Rather, he says, it is "a war over moral visions.... over [the] intangibles" of Israeli nationalism and Palestinian nationalism.

"In the end," he wrote, "the new Israeli patriotism is more admirable. For while Palestinian nationalism looks a lot like 19th-century blood and soil nationalism (laced with a large dollop of Islamic fundamentalism), Israeli nationalism is...a patriotism infused with democratic pride, and with respect for individual opportunity." He marveled that the Israeli people "seem able to be patriots as well as yuppies."

'U.S. role is clear'

"The role for the United States is clear," Brooks concluded: "to stand with the democratic nationalists over the blood and soil nationalists.... The struggle will be long, and it will force the people in the area and the American people to come to grips with the full implications of their political ideals."

The announcement of the cease-fire on June 13 led to only a short-lived reduction in the conflict. The period has been marked by increased pressure by the Israeli government and Washington on Palestinian leader Arafat to arrest members of the Hamas organization and others involved in attacks on Israeli territory—including those suspected of planning such attacks. Tel Aviv demands that all signs of Palestinian resistance be suspended for a full week "before it will relax economic and travel restrictions on Palestinians and resume talks," reported the July 3 *New York Times*.



Map shows scattered Palestinian areas in West Bank and Gaza Strip.

week," went the report, "suspicions were reawakened that its army could be laying out a contingency plan for an all-out assault on the Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel denies this, insisting that however vigorous its military actions—including the helicopter rocketing of Palestinian targets, tank fire and incursions into Palestinian territory—it is still only responding to, or preempting, Palestinian attacks." However, noted the article, "Israeli talk of 'self-restraint' has subsided and the right is pushing for war."

"War is the temper of the moment," stated the *Economist*. It described how in the previous week "the Israeli army laid siege to Palestinian towns and villages, commandeered Palestinian homes and snatched 'wanted' men from PA-controlled areas."

Hanan Ashrawi, a well-known Palestinian leader and spokesperson for the Arab League, described Tel Aviv's policy as "a systematic war, daily and incremental and debilitating. It's an attempt to put into effect a war plan by an occupying military force against an occupied people without the negative responses that would accompany any kind of sudden or dramatic escalation." More than 650 people have been killed since the conflict escalated in late September—almost four Palestinians to every one Israeli.

Republican journalist initiates debate

Republican Party ideologue David Brooks addressed the potential for a major war and its implications for the U.S. ruling class in "The Death of Compromise—There's no more middle in the Middle East." The article appeared in the July 2 issue of the *Weekly Standard*—a publication closely associated with the National Committee of the Republican Party.

"The Middle East conflict has been polarized and simplified," Brooks wrote. Brushing aside the political and social divisions that exist today among the people of Israel, he stated that "almost all Israelis of left, right, and center are unified behind the proposition that Israel must fight to defend its moral legitimacy." Similarly, he admitted, the Pal-



Palestinians defend themselves against Israeli soldiers in Nablus in March. Revelations about Israeli plans for massive offensive underscore irreconcilable interests of Palestinians and Israel's rulers.

Israeli security forces have maintained their suffocating regime of checkpoints around Palestinian areas, and have continued to use bulldozers to level Palestinian housing and clear their lines of fire. Helicopter gunships have struck down a number of Palestinian officials and activists, in keeping with the government's defense of its policy of assassinations.

For their part, Palestinians have continued to mount protests and armed resistance against the occupation, often pouring into the streets during the frequent funerals for the victims of attacks by the Israeli security forces, or seizing other opportunities to assert their nationhood.

Around 20 people took part in an armed demonstration July 24 outside the home of the military intelligence officer of the Palestinian Authority government headed by Arafat. They protested the PA's arrest of several people on charges of disorder. The crowd included members of the Fatah movement associated with Arafat.

Call for foreign monitors

The Bush administration, which initiated the cease-fire negotiations, announced in late July that it will send a team of monitors to the region once a "sustained period of quiet" has taken hold. Earlier officials of the G-8 group of major imperialist powers passed a resolution calling for "foreign observers" to be sent to the area. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations in Washington had previously rejected calls by Palestinian representatives for a "neutral" observer force to be established between the two sides.

"The proposal for a U.S. monitoring team would inject the Bush administration into

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a new and novel way and reflects the alarm that many U.S. officials feel about the 10-month surge of violence," reported Alan Sipress in the *Washington Post*. Israeli defense minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer responded to the G-8 resolution by saying that "if this will be forced upon us, I will live with the presence of the monitors of the Americans."

Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership has launched an effort to counter the depiction by Israeli and U.S. spokespeople of the breakdown of negotiations in 2000 as being due to Palestinian refusal to compromise. "The biggest lie of the last three decades is...that [then-Israeli prime minister Ehud] Barak offered everything [and] the Palestinians refused everything," said Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Korei July 23.

Korei emphasized that the territorial concessions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip offered by Barak at negotiations at Camp David last July "would have carved Israeli-controlled cantons out of the West Bank and dashed any hopes for a viable, territorially contiguous Palestinian state," reported the *Washington Post*.

In a recent interview with the *New York Times*, Arafat presented his view of the negotiators with the Israeli regime. The Israeli government, he said, says it must "control the Jordan Valley, with five early warning stations there. They have to control the air above, the water aquifers below, the sea and the borders. They have to divide the West Bank in three cantons. They keep 10 percent of it for settlements and roads and their forces. No sovereignty over Haram al Sharif. And refugees, we didn't have a serious discussion about."

Cuban and U.S. youth meet in exchange

Continued from previous page

themselves, such as the University for All, through which they can even obtain a university degree while they are serving their sentences."

The University for All is a nationally televised program of courses made available to people of all ages. Broadcast daily, classes are offered in English, French, history, geography, art appreciation, and literary criticism, among other subjects.

On the final two days of the Youth Exchange, the Cuban hosts organized panel discussions taking up a variety of subjects. Panelists included Otto Rivero, first secretary of the UJC; Hassán Pérez, president of FEU; and Javier Dueñas, a leader of the social work campaign and new editor of the University of Havana cultural magazine *Alma Mater*. Also speaking were Randy Alonso, moderator of daily televised roundtable discussions on a variety of subjects on world politics; Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly; and, in a special highlight, Cuban president Castro.

'Battle of ideas'

Kenia Serrano, a member of the UJC's National Bureau, explained that over the past

year and a half the revolutionary leadership has been spearheading a "battle of ideas" for a socialist course as an alternative to the dog-eat-dog values that go with capitalism.

This effort, Serrano said, was launched in December 1999 as part of the mass mobilizations of the Cuban people to demand that Washington return the Cuban child Elián González to his country. That campaign led to the daily roundtables and weekly Anti-Imperialist Tribunals, which today continue to be used to educate about Washington's implacable hostility to revolutionary Cuba and other aspects of imperialism.

This battle for ideas, intertwined with a fight for a "rounded, general culture" to broaden the knowledge and cultural level of the Cuban people, includes the social work campaign, the University for All, an effort to generalize computer literacy and place computers in every school in the island, and a campaign to train elementary school teachers and art instructors.

The U.S. delegates commented on and asked about a range of questions spurred by their visit to Cuba. These included the fight for women's equality; how to combat the negative social consequences of tourism, such as prostitution and capitalist influences

on culture; Cuba's internationalist solidarity; and how Washington uses its immigration policy against Cuba.

Fidel Castro took part in the windup session of the youth exchange, answering questions from U.S. delegates on topics ranging from combating illegal drug use to the fight to raise the level of culture as part of the working-class fight for socialism. (Coverage of his remarks will appear in a coming issue.)

Castro noted that 10 of the U.S. delegates at this youth exchange had participated in the first exchange in 1996. He urged everyone present, on their return to the United States, to speak to others about their experiences in Cuba in order to build for and participate in a third exchange in July 2003.

Seth Dellinger, from New York, said the eight members of his local group upon returning were enthusiastically welcomed at the airport by a number of supporters. They are now planning several events at colleges, churches, and elsewhere to report on the truth about the Cuban Revolution.

Asked about what he learned in Cuba, Dellinger replied, "The Second Declaration of Havana says, 'What does the Cuban Revolution teach? That revolution is possible.' Well, I experienced that reality firsthand."

Beneath organic farming hype is hostility to science alien to interests of workers, farmers

First of four parts

BY STEVE CLARK

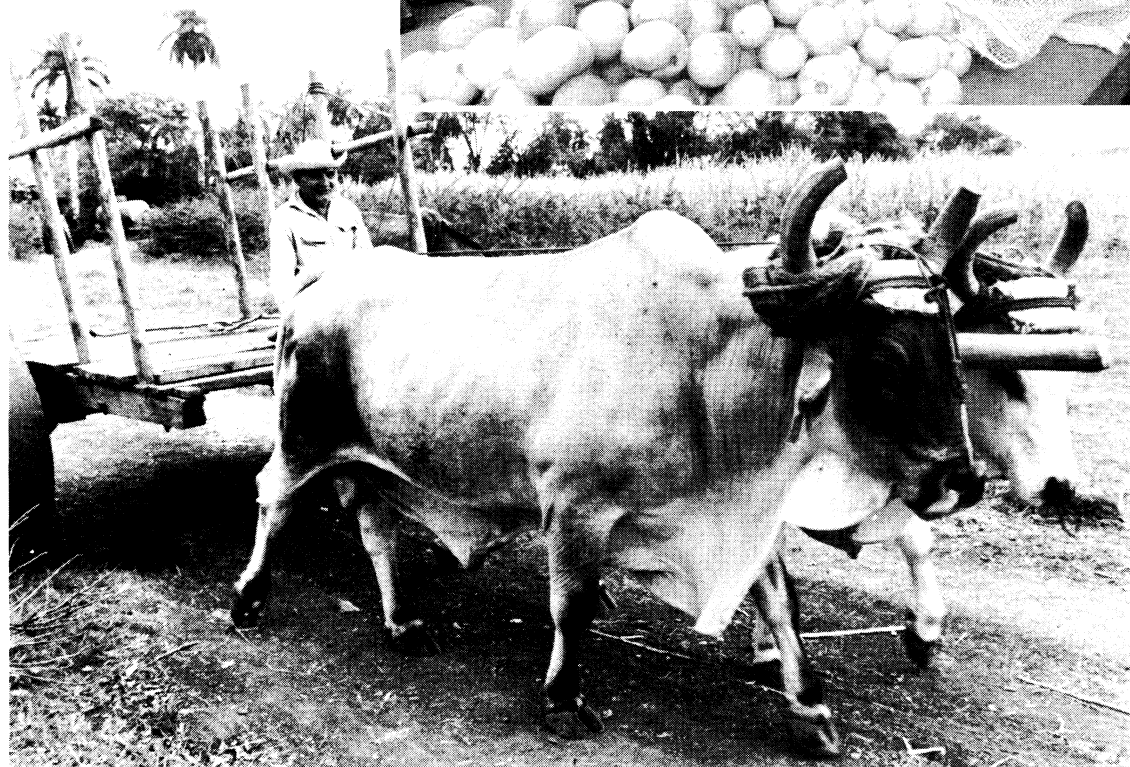
Karl Butts makes a good point concerning the final paragraph of an article in the July 2 issue of the *Militant*. Paraphrasing an interview with the director of an urban vegetable-growing cooperative in Havana, correspondent Joel Britton wrote that "the director explained that as in other large urban gardens they began using substitutes for chemical pesticides and fertilizers by necessity during the Special Period, but now it is by choice."

Butts is right in saying that "by reporting this particular statement" at the conclusion of the article, the socialist press can seem to be giv-



Militant photos by Argiris Malapanis

Top, farmers market in Havana, where over half of fresh produce is now grown in urban gardens. In early 1990s, collapse of trade patterns and tightened U.S. embargo forced farmers in Cuba to idle tractors for lack of fuel and parts. "Few if any Cuban toilers would call use of oxen to plow anything but a dire necessity—one they intend to put behind them as soon as conditions allow." Left, cooperative in Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1994.



keep machinery running. Workers and farmers turned decisively to the use of substitutes for fertilizers and pesticides. For example, they began using bagasso, a by-product of sugar production, as fertilizer."

Prior to 1990 trade with the Soviet Union and with other countries in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance had accounted for 85 percent of Cuba's foreign trade, much of it on favorable terms. With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the USSR, Cuba no longer had any buffer against the shocks of the world capitalist market. Over these same years, both Republican and Democratic administrations intensified Washington's economic warfare against Cuba as well.

During the hardest years of that crisis in the opening half of the 1990s, for example, farm-related consumption of diesel fuel and other petroleum-based energy sources was cut in half in Cuba—forcing farmers to idle tractors and other machinery and build up the nation's ox herd. The application of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides dropped by 80 percent. Imports of wheat and other grains fell by 50 percent, and the drop-off in many other imported food products was even steeper.

As Britton explained, one important way the revolutionary government responded to the resulting food shortages was through organizing working people to establish urban gardens—often established as cooperatives—to produce vegetables and fruits for an expanding network of farmers markets in Havana and other cities. During the trip, Britton and other conference participants visited three such gardens in the Havana area organized as Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPCs).

More than 50 percent of Havana's fresh produce is now provided by these urban gardens, which also provide work for some 60,000 Cubans.

Given the large concentrations of people living around the gardens, the Cuban government, as Butts points out in his letter, prohibits the use of certain chemical fertilizers or pesticides within the city limits.

In face of sharply reduced imports as well as national health regulations, the Cuban government over the past decade has organized farmers and workers to use substitute inputs in much of agricultural production. Centers have been established across the island to produce enriched compost and rock phosphates to replace manufactured fertilizers. Natural predators are being used to control pests, together with pesticides and herbicides produced using bacteria and fungi.

Some of these methods presumably have few if any detrimental affects on crop yields and have longer-term benefits for the soil, the water, and the health of human beings and other creatures. Cuba, in fact, has begun selling a line of its biological pesticides and herbicides on the world market under the brand name Biasav.

No 'Golden Age'

As Butts points out, however, it is simply false that "Cuba generally chooses not to use chemicals in agricultural production."

Synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides are used in the production of Cuba's main export crop—sugar—as well as in the cultivation of rice, coffee, potatoes, and many other commodities.

Moreover, as improved economic conditions enable them to do so, the Cuban government and people will undoubtedly choose to return to the use of farm inputs and technologies that are safe, that increase the productivity of farm labor and reduce its backbreaking character, and that feed and clothe more people at lower cost.

In the name of protecting the environment, and sometimes in the name of defending the Cuban Revolution as well, some organizations and individuals in bourgeois and petty bourgeois political circles turn the crisis measures Cubans have been forced to take into some kind of return to an idyllic Golden Age.

An example is a February 2001 article by the CEO of the Vermont-based Gardener's Supply Company. "Cuba leads the developing world," he writes, "in small-scale composting, organic soil reclamation, irrigation and crop rotation research, animal powered traction (oxen) and other innovative practices."

To be sure, the accomplishments of Cuban workers and farmers during and after the Special Period offer striking confirmation of their commitment to the socialist revolution. What they achieved in face of onerous economic and social conditions is inconceivable in any other country in the world today.

While the harnessing of oxen to plow fields was an "innovative practice" in humanity's Neolithic Period 6,000 years ago, however, few if any Cuban toilers today would call it anything but a dire necessity—one they intend to put behind them as soon as conditions allow.

What does 'organic' mean?

The matters raised by Butts, however, go beyond the agricultural policies of the Cuban Revolution over the past decade. They pose one of the most fundamental questions of communist theory and practice: the transformation of nature by social labor, without which the fight by the working class to put an end to all forms of exploitation and oppression is a utopian illusion.

Karl Marx, the founding central leader of the modern revolutionary workers movement, wrote in *Capital* that

Labour is, first of all, a process between man and nature, a process by

ing "a certain political weight to the concept of organic production being preferable to that where 'chemicals' are used"—a view that is neither the editorial position of the *Militant* nor, I believe, the opinion of the author of that article. What's more, Butts points out, readers "may also come away thinking Cuba generally chooses not to use chemicals in agricultural production."

Britton visited Cuba in mid-May as a *Militant* correspondent to cover the 40th anniversary events of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). Together with Wisconsin dairy farmer Randy Jasper and Carolyn Lane of Minnesota, a member of

Food First, Britton also participated in the May 17–19 Fourth International Meeting on Organic Agriculture, sponsored by the Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians.

Cuba's achievements

As Britton explained in the article in the July 2 issue, "Many of the presentations at the conference centered on how Cuban farmers, supported by the country's revolutionary leadership, responded in the early 1990s to a sharp drop in the availability of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, as well as fuel and parts needed to

Capitalism's World Disorder

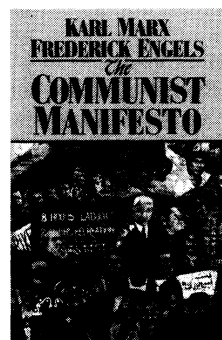
Jack Barnes

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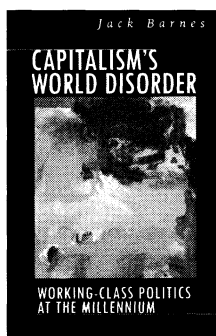


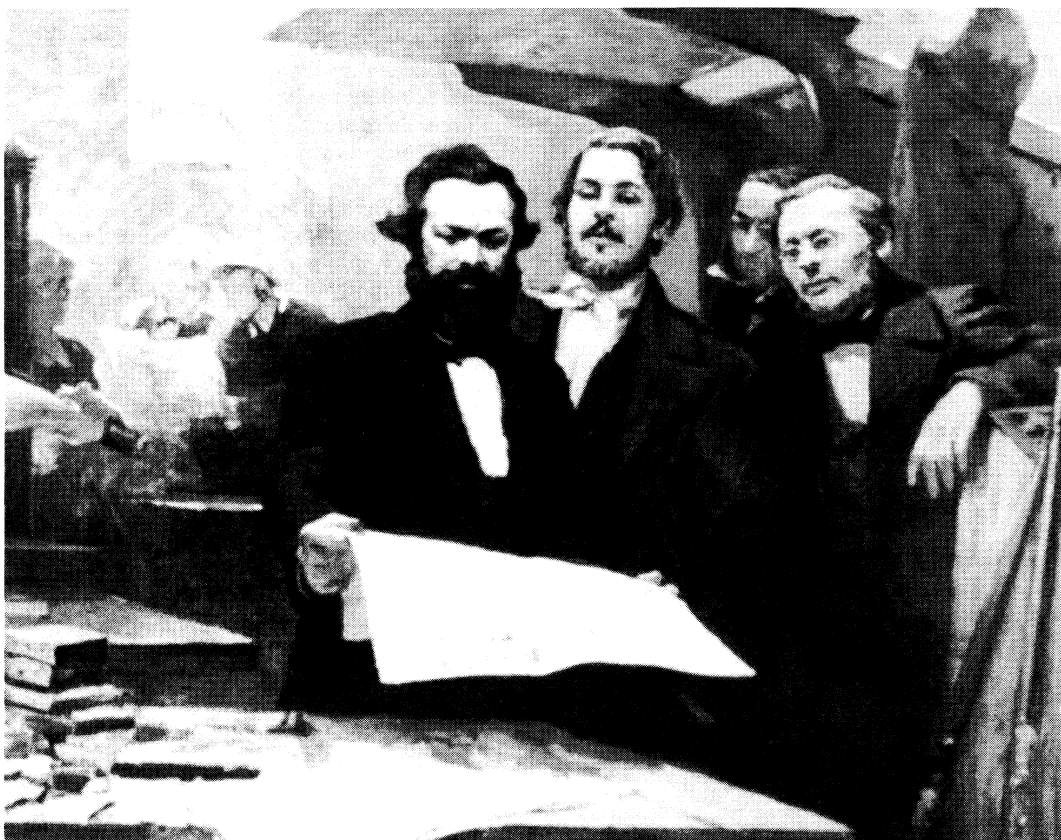
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Painting of Karl Marx (center) and Frederick Engels (to his side) examining copy of the daily newspaper they were editors of during the German revolution of 1848-49. Writing as young revolutionists three years earlier they observed that in the development of capitalism "there comes a stage when productive forces...are brought into being which, under the existing relations, are no longer productive but destructive forces."

which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature. He sets in motion the natural forces which belong to his own body, his arms, legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate the materials of nature in a form adapted to his own needs. Through this movement he acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature. He develops the potentialities slumbering within nature, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sovereign power. (*Capital*, vol. 1, Penguin Classics edition, p. 283.)

As Butts says, the concept of organic farming as somehow inherently superior to the use of synthetic inputs in agriculture is scientifically false and thus contrary to the interests of the great toiling majority of humanity. He urges the socialist press not "to give any credence to this marketing ploy."

When statements that were open to misinterpretation along these lines were made by a couple of participants in a national leadership meeting of the Socialist Workers Party in late May, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes addressed them in his summary report to the gathering.

"What has 'organic' come to mean when used in reference to food?" Barnes said. "It means 'more expensive'—that's what it

means. All products of human labor under capitalism are turned into commodities. So, when you see something at the grocery store christened as 'organic,' that simply means the U.S. Department of Agriculture has OK'd slapping a label on it enabling the marketing monopolies to put a higher price tag on it too."

A decade ago so-called organic foods could be found only in specialized "natural foods" shops catering to a small, largely middle-class market (the prices were even relatively higher back then). Today, however, virtually every one of the major food monopolies has bought up small businesses and launched its own product line. General Mills, Gerber's, Dole, Heinz, ConAgra, Archer Daniels Midland—all have their own "organic" brand names, selling at a premium price to a growing niche market in major grocery chains.

(Revolutionary Cuba itself has been able to tap into this niche to offset at least a tiny portion of its losses from the declining price of sugar on the world capitalist market. Recently Cuba has begun cultivating a small quantity of sugar using only biological inputs that it sells—well above standard commodity prices—to fancy European chocolatiers and purveyors of packaged brown sugar.)

A letter from a reader

Cuban farms, world hunger

I read the article by Joel Britton in your July 2 issue headlined, "Cubans celebrate 40th anniversary of farmers organization." As a small farmer who recently participated in a Cuba-U.S. farmer-to-farmer tour, guests of the National Association of Small Farmers of Cuba (ANAP), I found the article a good summary of what Cuban farmers have accomplished over the past four decades as a result of their socialist revolution and land reform. The description of how the revolution organized to overcome the food shortages of the worst years of the economic crisis of the early 1990s—what Cubans call the Special Period—was also useful.

I was concerned, however, about the last paragraph of the article, where Britton quotes the director of one of Havana's urban gardens. The article says that the director explained "that as in other large urban gardens they began using substitutes for chemical pesticides and fertilizers by necessity during the Special Period, but now it is by choice."

My understanding is that the urban garden program was instituted in 1994 as one of the measures aimed at making food more accessible to workers in ur-

ban areas. The law setting up the program stipulated certain chemicals and fertilizers would be prohibited out of concern for people living and working in close proximity to the farms. So a choice never existed, if this is true.

This would be only a quibble, if it weren't for the impression readers of the *Militant* might take away in reading this paragraph that the socialist press, by reporting this particular statement, has given a certain political weight to the concept of organic production being preferable to that where "chemicals" are used. At least this is how it struck me.

Readers may also come away thinking Cuba generally chooses not to use chemicals in agricultural production.

Organic farming is a bourgeois concept, and it has nothing to do with the fight to feed the world. I don't think it is in the interests of workers and farmers to give any credence to this marketing ploy in the socialist press. Communists in imperialist countries should be especially sensitive about being perceived as advocating idealistic solutions in a world of 800 million chronically hungry.

Karl Butts
Tampa, Florida

From its origins in the mid-19th century, organic farming as "a cause"—as opposed to this or that particular method of cultivation—has been associated with a suspicion of science and technology among layers of the middle class and bohemian bourgeois circles. Many of its champions in the opening five or six decades of the 20th century were also affiliated to the ultraright. They shared kinship with the right-wing conspiracy theorists of the 1950s and 1960s who campaigned to stop the fluoridation of water and toothpaste—an effort that has been revived in recent years with the backing of Ralph Nader and some other bourgeois figures parading as "environmentalists."

How capitalism works

"When class-conscious workers and farmers speak of 'sustainable' agriculture," Barnes said at the May SWP leadership meeting, "what we're aiming to sustain is the transformation of nature by human labor to meet social needs."

Given the competition of capitals and imperatives of war-related research and development in the imperialist system, Barnes said, nothing is going to stop the application of science and new technologies to both industrial and agricultural production. At the same time, nothing is going to stop the allocation of capital to maximize the rulers' short-term extraction of surplus value, not to advance human health, welfare, or long-term social goals of any kind.

Since all commodities under capitalism are produced and marketed with profits in mind—not their utility to human beings—all of them, "whether 'natural' or 'synthetic,' are subject to poisons, contamination, or shoddy workmanship," Barnes pointed out.

These political questions had been addressed by Barnes in a section of his 1999 book, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. "True environmental horrors are accelerating under capitalism today (and the Stalinist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe and the USSR are responsible for unthinkable devastation as well)," Barnes wrote.

"Revolutionary governments of the workers and farmers can and will reverse this deadly course." (*Capitalism's World Disorder*, Pathfinder Press, p. 301)

Both in that book and in his May 2001 report to the SWP National Committee, Barnes pointed out that "Marx and Engels wrote powerfully and convincingly about capital's destruction of the soil, the water, the air, and the basis for human life and civilization." Even before they had fully developed their proletarian world outlook, Barnes said, each of them as revolutionary-minded young people had been profoundly affected by what they saw all around them—whether in the newly industrializing German Rhineland where they grew up, or during trips to Great Britain where the factory system was the most advanced in the world—of the toll capitalism was taking on the nutrition and sanitary conditions of the working class and on the fouling of the natural environment.

That's why already in 1845, when Marx and Engels were both in their 20s and still three years away from joining a workers organization and helping draft its program, the

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Communist Manifesto, they observed that in the development of capitalism "there comes a stage when productive forces...are brought into being which, under the existing relations, only cause mischief and are no longer productive but destructive forces." (*The German Ideology*, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 52.)

To be continued next week.

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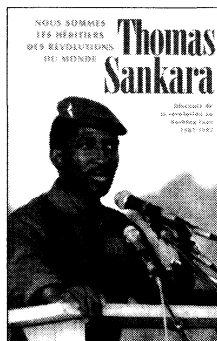
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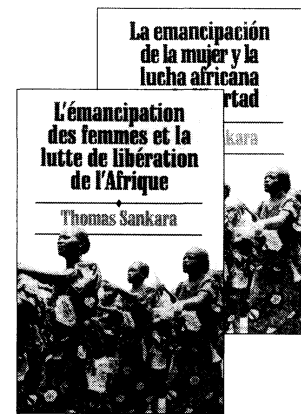
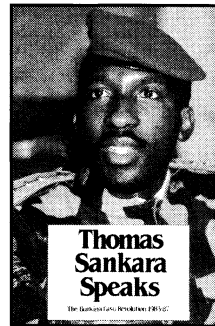
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U.S. rulers push for military control of space

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington's plans for putting in place an antiballistic missile shield are an essential part of U.S. imperialism's overall drive to militarily dominate space. Much of the Pentagon's land and sea operations already depend on communications and intelligence from satellites. In earlier inter-imperialist conflicts, which nation "ruled the seas" proved decisive in victory. Today, space has become the new ocean crucial to military success for the rival imperialist powers.

Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 1997, Air Force Gen. Howell Estes III, commander-in-chief of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and of the U.S. Space Command—established in 1985—laid out the U.S. rulers' perspective for maintaining and advancing its military power in space: "We must dominate the military space dimension and integrate space forces into our overall warfighting capabilities across the spectrum. As the number of spacefaring nations grows, space superiority will become a must for the United States."

The general added, "Today, we are the world's most powerful space force; however, we are in a shifting environment where space operations are becoming ever more vital to U.S. and global economies, and military space capabilities are becoming increasingly indispensable to U.S. national security. Space power is inextricably linked to military operations on land, sea, and in the air," he said. "Key military functions have already migrated to space—intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; ballistic missile detection and early warning; weapons guidance; position location; communications; and environmental monitoring. Space is truly the fourth medium of military operations and represents to our terrestrial warfighters the ultimate high ground."

He added, "Although today we use space power to enhance the effectiveness of our terrestrial forces, space power will become a dominating force in the United States" with "even the potential for war itself... moving from Earth into space."

The Air Force general pointed out that there are over 500 satellites in space today and about half of the more than 200 U.S. satellites are designated for military operations. Washington is planning to spend \$25 billion over the next 20 years for a dozen or so new satellites with electronic cameras that "would be able to track objects as small as a baseball anywhere, anytime on the planet," the *International Herald Tribune* reported. "It will be 'an incredible improvement' in America's ability to spy from the sky, a U.S. official said in Washington," the paper added.

Many of the U.S. forces stationed around the world depend on satellite communications and military intelligence to conduct their operations. The Naval Space Command (NSC), for example, which was commissioned in 1983, maintains a "space watch" around the clock to track satellites

in orbit. According to a fact sheet on its website, they operate "a surveillance network of nine field stations located across the southern United States...that can detect objects in orbit around the Earth out to an effective range of 15,000 nautical miles." More than 1 million "satellite detections, or observations," are collected by this surveillance operation each month, according to the NSC. Vital facts are then relayed to deployed Navy and Marine Corps forces.

The Air Force and Army Space Command carry out similar types of operations. Throughout the 1990s the Pentagon has uti-

dominance, NMD [National Missile Defense] and precision strike are a few examples. Space forces will be fully integrated with terrestrial forces to synchronize and multiply combat effectiveness. This includes getting the right information to the right people at the right time."

From the start the "civilian" space agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), has been aimed at giving U.S. imperialism this military advantage in space. It develops new technologies that the Pentagon can put to use and launches many of the military satel-

strike force to blackmail and threaten countries that come into conflict with the U.S. rulers, including the workers states in northern Korea, Russia, and China, as well as its imperialist competitors, especially in Europe.

Pentagon officials elaborated on some of the plans for such a space-based system at a three-day conference in mid-July held in Huntsville, Alabama. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command.

"Twenty years after President Ronald Reagan created an international furor by proposing to place weapons in space, the Pentagon has put nearly every major element of the original program back in the center of its plans as part of a national missile shield," commented a July 22 *New York Times* article.

The plan involves putting in place a layered defense, in which a missile can be fired upon in various phases of its flight from land, sea, or outer space. The Pentagon is accelerating its development of chemical lasers that would fly in space or high in the atmosphere. It is also undertaking new research into launching thousands of interceptors into space and expanding the placement of sensor-laden satellites into orbit.

The space sensors would be part of the Space-Based Infrared System, or SBIRS. The idea would be to place a low-orbit cluster of 25 to 40 satellites—once described in Reagan's Star Wars plan as "Brilliant Eyes"—that would be equipped with infrared sensors to detect and track warheads after separation from their boosters. Funding for this program has been increased by more than one-third to \$420 million in the 2002 military budget. A recent study by the General Accounting Office estimated the cost of this entire system to be about \$12 billion.

These satellites will also be utilized to expand the U.S. military's spying and surveillance operations. They are to be part of a vast array of military satellites encircling the globe. A 1997 U.S. Air Forces Issues Book describes SBIRS as a system "that will meet United States infrared space surveillance needs through the next two to three decades." It includes "satellites in Geosynchronous Earth Orbit and Low Earth Orbit" as well as sensors "on satellites in Highly Elliptical Orbit."

The Pentagon has also announced plans to revive research on a program they describe as "Brilliant Pebbles." This involves placing as many as 4,000 small interceptors stationed in permanent orbit around the earth, any of which could be rapidly deployed as "kill" vehicles that would smash into a ballistic missile launched from below.

They will be "sitting up there, in orbit, available to use whenever," stated Robert Snyder, executive director of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. He added that the Pentagon was seeking an immediate allocation of \$110 million to study how to put such a system in place. Their aim will be to conduct a test in space by 2005 or 2006. The original "Brilliant Pebbles" program was begun by the Reagan administration in the mid-1980s, and terminated in 1993 after \$4.8 billion had been spent on it.

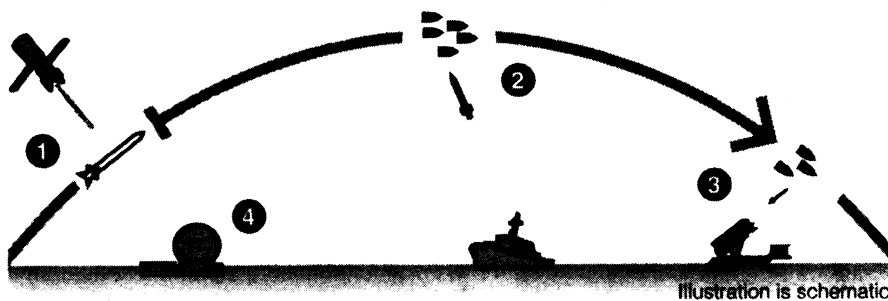
According to a *Times* article, "Critics of the current plan doubt the ability of the interceptors to function when left for long periods in space." Tom Collina, director of the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, commented, "They almost invite an enemy to develop antisatellite weapons to knock them out."

The U.S. military also plans to test space-based lasers that could be launched by satellites with their beams firing back into the earth's atmosphere to shoot down slow-moving warheads while they're still attached to the booster rocket. These lasers, which have so far only been tested on the ground, generate a flash of intense light that is designed to burn through a missile's booster and cause it to explode. This program "is expected to cost \$3 billion to \$4 billion through the shoot-down test," stated the *Times*, with a target date for launching sometime between 2008 and 2012.

This technology would also be deployed as part of an airborne laser system, in which lasers would be mounted to the nose of a modified Boeing 747 and fired at missiles boosting through the atmosphere. Briefing reporters on this project at the Alabama missile shield conference, Air Force Col. James Forrest projected that 747 planes would begin test flights next February. In 2003 the laser is slated to attempt its first shoot-down, aiming from a distance of 200 miles at a missile breaking through the clouds at an altitude of about 40,000 feet.

Defending Against a Missile Attack

The Bush administration's proposal for a missile defense plan includes technologies to detect and destroy incoming missiles at all phases of flight. The plan has a proposed budget of \$8.3 billion for 2002.



PHASE OF ATTACK	1 BOOST PHASE	2 MIDCOURSE PHASE	3 TERMINAL PHASE
DURATION	180 to 300 seconds	About 20 minutes	About 30 seconds
DEFENSE OPTIONS	Air-based laser Space-based laser Space-based missile	Sea-based missile Ground-based missile	Ground-based missile
DEPLOYMENT	About 2009	About 2006	About 2001-2007
2002 BUDGET (PROPOSED)	\$575 million	\$3.9 billion	\$2.2 billion

4 SENSORS Ground-, sea- and satellite-based sensors detect and track missiles and assess effectiveness of missile defense. Proposed budget for 2002: \$495 million.

Sources: Ballistic Missile Defense Organization; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Diagram from *New York Times* illustrates some of U.S. rulers' plans for putting in place an antiballistic missile weapons system. Space has become the new ocean that Washington seeks to militarily dominate. Surveillance, communications, and guidance satellites are already central to U.S. imperialism's war machine.

lized space-based surveillance satellites to help pinpoint targets for cruise missiles and other warplanes called into operation.

"Today, we primarily use space to enhance the operational effectiveness of our terrestrial forces," stated the commander of the U.S. Space Command. "Tomorrow, the contribution of space to the overall success of joint and combined military operations will only expand."

He added, "Global engagement will see certain terrestrial missions migrating to space. Worldwide surveillance, information

lites. NASA, for example, has been testing out reusable launch vehicles that the Pentagon hopes can lead to the development and deployment of military space planes.

Plans for testing new space weapons

The Bush administration is currently allocating funds and making plans to test a broad array of new weapons that would encircle the globe.

The aim of this system is to assert Washington's military dominance and, if it can be proven to work, to gain a nuclear first-

Bush and Putin announce new steps on missiles

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In his recent trip to Europe to attend the Group of Eight (G-8) summit of industrial nations, U.S. president George Bush made clear to leaders of other major imperialist powers his administration's determination to press ahead with development and deployment of an antiballistic missile shield. This push is being bolstered by the fact that the Bush administration is finding an increasingly open spirit of collaboration from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

On the last day of the summit meeting, which was held in Genoa, Italy, Bush and Putin held talks and came to an agreement to "reduce nuclear weapons on both sides while allowing the United States to build a missile defense shield," reported an article in the July 23 *Washington Post*.

At a news conference at the Genoa meeting, Putin said he was now rethinking his prior warning that he would convert single warhead missiles into multiple-warhead ones if Washington were to abrogate the Antiballistic Missile treaty. "If, as we understood from each other today, we are ready to look at the issue of offensive and defensive systems together as a set, we might not ever need to look at that option," the Russian president stated.

Commenting on this development, the

Washington Post noted, "White House officials, who had made little headway in building support from European allies for the U.S. positions on global warming and missile defense were glad that Putin had been so cooperative on arms control."

The United States currently has about 7,300 strategic nuclear weapons; Russia has about 6,100.

Bush has been advocating linking the reduction on offensive nuclear weapons to winning agreement for a missile defense shield even prior to assuming the presidency. In a May 2000 campaign speech he called for cutting U.S. nuclear stocks to "the lowest possible number consistent with our national security."

The week following the G-8 meeting Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national security adviser, traveled to Moscow to further pursue this discussion and to present the Russian president with what the *New York Times* called "an American blueprint" for "building a new nuclear weapons framework."

"There is a recognition that the United States intends to move forward with missile defense," she said, commenting on her meeting with Russian officials. "You've got a discussion now about how you move forward, not if you move forward. That's considerable progress in the last several months."

In a July 26 *New York Times* column titled "Victory for Missile Defense," William Safire hailed this latest development. "Vladimir Putin yanked the rug out from under Democrats opposed to missile defense," he wrote, when the two leaders "agreed to work on a new strategic framework to alter or replace the old Antiballistic Missile Treaty, in tandem with lowering each nation's stockpile of nuclear weapons."

Safire backed Bush's course and urged the administration to "use our planned unilateral reduction of offensive missiles to 'defuse confrontation with Russia,' as Bush suggested last year. But we should not let America's timetable for a missile defense be determined by Russia's desire for us to reduce offensive missiles to a level below what our military considers essential to national security."

Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, who was part of the diplomatic delegation visiting Russia along with Rice and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, floated a plan for Moscow to set up a few capitalist investment zones. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the treasury secretary "urged Russia to enact significant reforms in a few political regions to demonstrate how the entire country could attract

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Socialists in Canada assess opportunities for party building

BY NATALIE STAKE-DOUCET
AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Drawing on recent experiences in forging ties with workers in struggle, members of the Communist League met here July 22 to take stock of the opportunities today to build the party and the Young Socialists as part of the emerging vanguard layer of workers and farmers in Canada.

Participants in the meeting discussed struggles that they have been involved in over the past months by farmers, meat packers, hospital workers, bus drivers, and workers in the bakery, refinery, chocolate, and household appliance industries. Members of the Communist League and YS in attendance came from Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

These are examples, Communist League leader Michel Prairie said in his report to the meeting, of the “resistance of working people to the productivity drive of the bosses and the austerity drive of the provincial and federal governments. These struggles take place in the context of a slowdown in the world capitalist economy and the political instability that engenders. We are finding that the branches of the Communist League and its organized units in the trade unions have more opportunities to recruit youth and workers to the Communist League and Young Socialists,” he said.

“Our experience shows that workers on the picket lines and many working people and youth who are involved in social movements welcome the participation of communists as co-fighters in their struggles. They welcome not only the solidarity we bring but the working-class perspective on a broad range of questions as well as Pathfinder books, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial*, which explain the lessons of more than 150 years of struggle of the modern working class,” he said.

Today a large majority of members of the party in Canada are either garment workers or meat packers. Those who work in unionized shops are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). In addition to these industrial union fractions, branches of the Communist League are taking steps to establish themselves in workers districts in the three cities, together with local chapters or members of the Young Socialists in the area.

Ruling class preparation

In his report Prairie reviewed some of the recent developments in bourgeois politics in Canada, particularly the deepening crisis of the right-wing Canadian Alliance, which is the official opposition in the federal par-

liament. There is also a developing discussion in the trade union officialdom and academic circles over the future of the New Democratic Party (NDP), a union-based social democratic organization.

In the November 2000 federal election the Liberals won a third consecutive term, capturing 173 seats in parliament. The Canadian Alliance won 67 seats, a gain of 9. The NDP lost six seats, barely holding onto its official parliamentary status with 15 representatives elected. Its share of the popular vote dropped to 8.5 percent. And now, in the context of a bitter struggle within the Alliance over efforts to oust rightist leader Stockwell Day, polls show that support for the Alliance has dropped to about 8 percent.

“The move within the Canadian Alliance to oust Stockwell Day, as well as the splintering of the Alliance, is not generated by the current level of working-class resistance,” said Prairie. “The Canadian Alliance crisis reflects the differences among Canada’s capitalist rulers about how far and how fast to move against the democratic rights, wages, and benefits of working people as they prepare for the bigger class confrontations that they can see are on the horizon.

“At this time, the major capitalist families don’t need an openly antiabortion, anti-immigrant, pro-death penalty, and anti-Quebec party whose claim to fame is a leader like Stockwell Day who pushes the culture war against the rights of women and other basic rights won by working people. The Conservative governments in Alberta and Ontario and the Liberal government in Ottawa are doing a satisfactory job for the ruling class already. That’s the underlying cause of the Alliance crisis.

“The growing discussion over the future of the NDP has another source,” Prairie continued. “It directly reflects the ongoing weakening of the trade unions in Canada. “While the resistance of workers is increasing,” explained Prairie, “there is not yet a broad radicalization among workers and working farmers. That will come as the rulers inevitably intensify their attacks.

“As the unions weaken,” he said, “the influence of the union bureaucracy within bourgeois politics is less than it has been in decades. As a result, the NDP—which at bottom is the political arm of the trade union officialdom and has sharply shifted to the right under the productivity drive of the ruling class—is in decline.”

Branches and union fractions

“The Communist League needs to move forward on two fronts at the same time,” Prairie explained in his report. “We have to strengthen the political work of our union fractions and at the same time build branches



Bus drivers walking picket line last April against Surrey Transit Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia. Members of the Communist League and Young Socialists have joined struggles in the past months by bus drivers, meat packers, and other workers.

that establish a base in workers districts through selling subscriptions to the *Militant*, setting up regular street-corner tables of revolutionary literature and going door to door, and make the Militant Labor Forum a weekly political event. The Pathfinder bookstores and the activities organized out of them to link up with the resistance in the city and the region are the bedrock of a workers district branch, which at bottom is a political, not a geographical perspective.”

Participants in the discussion gave numerous examples of the work of the Communist League in building such branches and union fractions today.

Joe Yates, a leader of the party and a garment worker, reported that in Vancouver the Communist League and Young Socialists have broadened their political reach in the city, knowledge of the labor movement, and collaboration with a layer of workers by consistently relating to strikes of meatpacking workers and bus drivers in the area.

At Superior Poultry, a months-long strike forced the company to recognize the UFCW and sign a contract. Meat packers at Fletcher’s Fine Foods fought the company’s drive to impose a 40 percent wage cut for almost a year. Workers from both of these strikes, as well as striking bus drivers, have spoken at the Militant Labor Forum in Vancouver on their struggles. Several striking bus drivers have become subscribers to the *Militant* and three have purchased the new Pathfinder book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes.

Some of these workers also attended a class sponsored by the Communist League and the Young Socialists discussing the article by Karl Marx, *Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future*. As a result of this effort communist workers in Vancouver

have recruited a new member to the Young Socialists and a new member to the national supporters formation of the Communist League.

“Is there something special about Vancouver?” asked Michel Prairie. “The answer is no. By linking up with working-class resistance through consistent and determined work the Vancouver branch is transforming itself. This can be duplicated in every other city in which there is an organized communist presence.”

From Montreal, meat packer and UFCW member Al Cappe reported on discussions he has had on the job which led to six young co-workers buying copies of the French-language edition of the Pathfinder pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*, one copy of the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*, one copy in French of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, and one copy of the pamphlet *Why Working People Should Support the Fight for Quebec Independence*.

“The day-to-day resistance on the job makes co-workers search for answers they can only find in books and pamphlets like those distributed by Pathfinder,” said Cappe. “Young rebels are attracted to our ideas if we present them clearly and forthrightly.”

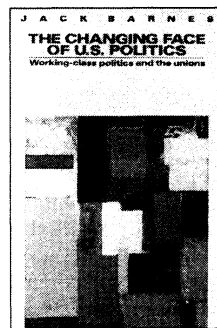
Toronto meat packer Tony DiFelici reported that some co-workers at Quality Meats where he works have experience in the fight against the military dictatorship in Burma and are attracted to strikes and struggles in Canada. “Last week one co-worker went with me to the picket line at Christie Biscuits. He told the workers that we should strike Quality Meats when our contract expires,” he said.

While there, Christie strikers said 70
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FROM PATHFINDER

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AND THE TRADE UNIONS



Jack Barnes

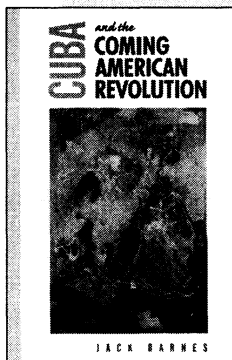
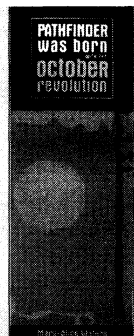
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—Fidel Castro, March 1961

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Bush, Putin take steps on missiles

Continued from Page 10

private foreign investment.” In these areas, the *Journal* said, “officials would take a tough stand against corruption, with the goal of making contracts enforceable and the rule of law paramount.”

O’Neill commented, “If they choose a place they can get their arms around, the probability of making a real difference is greater than if they try to achieve this over their entire 5,000-mile expanse at one time”—a failed course pursued earlier by the imperialists in collaboration with the Russian government which was known as “shock therapy.”

Treasury officials are also trying to convince the World Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development—so far with limited success—to only provide funds to Russia in regions where they meet what the *Journal* calls “strict business-climate standards.” Capital is basically only going to go to areas that are friendly,” said Commerce Secretary Evans. The big-business paper added that “Both cabinet members were effusive in their praise of President Vladimir Putin and his willingness to improve Russia’s business climate.”

'Out with the Navy! Vieques is ours!'

Continued from front page

calling for the immediate closing of the Navy base and departure of military forces from the island. Washington has said it will hold a referendum in November, but the option of voting for the U.S. Navy to leave now is not included in the so-called plebiscite organized by the colonial power.

The voter turn out was very high, with 81 percent of the 5,893 registered voters on the island casting ballots. Despite the intense campaign by the Navy and pro-statehood organizations, the option that favored letting the military stay indefinitely gathered just 30 percent of the vote. The proposal that the Navy leave in 2003, proposed by President George Bush in June, only obtained 1.7 percent.

The White House responded to the results of the referendum by announcing that the Navy will continue training in Vieques until at least 2003 while it looks for other facilities. The next round of bombing is scheduled to start August 2. "The outcome of this referendum will have no impact on the Navy or our focus," said Lt. Cmdr. Kate Mueller, a Navy spokesperson in Washington. Washington's response did not come as a surprise for many on the island, given its history of total disregard of the Puerto Rican people's right to self-determination. Protests and civil disobedience actions continue.

"It's an absolute lack of respect for the democracy they claim to defend," said Bob Rabin, a member of the Committee for the Rescue and the Development of Vieques. "This is not democracy for Puerto Ricans," he added in a phone interview. "We are conscious of the importance of continuing to struggle through civil disobedience and we are preparing for the day the bombing starts again." A caravan to the Navy base has been organized for August 2 to protest the resumption of the bombing and to give support to those involved in civil disobedience actions.

Miriam Sobá of the Vieques Women's Alliance told *El Vocero* she thought the most important outcome of the vote "was the self-esteem acquired by the people of Vieques, by knowing that they can win against the Navy, despite the failed attempts to buy minds and plant fear in people."

In the weeks leading up to the vote, pro-Navy groups carried out a red-baiting cam-

paign, claiming that communists—including Cuban president Fidel Castro—were behind the Peace for Vieques movement. These forces put up posters depicting revolutionary leaders Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara, along with a leader of the anti-Navy groups, with the message: "Vote these three out of Vieques."

Another of the scare tactics used by supporters of the Navy was to play up the impact of the withdrawal of the Navy and the loss of federal subsidies to the island if the Navy was to leave. They also denied that the Navy is responsible for the destruction of the environment and the livelihood of farmers and fishermen in the area.

Socialist candidate is on ballot in Pittsburgh

Continued from front page

are resisting Murray's efforts to push back the union and set up nonunion operations. Democrat Thomas Murphy, the incumbent who spent \$1.4 million in the party's primary election to win by 699 votes, and Republican James Carmine, a professor of philosophy at Carlow College, are also in the race.

The filing followed a 10-day petitioning effort in which campaign supporters found a welcome response from working people. A large proportion of the signatures were gained in the areas surrounding the Social-

"We need that land back, and Vieques has to grow," responded Julio López, a 35-year-old plumber quoted in the *Orlando Sentinel*. "For better or for worse, we need to find out if we can do better for ourselves," he added.

Conde explained how the Navy has made some jobs available for the residents as a way to win public support. "Before there used to be a big fear to protest against the Navy, because they do provide some jobs," said Conde. "But washing and ironing uniforms is not a gift from the Navy to the women of Vieques. It is work," she concluded.

According to the *New York Times* the Navy has also begun making \$100 payments to fishermen whose livelihood is disrupted

by the military exercises and has announced subsidies for small businesses.

"The struggle in the last two years has allowed us to talk among ourselves about what we want for Vieques and to demonstrate that 'We can do it,'" said Conde. She said discussions on the economic situation in Vieques have led to setting up experimental hydroponic farms—because of the soil contamination from ammunition used in the bombings—as a way to create jobs and attract youth who have left to study and work on the main island.

Ron Richards in Puerto Rico contributed to this article.

ist Workers headquarters in East Liberty, a working-class neighborhood. Petitioning efforts included street tables, street petitioning teams, and supporters approaching people in parking lots at local grocery stores.

The highlight of the drive was on Saturday, July 28, when 1,059 signatures were collected, sending the effort over the top. Petitioners reported they found a real openness to the campaign and that large numbers of people signed when they learned that a socialist and coal miner was seeking to get on the ballot.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to 'Missile Defense': U.S. Nuclear Weapons Defend Profits. Fri., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m.

The Legacy of Patrice Lumumba and the Congolese Revolution: Lessons for Today. Fri., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. *Both events at 3926 Mission St. Tel: (415) 584-2135.*

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Cancel the Third World Debt. Speaker: Róger Calero, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., Aug. 3, 7:30 p.m. *506 Springfield Ave. 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.*

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Why Working People Should Support the Demand to Cancel the Third World Debt. Fri., Aug. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Anniversary of the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fri., August 10, 7:30 p.m. *Both events at 372A 53rd Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 567-8014.*

Garment District

Coal Miners Fight to Defend their Union. Fri., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. *545 8th Ave. Tel: (212) 695-7358.*

Upper Manhattan

Capitalism's World Disorder: Cancel the Third World Debt, Oppose Free Trade Area of the Americas Agreement. Fri., Aug. 3, 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Maurice Williams, *Militant* staff writer. **From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Washington's Anti-Ballistic Missile Shield.** Fri., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. *Both events at 540 W. 165 St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.*

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Cuba Campaigns against "Free Trade" Pact. Fri., Aug. 10, 7:00 p.m. *7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Donation: \$3. Tel: (09) 276-8885.*

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The grocer and landlord will wait too?—“Greenspan advises patience—Fed chief says the country must wait for interest rate cuts



Harry Ring

to take effect”—News headline.

Raise the drawbridge—Beginning in 2003, motorists entering the heart of London will pay a \$7.50 fee. They can, of course, park their cars somewhere and take the sub-

way, famed for the quality of its service. Like one recent morning rush hour, four trains got stuck in a tunnel, trapping some 4,000 passengers for nearly two hours. Seventeen people were hospitalized from the 100-degree heat.

‘Sorry about that’—In the Los Angeles County jail system, more than 2,000 inmates were held beyond their time between 1997 and 2000. This is attributed to faulty record-keeping and computer glitches. Those who file claims or lawsuits usually get a few hundred dollars. These add up to more than \$500,000 a year.

Paddle-brained racists—In Mobile County, Alabama, 781

school children were paddled in a year. Black children are 49.5 percent of the pupils. They got 70 percent of the paddling. The county school board rejected a motion to end the practice.

Truly a capitalist solution—The chief brains at several national parks have come up with a brilliant solution to the problem of overflowing garbage cans in the parks. Provide more cans and waste facilities? No, something simpler and cheaper. Remove the garbage cans. Explained the superintendent at Cape Cod National Seashore: “If people don’t see trash cans, they take their garbage with them.”

Besides, they’re only for fires—

Tyco International will recall 35 million potentially defective sprinkler heads at an estimated cost of \$200 million over a five-year period. A Tyco official shrugged off the \$40-million-a-year cost as “negligible.”

Yep—Since the collapse of the Soviet regime, a layer of well-heeled Russians have been staging grand balls in the palaces of St. Petersburg. At one shindig, a *New York Times* correspondent reported, the guests strolled across dimly lit grounds toward dessert and coffee at a summer pavilion, passing a group of groundskeepers and their families. “Even in the dark,” the report said, “It was impossible to miss the sullen glares.... This is why we made a revolution, they seemed to say.”

A candid title?—A web site apparently scooped up a publisher’s remainder, with the book’s price reduced from \$25 to \$7.50. The title: *Investing Online for Dummies*.

Chop and squeeze—Albertson, the second largest U.S. grocery chain, is shutting down 165 stores ending the jobs of an undisclosed number of workers. Top dog Lawrence Johnson, who recently switched from a top post at General Electric, said, “The environment I came from at GE is pretty notorious for ongoing productivity and continuous improvement. That’s exactly what we’re planning for at Albertson’s.” Or, in plainer English, more productivity with fewer workers.

Palestinians in Los Angeles push back deportation

BY NAN BAILEY

LOS ANGELES—A U.S. immigration judge in Los Angeles has ruled against the latest attempt by the Justice Department to deport Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh for their political beliefs.

The ruling by Judge Bruce Einhorn agreed with the argument of defense lawyers for the two Palestinian men that a 1990 “anti-terrorism” law cannot be applied retroactively against Hamide and Shehadeh because both were already facing deportation under the McCarran-Walter Act, a 1950s witch-hunting law that has since been ruled unconstitutional. The June 21 decision, which was not made public until a week later, registers a substantial victory for democratic rights.

Hamide and Shehadeh are part of a group called the “L.A. Eight”—seven Palestinians and a Kenyan living in the Los Angeles area. In 1987 the eight immigrants were charged under the McCarran-Walter Act with possessing literature advocating “worldwide communism,” and for having ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Call for Justice, a newsletter published by the Committee for Justice to Defend the Los Angeles Eight, explains that “since then [1987], charges against them have been dropped and added repeatedly by the INS, all aimed at constitutionally protected speech and associations.”

“This decision is significant for the immigrant community, for the communities against U.S. policies in the Mideast, and communities opposed to U.S. policies worldwide,” said Michel Shehadeh. Currently the West Coast director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), Shehadeh was arrested at gunpoint in a predawn raid of his home in January 1987.

“With my wife already at work, I was taking care of my three-year-old son Ibrahim when the agents barged into my home,” he said. “As they pushed me into the police car, I was shocked to see that they had left my frantic child behind all alone.”

“This decision is the beginning of defeating the government’s attempts to silence the Palestinians,” said Shehadeh in a recent phone interview. “This is not the end of this

case. We must keep mobilizing to bring the case to an end and defeat totally the government’s attempt to use it as an incubator for repressive legislation and case law against activists.”

Marc Van Der Hout, one of the attorneys for the L.A. Eight, told the *Los Angeles Times*, “This is a tremendously significant decision and hopefully it will put an end to this outrageous prosecution of our clients, who have done nothing other than engage in protected 1st Amendment activity.”

The Los Angeles Eight have won a number of important legal rulings over the last 14 years. These include a ruling by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court in 1998 that the Constitution does not permit “guilt by association.” Another important decision by 9th Circuit Court judge Stephen Wilson declared the McCarran-Walter Act unconstitutional. A federal appeals court reversed Wilson’s ruling, but on technical grounds, saying the Los Angeles Eight were not far enough along in their deportation proceedings to raise the issue. The law was later repealed.

The Los Angeles Eight have attracted widespread support, even from editorials in bourgeois dailies in Southern California, among them the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* and the *Orange County Register*. An editorial titled, “Feds Should Drop Unjust L.A. 8 Case,” in the July 12, 2001, issue of the *Orange County Register* stated, “The dispute comes down to a simple question: Should eight immigrants who are in the United States legally be deported for taking part in political activities that would unquestionably be protected if they were full-fledged U.S. citizens?...”

“The Bush administration has the opportunity to put an end to a long-running and capricious Immigration and Naturalization Service case against a group of immigrants known as the L.A. Eight. For the sake of justice, the administration simply needs to drop its case against the group—something easy to do now that a Los Angeles immigration judge ruled against the INS in late June.”

Criminal charges have never been filed against the Los Angeles Eight. Over the course of the last 14 years of the legal battle, three of the eight won permanent resident status and no longer face any charges. Three



Militant/Nelson Blackstock
“L.A. Eight” defendants outside federal building in Los Angeles, May 1987. While charges against them were dropped, two Palestinians are fighting “terrorism” charge.

others face what their lawyers call “minor charges,” such as overstaying a student visa. Hamide and Shehadeh were legal residents of the United States at the time they were arrested in 1987. According to the ADC, the only grounds on which the INS could con-

tinue its deportation efforts now would be under the defunct McCarran-Walter Act. In his June 21 ruling Judge Einhorn gave the Justice Department a deadline of August 5 to decide whether to proceed with the charges against the two.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



August 27, 1976

CHARLESTON, W. Va.—Striking coal miners from seven states began returning to work August 12, ending their powerful month-long wildcat. The 100,000 miners had walked out to protest being “kicked around” by federal judges acting on the side of the coal operators. The strikers charged that the coal industry has consistently violated the 1974 United Mine Workers of America contract by refusing to settle grievances at the mine site. Instead, the coal operators have forced the union to take grievances into the courts.

Job disputes in the mines are often life-and-death questions of safety. But the federal courts see fit to act only when it is the mineowners seeking fines and injunctions against the workers.

The UMWA national leadership did not back the strike and ordered the miners back to work. The nationwide strike grew out of a dispute between the mineowners and Local 1759 at Cabin Creek, West Virginia. The local had demanded that a union member fill a new job monitoring safety telephones and electrical controls outside the mine. That phone would be the underground miners’ only link to the outside in case of an emergency. The Cedar Coal Company wanted to hire a supervisor. A federal arbitrator ruled that the job had to go to a unionist, but the company ignored the decision.

When the UMWA local tried on June 23 to get a court order forcing Cedar Coal to abide by the arbitrator’s ruling, federal judges in Charleston said they were too busy to hear the case. The next day Local 1759 struck.



August 13, 1951

Events last week made it increasingly clear that Washington does not want a cease-fire in Korea. The U.S. negotiators have been making every effort to blow the cease-fire conferences sky-high, and to do it in such a way that the blame will fall on the Chinese and North Korean authorities.

General Ridgway and the U.S. Far East Command have broken off negotiations again, this time on the pretext that a squad of armed Chinese soldiers was seen in the vicinity of the conference site. The Chinese command made an extremely apologetic explanation, saying that this was a mistake, and that the responsible company commander would be disciplined, but Ridgway found even this unsatisfactory.

Plainly attempting to goad the Chinese and the North Koreans to break off the negotiations, Ridgway again refused to accept the apology. He asked the Chinese to submit a declaration which would virtually admit that they had sent troops into the area on purpose, placing the onus for any future break on themselves.

The fantastic exhibition of bad faith by U.S. negotiators makes it plainer than ever that U.S. imperialism would like to bust up the talks and continue the war. They are doing this because, short of armed conquest, they don’t have a chance in the world to install a U.S. puppet government in Korea, or even any part of Korea. In addition, peace in Korea would remove the excuse for holding the Seventh Fleet in Chinese waters, American troops in Japan, and American naval and bombing bases all through the Far East.

Political crisis deepens in Nepal

BY GREG McCARTAN

The prime minister of Nepal resigned July 19 over differences on how to respond to a growing guerrilla campaign by a Maoist organization, deepening the political crisis in the country that followed the June palace massacre of most of the royal family.

Girija Prasad Koirala, head of the Nepali Congress party, told parliament three weeks ago he would leave office unless they agreed to a program that included an expansion of military funding to fight the Maoist insurgents and amending the constitution to strengthen the office of prime minister. The main opposition Communist party refused, and instead pressed ahead with its call for Koirala to resign, charging him with corruption.

The former king, reportedly killed by his son, ruled as an absolute monarch until 1990 when a mass movement forced him to allow the creation of a parliament under a constitutional monarchy. Feudal relations

still exist in much of the countryside.

A three-day general strike called by the Communist party paralyzed the country prior to the palace killings. The Maoists, who had supported the king as a “liberal and nationalist” monarch, launched a series of raids against police posts and declared that the death of the king ushered in a republic. The organization has set off bombs in the capital of Kathmandu, which was shut down July 12 in response to a strike call by the guerrilla army. The organization is said to control much of the western part of country and has inflicted heavy losses on the police force.

The Maoists called the strike to protest a government law giving officials power to arrest anyone “suspected of being involved in activities aimed at disrupting peace, among other moves rebels say are aimed at crushing their insurgency,” the *Financial Times* reported. The government is training a new paramilitary force to deploy against the guerrillas.

U.S. conflicts with Europe

U.S. president George Bush's recent trips to Europe highlight the rising tensions between the United States and various European imperialist powers—disputes that are at the center of world conflict today.

Washington, representing the dominant imperialist ruling class on the face of the earth, is in sharp competition—with the German and French imperialist powers especially—over access to markets and sources of raw materials around the world. In the imperialist system, who is on top, who is second, and who is third, fourth, and down the line, translates into hundreds of billions in profits gained or lost for the respective superwealthy ruling classes.

Washington uses its economic might and overwhelming military supremacy, including plans to set up an antiballistic nuclear missile weapons system, to maintain top-dog status. This competition and conflict between the imperialists has marked world history since the late 1800s, including two world wars and countless military, economic, and political battles.

With the German and French governments spearheading the attempt to forge a European Union and a common currency as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism in the world, the conflict has sharpened. Tensions continue on a weekly if not daily basis over:

- the place of NATO and a new European rapid-reaction military force;
- setting up a nuclear antiballistic missile weapons system;
- export and import quotas and other trade flare-ups;
- treaties and pacts such as the fake Kyoto climate control accords and germ warfare inspections;
- how to respond to the war in Yugoslavia that continues to sound on the European continent;
- what steps to take to try to bring capitalism back to Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union;
- U.S. sanctions against Libya and Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- access and control of Mideast and Caspian-region oil

and gas; and many other disputes.

One of Washington's advantages is that the European imperialist powers, despite their "union," remain separate nation-states with their own ruling classes that have conflicting interests. The U.S. imperialists seek support for their policies from each government as they can, and take advantage of the conflicts among the various ruling classes to advance their position as a leading European power.

With Russia greatly weakened and China unable to position itself as a strategic world military threat for some time, these conflicts between the imperialist powers now tend to be more out in the open and sharper. Whether it's a dispute between the rulers of Greece and Turkey over the continued occupation and division of Cyprus, or import duties Washington imposes on steel, the flare-ups have a potentially greater dynamic than before.

No one is in control of the pressure that erupts in these conflicts. Unilateral acts are taken in reaction to the perceived national interests of powerful capitalist classes that come into conflict with the national interests of competing capitalist classes. No one plans these clashes, and no one can ultimately prevent them.

At the same time that Washington exerts its dominance as the leading European military power, the U.S. rulers are putting pressure on the European imperialists to play a bigger role in providing funds in the form of aid, loans, and investments in an effort to open up the workers states in Russia and eastern Europe to greater capitalist investment and exploitation.

When the capitalist rulers seek to line us up behind "our" nation in these disputes, workers and farmers need to respond that the only "we" in the world is the working people of the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. We have nothing in common with "them," the capitalist rulers who are the enemy of humanity both at home and abroad. Such a stance is a precondition to defending ourselves from the brutality and assaults the imperialist powers will more and more bring upon humanity as they try to salvage their outmoded and crisis-ridden system.

Celebrate, build on L.A. 8 win

"We must keep mobilizing to bring this case to an end and defeat totally the government's attempt to use it as an incubator for repressive legislation and case law against activists." That was Michel Shehadeh's response to the recent victory of the "Los Angeles Eight" in their fight to prevent Washington from deporting Shehadeh and others because of their political views in support of the Palestinian liberation struggle. It's a struggle to defend democratic rights that all working people and defenders of political liberties should support.

From beginning to end, the persecution of the L.A. Eight—seven Palestinians and one Kenyan immigrant living in the Los Angeles area—by U.S. authorities has been a blatant assault on the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and association. At the time of their arrest in 1987, they were accused under the witch-hunting McCarran-Walter Act with "advocating world communism." Since then, the government has failed to produce a shred of evidence of any "criminal activity"—unless you count expressing their political views and raising money for Palestinian hospitals, youth clubs, and child care centers. When none of their "terrorism" charges would stick, the FBI turned the eight immigrants—all of whom are either permanent residents or eligible for legal residence—over to the INS for deportation.

Over the last 14 years the L.A. Eight have won some important legal victories. These include a ruling by a federal district judge that the McCarran-Walter Act is unconstitutional, as well as a decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that the Constitution does not permit "guilt by association." Nevertheless, the Clinton administration actively pursued the case, seeking to use the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act to speed their deportation. In February 1999 the U.S. Su-

preme Court ruled that the 1996 immigration law not only denies those facing deportation access to the district courts but that it can be enforced selectively. "The Executive should not have to disclose its 'real' reasons for deeming nationals of a particular country a special threat—or indeed for simply wishing to antagonize a particular foreign country by focusing on that country's nationals," asserted Justice Antonin Scalia on behalf of the majority.

The L.A. Eight case highlights how anti-immigrant legislation is being used by Democratic and Republican politicians alike as a way to get their foot in the door to attack democratic rights. In addition to trying to deport individuals for their political views, the 1996 law made it easier for the INS to deport any noncitizen convicted of any crime. Another measure approved by Congress and signed by Clinton the same year—the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act—allows the government to hold noncitizens in "preventive detention" on the basis of "secret evidence." Over the last five years some two dozen people have been imprisoned under these Star Chamber rules, most of them immigrants from Arab or majority Muslim countries. And many states have begun to demand a Social Security number to obtain a driver's license, limiting the job options of millions of immigrants and taking a step toward establishing a form of national identity card.

The target of these encroachments on civil liberties is much broader than immigrants. They anticipate the more draconian measures the U.S. rulers will need in the coming years to protect their system, as the class struggle sharpens and working people act to defend our living and working conditions.

All workers, farmers, and supporters of democratic rights should join with the L.A. Eight in demanding the INS drop all further charges and end its deportation efforts.

Campaign for Socialist Workers

Winning ballot status for socialist coal miner Frank Forrester in the Pittsburgh mayoral race is a real victory for working people. Socialist Workers campaign supporters in Massachusetts have kicked off a drive to collect 4,300 signatures to put meat packer Brock Satter on the ballot in the 9th Congressional District, an effort we encourage readers of the *Militant* to support by joining the petitioning drive, contributing funds, and attending special Militant Labor Forums planned over the next two weeks.

These and other socialist election campaigns in the 2001 elections present a working-class and revolutionary alternative to the racism, economic depression, wars, antiunion assaults, and attacks on democratic rights inherent in the system of capitalism. They point to a working-class course independent of the two-party system and the Democrats

and Republicans who represent the interests of the superwealthy ruling class.

The socialist campaigners take their message to co-workers on the job in textile mills, garment shops, meatpacking plants, coal mines, and other worksites; to strikes and protests of working people standing up to assaults by the employers and their government; and to street corners and other working-class districts.

The welcome response by workers in Pittsburgh when asked to help get Forrester on the ballot is a good example of the openness to proposals and ideas on crucial political questions raised by socialist workers. Joining with the Socialist Workers campaign in cities across the United States is a great way to effectively reach thousands with the socialist alternative and make a difference in constructing a leadership of workers and farmers in struggle today.

Socialists meet in Canada

Continued from Page 11

workers on strike against Petrocan recently came to the picket line to show their solidarity. These unionists reported that workers at the Christies plant in Montreal have refused overtime in support of their walkout. Visits by communist workers to both picket lines, and articles in the *Militant* on the two strikes, have contributed to the collaboration between the strikers.

Socialist worker Michel Duclos, who works as a sewing machine operator in Toronto, said by setting up regular literature tables in the workers district where the Communist League branch is located, party and YS members have increased sales of Pathfinder and the *Militant* and boosted attendance at the weekly Militant Labor Forum. The area is multinational and includes workers' neighborhoods, a shopping district, and industrial areas.

"Yesterday I participated at one of these tables," said Vancouver YS leader and meat packer Gabriel Charest. "It's great to be able to point down the street to the Pathfinder bookstore to encourage workers to visit it."

Sylvie Charbin, a UNITE member from Montreal, explained that workers at Jack Victor where she is employed organized to make the company put guards on some sewing machines after one worker seriously injured her foot when scissors from a machine fell on her. "This kind of resistance generates discussion on broader questions," Charbin said, describing how a co-worker who sharply disagrees with her on why civil rights for gay people are important for the unity of the working class as a whole came back to her asking for more discussion. "This shows the space that exists inside the working class for civil discussion of controversial questions," said Charbin.

Publishing the books workers need

Young Socialists are working with the Communist League to build a broad delegation of youth from Canada to attend the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students being held in Algiers, Algeria, August 8–16. Thousands of youth from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Americas, and the Pacific will be attending, including hundreds from revolutionary Cuba. Discussions will center on the multifaceted international struggle against imperialist domination.

"We have been able to work with a number of youth who are organizing to raise the substantial funds needed to fly to Algiers," reported YS leader Natalie Stake-Doucet, a garment worker and UNITE member in Montreal. "A number of fighters who are attracted to this kind of anti-imperialist festival, will be attracted to the working-class perspective of the YS," she pointed out.

In his report Michel Prairie, who is editor of Pathfinder's French-language publications, described the "explosion" of French-language titles being produced by Pathfinder through the efforts of an international team of volunteers. Three French-language pamphlets are being produced in time for the World Youth Festival. One is *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters, which is already available in English and Spanish. The book describes the historical continuity of Pathfinder's publishing program.

The efforts of the Pathfinder volunteers will also ensure that French-language readers at the Algiers youth festival will be able to purchase some of the most important speeches and writings of Thomas Sankara, the central leader of the 1983 Burkina Faso revolution in Africa. Sankara was assassinated in a pro-imperialist coup. Volunteers are currently preparing the French and Spanish-language editions of Sankara's *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, previously published in English. And they are working on a new French-language pamphlet, *We are the Heirs of the Revolutions of the World* by Thomas Sankara, containing a number of his most important speeches.

Pathfinder's French-language publishing program is central to the building of the communist movement in Canada. Volunteers in France are also part of the international team. Prairie reported on recent sales efforts by volunteer Pathfinder sales representatives to get Pathfinder's 23 French-language titles into bookstores in Paris and other major French cities.

"Volunteers in Canada have also dramatically increased sales of Pathfinder books to a range of bookstores across the country in the first half of this year," Prairie said. "Sales have more than doubled this year in comparison to this time last year. Sixty-percent of the sales are to stores other than Pathfinder bookstores, many of them for the first time in Quebec. This is a reflection of the increased thirst for these books by workers, farmers, and youth, and of the effort by a new layer of volunteers to sell them to commercial bookstores."

The evening preceding the conference many of the participants attended a fund-raising barbecue to mark the beginning of the Communist League's fund drive. The drive, with a goal of \$7,000, will help ensure the maintenance of the French-language publishing program and the League's international work. It will conclude on September 16. The 30 people attending the event contributed \$350 towards the goal.

Natalie Stake-Doucet is a sewing machine operator and a member of UNITE in Montreal. John Steele is a meat packer and a member of the UFCW in Toronto.

Literacy and the worker-peasant alliance

Reprinted below is an excerpt from *Lenin's Final Fight, 1922-23*, which is featured as one of Pathfinder's "Books of the Month" for August. This selection is taken from Section Six of the book, "Strengthening the Alliance with the Peasantry." It appears under the title "Pages from a Diary" and is dated Jan. 2, 1923. Copyright © 1995 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY V. I. LENIN

The recent publication of the report on literacy among the population of Russia, based on the census of 1920 ("Literacy in Russia," issued by the Central Statistical



Women attend literacy class in Soviet Union in early 1920s

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Board, Public Education Section, Moscow, 1922) is a very important event.¹

At a time when we hold forth on proletarian culture and the relation in which it stands to bourgeois culture, facts and figures reveal that we are in a very bad way even as far as bourgeois culture is concerned. As might have been expected, it appears that we are still a very long way from attaining universal literacy and that even compared with tsarist times (1897) our progress has been far too slow.² This should serve as a stern warning and reproach to those who have been soaring in the empyreal heights of "proletarian culture."³ It shows what a vast amount of urgent spadework we still have to do to reach the standard of an ordinary western European civilized country.

It also shows what a vast amount of work we have to do today to achieve, on the basis of our proletarian gains, anything like a real cultural standard.

We must not confine ourselves to this incontrovertible but too theoretical proposition. The very next time we revise our quarterly budget we must take this matter up in a practical way as well....

Nowhere are the problems of this culture tackled so thoroughly and consistently as they are in our country. In no other country is state power in the hands of the working class which, in its mass, is fully aware of the deficiencies, I shall not say of its culture, but of its literacy. Nowhere is the working class so ready to make, and nowhere is it actually making, such sacrifices to improve its position in this respect as in our country.

Too little, far too little, is still being done by us to adjust our state budget to satisfy, as a first measure, the requirements of elementary public education. Even in our People's Commissariat of Education we all too often find disgracefully inflated staffs in some state publishing establishment, which is contrary to the concept that the state's first concern should not be publishing houses but that there should be people to read, that the number of people able to read is greater, so that book publishing should have a wider political field in future Russia. Owing to the old (and bad) habit, we are still devoting much more time and effort to technical questions, such as the question of book publishing, than to the general political question of

literacy among the people....

Promoting literacy among the people

There is still very much in the proletarian and peasant state that can and must be economized for the purpose of promoting literacy among the people. This can be done by closing institutions which are playthings of a semiaristocratic type, or institutions we can still do without and will be able to do without, and shall have to do without for a long time to come, considering the state of literacy among the people as revealed by the statistics.

Our schoolteacher should be raised to a standard he has never achieved and cannot achieve in bourgeois society. This is a truism and requires no proof. We must strive for this state of affairs by working steadily, methodically, and persistently to raise the teacher to a higher cultural level, to train him thoroughly for his really high calling and—mainly, mainly, and mainly—to improve his position materially.

We must systematically step up our efforts to organize the schoolteachers so as to transform them from the bulwark of the bourgeois system that they still are in all capitalist countries without exception into the bulwark of the Soviet system, in order, through their agency, to divert the peasantry from alliance with the bourgeoisie and to

bring them into alliance with the proletariat.

I want briefly to emphasize the special importance in this respect of regular visits to the villages; such visits, it is true, are already being practiced and should be regularly promoted. We should not stint money—which we all too often waste on the machinery of state that is almost entirely a product of the past historical epoch—on measures like these visits to the villages.

For the speech I was to have delivered at the Congress of Soviets in December 1922 I collected data on the sponsorship undertaken by urban workers of villagers....

Here we have a fundamental political question—the relations between town and country—which is of decisive importance for the whole of our revolution. While the bourgeois state methodically concentrates all its efforts on doping the urban workers, adapting all the literature published at state expense and at the expense of the tsarist and bourgeois parties for this purpose, we can and must utilize our political power to make the urban worker an effective vehicle of communist ideas among the rural proletariat....

It is our duty to establish contacts between the urban workers and the rural working people, to establish between them a form of comradeship which can easily be created. This is one of the fundamental tasks of the working class which holds power. To achieve this we must form a number of associations (party, trade union, and private) of factory workers, which would devote themselves regularly to assisting the villages in their cultural development.

¹ Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, pp. 462-66.

² Despite the difficult conditions of the civil war, the school system expanded following the Russian revolution. The number of students receiving primary education in early 1921 was more than 20 percent higher than in 1914-15. During the first eighteen months of the New Economic Policy, however, education suffered. In line with overall austerity measures, expenditure on education was cut back sharply. Local soviets, lacking the funds to pay teachers on their own, began to close down schools. By December 1922 more than twenty thousand schools had been shut, about 30 percent of the total.

³ See Lenin's reference to "proletarian culture" in his report to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, in chapter 3.

AUGUST Pathfinder Readers Club specials

25% discount

In Defense of Marxism: The Social and Political Contradictions of the Soviet Union on the Eve of World War II
Leon Trotsky

Writing in 1939-40, Leon Trotsky replies to those in the revolutionary workers movement who were beating a retreat from defense of the Soviet Union in face of looming imperialist assault. He describes how the rising pressures of bourgeois patriotism in the middle classes during Washington's buildup to enter the spreading imperialist war in Europe were finding an echo even inside the communist movement. And he explains why only a party that fights to bring growing numbers of workers into its ranks and leadership can steer a steady revolutionary course. **Special offer \$19.00** (regular price \$24.95)



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Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, and Mary-Alice Waters

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V.I. Lenin

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LETTERS

Coverage on Europe

I would like to commend you for your coverage of European political developments, most recently in "Discussion with a Reader on the European Union" in the June 2 issue. Far too many "leftists" on this continent accept the view that "European integration" via the EU will solve many of the contradictions facing this system. You have accurately exposed this fallacy by highlighting the continued rivalries and tensions amongst the major powers. Keep up the insightful analysis.

Dirk Schwanz
Paris, France

U.S., UN, and the Congo

The publication by Pathfinder of the newly reissued pamphlet *Revolution in the Congo* is welcome indeed, as is the fine review of the new film *Lumumba* by Brian Williams in the July 23 *Militant*.

The text of the unscheduled speech by Lumumba at the ceremony officially declaring the independence of the Congo, referred to in the review, can be found in *Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba 1958-1961*. The book is, unfortunately, out of print. The speech is indeed worth "tacking up over your door," as Malcolm X said.

As for the role of the UN, readers of the *Militant* should consider the candid—and cynical—remarks of Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* in a recent editorial column entitled "95 to 5" as he argues against threats of a U.S. withdrawal from that body: "Then let's stop bellyaching about the U.N., and manipulating our dues, and start taking it seriously for what it is—a global forum that spends 95 percent of its energy endorsing the wars and peacekeeping missions that the U.S. wants endorsed, or taking on the thankless humanitarian missions that the U.S. would like done but doesn't want to

do itself. The U.N. actually spends only 5 percent of its time annoying the U.S. Not a bad deal."

Floyd Fowler
Atlanta, Georgia

IAM and protectionism

In the July 2 issue Brian Williams reported on the support by leading officials of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) for the U.S. government's plans to develop and deploy an antiballistic missile system.

In the spring issue of the IAM's journal in Canada, the anti-worker logic of the IAM leadership's protectionist politics was further illustrated by Canadian vice president Dave Ritchie. Rather than criticizing government handouts to aerospace companies, Ritchie argued that "we should use the leverage we have when companies want to send aerospace work overseas. Our governments should tell corporations: 'You want continued subsidies? Well here are the standards that must be met when it comes to workers rights, wages, safety, and health.'"

It was from this protectionist perspective of counterposing the interests of its members to workers in other countries that the IAM in Quebec mobilized its members to join recent protests at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. It then completely abstained from participating in the annual Montreal May Day march which features workers on strike or in struggle.

Jim Upton
Montreal, Quebec

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.

Locked-out unionists in UK gain support

BY CAROL BALL
AND PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—Unionists locked out by Friction Dynamics in Wales are winning growing support for their fight against the company's antiunion drive. "If the company beats us, they beat the union," Gerald Parry, one of 87 locked out workers, told 200 people at an antiracist festival here organized by the Trades Union Congress July 21.

Members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) at Friction Dynamics, an auto parts maker in Caernarfon, North Wales, held a one-week strike April 30 to protest company demands for a 15 percent wage cut, the end of shift pay, the introduction of longer working days with no overtime, and a range of restrictions on union meetings and the number of shop stewards at the plant. Union members rejected the concessions and approved a walkout by a 93 percent margin.

Friction Dynamics is owned by Craig Smith, an American who bought the factory in 1997. Smith also owns plants in the United States. A Welsh-language TV program claimed Smith used a compensation fund set up for workers who had contracted the incurable lung disease asbestosis at his plants in the United States to purchase Friction Dynamics. Smith told the program this was "merely an investment" on behalf of any future claimant.

Upon returning to work after the one-week strike, workers were handed an un-



Photo provided by Dynamex Industrial Action
Solidarity march July 7 for members of Transport and General Workers' Union locked out by auto parts maker Friction Dynamics in Caernarfon, North Wales. Action attracted some 3,000 people.

scheduled holiday, effectively locking them out. In response they set up picket lines to continue their fight. Smith then carried out a previously announced redundancy (lay-off) of 24 workers and sacked 87 others. The company has hired a number of scabs and

is using management personnel to keep some production going.

The locked out workers won support at the Biennial Delegate Conference of their union and TGWU general secretary Bill Morris backed the workers in an address at

a conference of the Wales Trades Union Congress. Donations are beginning to come in from union branches around the country, the largest so far being £2,500 (US\$3,562) from workers at the Ford factory in Southampton. Financial support has come in from student organizations and the Students' Union in Bangor, North Wales, is organizing a benefit concert.

On July 7 a solidarity march and rally in Caernarfon drew 1,000 people and up to 2,000 more lined the march route, the largest labor action in the area for years. Gerald Parry told the rally that the unionists "have a just cause and, from what we have seen today, we are clearly not alone. There is truth in the saying that in unity there is strength."

Solidarity has come in from many residents in the area, including local farmers. "We used to have farmers who also worked in the plant. So they have been one of us and now they give us their support," explained Parry.

Another worker who was part of the delegation to the London rally told the *Militant* that a local supermarket has supplied the canteen at Friction Dynamics. "Two wives of strikers went in there and told them to stop or they'd

lose customers," he said. "They stopped the deliveries because they know the situation in the community. Even the barber who cuts Craig Smith's hair is refusing to do it and he has to go outside Caernarfon! People keep coming by the picket line and bringing us fish and chips and cakes."

Smith "thought we were easy pickings," said Parry. "He was wrong. He didn't realize we were well organized and that the media would pick up on it. Our local community and union support has strengthened. Now morale is fantastic, we're getting stronger every day. When someone puts a gun to your head you've got to fight. We're not talking about money here, but principles."

Workers at Friction Dynamics were the first to be dismissed since passage of a new employment law, touted by the Labour Party leadership as protection for workers' right to strike. Under the 1999 Employment Relations Act strikers are supposedly not to be sacked for eight weeks in a dispute. But union officials said the situation at Friction Dynamics proved the act had afforded "no protection" for workers.

Union lawyers are preparing to take the cases of each sacked worker to an industrial tribunal where they will claim the company failed to enter into meaningful negotiations over the strike during the eight-week time period.

Paul Davies is a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union and works at IBC Vehicles in Luton.

New Zealand apple growers protest deductions

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—More than 500 apple growers rallied in the Hawkes Bay city of Hastings July 13 to protest against the apple exporting company Enza. Following the rally, a procession of around 100 tractors and apple-picking hydragrad machines drove to present a petition to the nearby Enza headquarters.

Growers were demanding that Enza halt plans to deduct NZ\$4.50 per carton from what it pays for apples this year (NZ\$1=US 41 cents). The deductions are to offset company losses of \$50 million on speculative foreign exchange deals begun in the early 1990s, as well as \$4.2 million in losses from the abandoning of an all-weather loading facility at the local Port of Napier. Further deductions next year of \$2.63 per carton have been flagged for apples produced in the season just ended.

Enza is acting to charge the costs to growers ahead of the loss of its export monopoly, which the Labour-Alliance government recently announced will take effect on October 1. Growers, many of whom hold shares in Enza, are especially angry about the deductions because they thought that \$25 million in proceeds from the company's sale of a fruit juice subsidiary last year had been used to wipe out the debt.

"Everybody's going bankrupt," said grower Bernie Cacciopoli, who gave up supplying Enza recently and now sells his fruit through a roadside stall. He explained that many growers are unable to meet their debts to the packing houses, resulting in one large packing house being placed in receivership this year as a result of bad debts. Many also cannot afford pruning, which is usually under way at this time of year, he said. He explained that with returns on apples of around \$17 per carton, once production costs of around \$10 are deducted, Enza's new deduction of \$4.50 means that the grower would receive less for quality fruit than if it was sold it for juice.

Orchardist Tony Gilbertson, speaking at the rally, estimated that the deductions would ruin 40 percent of orchards in the Hawkes Bay region. The rally was preceded by several protest meetings that were attended by hundreds of growers in the key

Hawkes Bay and Nelson apple-growing regions.

Enza, formerly the Apple and Pear Marketing Board, was set up as a joint stock company last April with shares distributed to growers and a statutory monopoly on exports. This followed stiff grower opposition to attempts by the previous National party government to deregulate pip fruit exports.

Enza is now effectively controlled by two investment companies, Guinness Peat Group and FR Partners, who bought up 36 percent of the shares. Over the past two years low payments to growers—in the context of a worldwide oversupply of apples and falling demand—and the actions of Enza, have led many growers to demand an end to its monopoly.

Last December, 150 growers marched on parliament in Wellington to protest low returns and demand loosening of export regulations to allow more independent exporting of fruit. Apple growers are currently required to obtain a permit to export independently of Enza. The new plans to remove

these export restrictions, while welcomed by many growers, have met with mixed reactions, reflecting concerns about the impact of competition especially on smaller producers.

Opposition members of parliament from the National and Act parties have taken the opportunity to claim to champion growers' demands. Nicholas Smith, a member of Parliament from the city of Nelson, called on growers at a meeting in Hastings July 3 to "unite and take control of the export business from corporate investors," the *New Zealand Herald* reported.

Meanwhile, Minister of Agriculture James Sutton has expressed concern about the viability of the apple industry if the dispute is not rapidly settled. A report issued July 21 by his ministry showed that horticulture is now the country's fourth largest export earner, with apples the second biggest earner behind kiwifruit.

Felicity Coggan is a member of the National Distribution Union.

Steelworkers on strike in Alabama stay strong

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—The strike by workers at the Meadowcraft plant here remains solid after four weeks on the picket line. As members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8285 win broader layers to join the union, the bosses have launched a series of attacks against the strike.

Workers struck the plant June 30 after rejecting a concessionary contract that would cut \$2 or more from the hourly wage of welding department workers. Under the bosses' thinly masked "incentive" plan, welders at this lawn furniture plant would have to average 104 percent production in a workweek for an 88-cent raise. If they fall short, their hourly wage would drop to \$7-8 an hour.

On July 21 workers held a mass rally and barbecue in front of the plant that drew more than 200 strikers and their supporters. "Can we do it? Can we do it? Yes we can! Yes we can!" was one of several chants that day.

A number of strikers less familiar with

all the issues in the fight used the event as an opportunity to ask questions of union officials and others. An information sheet on the strike is being translated for workers whose first language is Spanish.

Company begins attacks

Two-and-a-half weeks into the strike Meadowcraft managers passed out a letter to pickets slandering the union. It claims that the union officials would not sit down and negotiate, and attempts to prettify the company's takeback contract.

"The letter is bull," said Willie Hall, who has worked at Meadowcraft for 31 years. "They say the union has not gotten in touch with them. But we just don't accept the contract. As far as their statement that not every worker is in the union and voted against the contract—majority rules and the union rules. We are on strike."

A few days later Zen Pearson, USWA Local 8285 president and a worker in the plant, drafted a response to the company's

lies. Pearson explained that a 55-cent raise over three years—held up as so great by the bosses—doesn't even offset the rise in insurance costs in the company's contract.

The company letter is "all about destroying our unity and solidarity." The letter ends giving special thanks to "our MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS." (Emphasis in original.)

Support grows for strike, union

Strikers have won support from a substantial layer of toilers here in Birmingham. They have also gotten favorable television and news coverage. "Bell South workers brought us donuts, Ken's Barbecue brought us a pan full of ham, and other locals have been bringing us ice and drinks," Margie Shockley said.

Finishing welder María García noted that since the strike began the majority of Latinos in the plant have signed union cards.

Local 8285 vice president Lewis Graves

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