

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Farmers rally in Oregon;
discuss fight against USDA

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Socialists launch New York mayoral campaign

BY GREG MCCARTAN

NEW YORK—The New York Socialist Workers campaign has announced Martin Koppel as its candidate for mayor of New York.

“Our campaign is presenting a fighting, working-class alternative to the parties of the ruling billionaires, the Democrats and Republicans and other pro-capitalist parties,” Koppel said in an interview. “To workers and farmers who are engaged in the stiffening resistance to the assault by the bosses and their government, to young people who are attracted to these struggles, we say—this is your campaign.”

New York, Koppel said, “is often portrayed solely as Wall Street and the home of wealthy bankers and capitalist corporations. But it is also the home of millions of working people—garment workers, truck drivers, transit workers, meat packers, restaurant and hotel workers—who produce the wealth in this city and who are fighting against cuts in their wages, for the right to organize into a union, against brutalization by the police, to demand equal rights for all immigrants and a halt to deportations, for the right to decent housing, and many more

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Coal miners strike in UK over bonuses

BY PAUL GALLOWAY
AND ANNE HOWIE

ROSSINGTON, England—National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) members at Rossington Colliery (local) in South Yorkshire, 340 strong, are heading into their fourth week on strike against UK Coal, formerly RJ Budge Mining. The coal miners walked out August 15 after bosses refused to negotiate bonus payments, which have been an important percentage of miners’ overall weekly pay.

This is the first official all-out strike in the mining industry here since the yearlong nationwide battle by the NUM in 1984–85. It follows a six-day unofficial walkout in June over the same issue.

Miners have organized two mass pickets of up to 100 workers since the start of the dispute, but picket lines are usually small since everyone, including a few nonunion miners, is on strike. Only pit deputies, who are members of the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies, and Shot Firers, are responsible for pre-shift safety checks, are going to work, with union agreement.

Production-related bonuses have historically made up a substantial part of miners’ pay packets. For example, at mines bought by UK Coal when they were privatized by the government, workers take home £40 per shift plus a £20 guaranteed minimum bonus per shift (£1 = US\$1.45). At the

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Palestinians resist attacks, war moves by Tel Aviv

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, took to the streets this past week to protest the assassination of Mustafa Zibri, a central leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by Israeli military forces August 27. And despite repeated invasions of towns in the West Bank and Gaza by tanks and helicopter gunships, the Palestinian people have shown their continued determination to fight for their self-determination.

The occupation of the town of Beit Jala and the assassination Zibri in the last week of August signaled the Israeli rulers’ continuing drive to crush the Palestinian people’s struggle for national rights. This war drive is accompanied by a propaganda offensive designed to brand Palestinians as “terrorists” and potential suicide bombers. Meanwhile, talk of top-level “peace” negotiations has been virtually dropped.

The use of helicopter gunships in the August 27 assassination of Mustafa Zibri was typical of the several dozen such targeted killings since the unrest escalated more than 11 months ago. The gunships fired missiles into the office of the 63-year-old leader, killing him and wounding five others. Zibri was a prominent and long-standing figure in the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The *New York Times* commented that, given Zibri’s seniority and standing within the Palestinian movement, the attack amounted to “an unmistakable expansion of Israel’s policy of tracking and killing suspected militants.” Thousands of people turned out for Zibri’s funeral procession.

Later that same day, Israeli troops stormed into Beit Jala and seized a number of buildings allegedly used by Palestinians shooting at the nearby area of Gilo, in south Jerusalem. The soldiers burst into a Lutheran church compound and private houses, searched people, and assumed firing positions. Army commanders put no time limit

Unionists back longshore workers at Labor Day event in S. Carolina



Militant/Naomi Craine

Rally to “Free Charleston Five” at Labor Day Picnic in South Carolina.

BY NAOMI CRAINE
AND ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

LADSON, South Carolina—Nearly 2,500 participated in the fifth annual Labor Day picnic here, dedicated to the fight

to free five Charleston longshoremen currently under house arrest on framed-up felony charges of inciting to riot.

The event, held at the fairgrounds, Continued on Page 5

on the occupation, saying that they would stay until the Palestinian guns were “silenced.”

“The Palestinian Authority did not do its job in this area,” said Brig. Gen. Gershon

Yitzhak, the commander of the Israeli army in the West Bank, justifying the brutal invasion. “Therefore, after restraining ourselves for a very long period of time, we

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St. Paul meat packers win labor board ruling

BY LAWRENCE MIKESH
AND BOBBI NEGRÓN

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—In a victory for meatpacking workers here, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced August 27 it decided to uphold the July 2000 union representation election at Dakota Premium Foods, a beef slaughterhouse. Workers at the plant voted 112-71 more than a year ago to join the United Food and Commercial Workers union. This is the second NLRB ruling backing the outcome of the election and overruling the company’s appeals and charges of unfair practices by the union.

“Now it is reality,” said Roberto Sarmiento, a worker in the packaging department at Dakota Premium Foods for 11 years. “The union will increase our strength.”

Juana Hernandez, a worker in packaging, said, “Workers are fighting for dignity and respect in the plant. We have to stop the company from forcing us to work when we are injured. I see it all the time, such as workers who have injured their arms. The company has them working with just one arm. We are fighting for a contract, and for our dignity and respect as human beings.”

The July 2000 election victory came as a product of a seven-week organizing drive

that began with a seven-hour sit-down strike in June. Workers organized the strike to protest harsh working conditions and the company’s doubling of the production line speed. It paved the way for the next step in the struggle, the fight to win a contract.

London meet discusses youth festival

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT
AND JACK WILLEY

LONDON—The 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Algiers, Algeria, in August, was an opportunity for revolutionary and anti-imperialist-minded youth to engage in political discussion and debate and exchange experiences of struggles they are deeply involved in. Some 6,500 young workers and students from semi-colonial countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the South Pacific; imperialist countries in Europe and North America, and the South Pacific; and from revolutionary Cuba, held forums, speakouts, and informal get-togethers during the nine-day event.

At a socialist educational conference held here following the youth festival, a panel of Young Socialists who participated in the youth festival pointed to the Algeria gathering as one example of the expanding openings for the

communist movement in the world today. At the world youth festival, said Jacob Perasso, Young Socialists National Executive Committee organizer in the United States, “there was a tremendous hunger for ideas, for Marxism, and a desire among many revolutionary-minded youth to build the kinds of organizations capable of effectively leading the toilers in their countries in struggle against imperialism.”

The panel included young socialists from the United Kingdom, Iceland, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, many of whom joined a solidarity visit to the refugee camps of Western Sahara following the festival (see article on page 8). Several more participants in the festival from the United Kingdom, Sweden, Iceland, France, and the United States were part of the audience of 65 that attended the

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Report from delegation to Western Sahara — page 8

Striking auto workers push back Mitsubishi

BY CAPPY KIDD

NORMAL, Illinois—In a 30-hour strike August 24, where up to 1,000 workers massed on the picket line, auto workers pushed back Mitsubishi Motors' demand for new concessions. This was the first strike at the company's auto assembly plant here and the first against a Japanese auto manufacturer in the United States.

In a drive to increase productivity, Mitsubishi, which ranks ninth in auto sales in the United States, cut its union workforce at this plant by 500 workers two years ago and the number of labor hours to assemble a car from 40 to less than 24.

In the recent contract negotiations, Mitsubishi had demanded further concessions that would have eliminated four annual paid sick days, forced the workers to schedule an additional week of their vacation during the annual plant shutdown, and compromised seniority protection in job assignments.

"They should not have been surprised," said Eva Kruse, an assembly line worker. "They were demanding too many concessions for us not to strike." Kruse and other workers are members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2488.

Kruse's husband Tony, who has worked at the plant 11 years, said there was a wave of anger throughout the workforce at Mitsubishi's demand for new concessions after the workers had already given up so much to make the plant profitable. He described the scene inside the plant the night of August 23 as the old contract expired:

"At midnight, many of the workers, saying 'we don't have a contract,' hit the red buttons, stopped the line, and sat down. The A and B lines, the main production lines, were completely shut down and the workers said, 'We aren't doing any work until we hear from our union.'" Tony Kruse said production was resumed a short time later as union representatives in the plant informed workers that the contract had been extended to 1:30 a.m. when the shift normally ends.

"The key issue is not money," said Justin West, president of UAW Local 2488. "Wages have been good here. We have kept parity with Chrysler," formerly the partner at the plant. The key issues, he said, "are working conditions, safety, and ergonomics. And the question of line speed, with

management saying they can do whatever they want, whenever they want, to whom-ever they want. Mitsubishi's upper management is out of touch with the level of frustration on the shop floor."

Eva Kruse explained why the issue of job rotation and ergonomics is so important: "In the contract before the last one, we had full rotation. That meant you might do 20 different jobs on each shift. This reduces the chances of repetitive motion injuries or getting stuck on a particularly hard job. In the last contract, Mitsubishi reduced the rotation to just two different jobs per shift and the injuries have skyrocketed."

West attributed the company's rapid reversal to the size and strength of the picket lines. "The strike started at 1:30 a.m. on Friday," he said. "I think they were startled by the solidarity of our membership. By 6:00 a.m. they contacted our negotiating committee and said they wanted to withdraw some of their concession demands from the table and asked us to restart the negotiations. Twenty-four hours later we had a tentative contract."

U.S. troops in Argentina for military maneuvers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In what the Pentagon described as "the largest joint and combined service exercise held in the region," some 400 U.S. airmen, sailors and soldiers are joining around 900 military personnel from several South American countries for "peacekeeping" maneuvers in Salta, Argentina, from August 22 through September 11.

The military operation, dubbed "Cabanas 2001," is being sponsored by the U.S. Southern Command. It includes U.S. special operations forces assigned to the 7th Special Forces Group in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and the Special Operations Command-South in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. Troops from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay are participating in the operation, while the governments of Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela have sent observers.

The northern Argentine province of Salta where the exercises are occurring happens to be one of the centers of resistance to the



United Auto Workers picket Mitsubishi Motors in Normal, Illinois, August 24.

Of the 2,800 members of Local 2488, roughly 2,200 participated in the ratification vote August 26, approving the contract with an 83 percent majority. Under the new contract, production workers' pay will rise from \$22.28 an hour to \$24.64 by September 2001 and to \$27.75 an hour by the end of the contract. They will also get two additional paid holidays. Mitsubishi was able to increase the

length of contract from three years to four and the workers will have a \$2 increase in their co-pay for prescription drugs.

As he was leaving the ratification meeting, Brad Shepley, an electrician with 13 years in the plant, said, "To have 1,000 people on the picket line and to win a strike in one day brings nothing but confidence to the membership."

government's austerity moves, where workers and peasants have been involved in ongoing protests against wage cuts and attacks on other social gains.

In mid-August eight opposition deputies in the Argentine parliament denounced these military maneuvers as part of a "strategy of aggression aimed at intervening in the internal affairs of Colombia and other Andean nations." They pointed out that the "enemies" that the maneuvers target are "potentially Argentine citizens and residents of our country who mobilize to protest social injustice."

In response to the question of why Salta was chosen as the site for this operation, U.S. general Reno Butler, who is in charge of the special forces of the Southern Command, claimed that one of the main reasons is the excellent weather in the area at this time.

The operation is aimed at simulating the intervention of a UN-type multinational peacekeeping force in the region. Two towns whose people are in conflict are being set up, together with demonstrations and armed patrols to police the area.

A year earlier similar exercises though on a somewhat smaller scale were conducted in the Argentine city of Córdoba.

In another development, a delegation of top U.S. officials led by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman and General Peter Pace, the head of the U.S. army's southern command, visited Bogotá, Colombia, for a couple of days at the end of August to review progress being made in strengthening the Colombian armed forces. The U.S. delegation also includes representatives of the Justice Department, the National Security Council, the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Agency for International Development. According to an EFE news dispatch, thousands of people lined the streets in Bogotá to protest the visit.

Since July 2000 the government of Colombian president Andres Pastrana has so far received nearly \$1 billion in military aid from the United States, with hundreds of millions more on its way shortly.

Washington claims the funds are for fighting a war against drugs but they're actually aimed at strengthening the government's hand in its offensive against armed opposition groups, such as the 20,000-strong Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, which controls up to 40 percent of the country, and the smaller National Liberation Army.

Over the past year U.S. military aid has provided the Colombian regime with 69 transport helicopters and has funded the training of a crack 3,000-member army brigade. By 2004 the Colombian army is projected to double in size from the 80,000 troops it had on hand in 1998.

In addition an elite 6,000-member Rapid Deployment Force is receiving new equipment and training. Washington has also sent \$5 million in aid to create a spying center for the police and military, and \$55 million went to "classified intelligence programs," according to George Vickers, director of the Washington Office on Latin America.

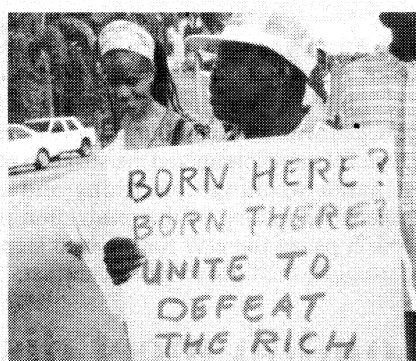
"Carrying out operations is now possible," said Gustavo Bell, Colombia's defense minister. "Strategic areas have been retaken that until just a few years ago were considered bastions or mobility corridors for guerrillas."

With the growing strength of the army, comes a bigger role for the rightist paramilitary groups as well. A September 2 *New York Times* article reported that residents in several villages throughout the province of Arauca "raised questions about the army's tactics. Some said soldiers treated them brusquely or threatened them, telling them the 'head-cutters,' meaning paramilitary gunmen, would be following."

THE MILITANT

Defend rights of immigrants, refugees

The Australian government's seizure of a ship carrying migrants from Afghanistan, and its refusal to allow them to enter the country, shows the imperialist powers' contempt for working people. The 'Militant' covers the worldwide struggle in defense of immigrant rights. Don't miss a single issue.



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'Strike! Strike!' say auto workers in Mexico

BY RÓGER CALERO

After two weeks on strike, auto workers at the giant Volkswagen plant in Puebla, Mexico, rejected the company's "final" offer of a wage increase August 28. They voted overwhelmingly to continue the walkout and reaffirmed their demand for a 19 percent raise. At a general meeting, described by the Mexican daily *El Universal* as the best attended since the beginning of the strike, more than 10,000 workers turned down an offer that included an 8.5 percent pay increase, plus a 1 percent hike for school supplies, and 0.7 percent raise for the basic food basket for workers and their families.

With their fists up in the air and chanting, "Strike, strike!" the workers cut short a report by José Luis Rodríguez, the general secretary of the Independent Union of Volkswagen Workers, about the negotiations with company and government representatives. According to *La Jornada*, as workers began to walk out of the union hall they had

AS WE GO TO PRESS...

Union leaders announced September 5 that they had reached a settlement with Volkswagen. According to the *New York Times*, the pact includes raises of 10.2 percent and additional benefits, including coupons good for food and children's school supplies.

Conference set for Cuban trade union leaders in Canada

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—At the September 3 Labor Day parade of 50,000 unionists, members of the Worker-to-Worker Canada-Cuba Labour Solidarity Network found interest in a Cuban Labour Solidarity Conference they are helping to organize in Windsor, Ontario, October 5-7.

Four leaders of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) Cuba's central union organization, will attend and speak at the conference. They are: Pedro Ross Leal, secretary general of the CTC; Leonel González González, CTC director of international relations; Manuel Montero Bistilliero, head of the CTC's North American Interests Bureau; and Diana María García, general secretary of the Public Administrative Workers union.

"We got support from oil workers in Algeria, maybe we should ask for support from Cuban workers," said a member of Local 593 of the Communications Energy and Paperworkers (CEP) union who has been on strike for six months against a union-busting drive by the Petro-Canada oil company.

"I didn't know there are unions in Cuba. I didn't think Fidel Castro would allow that," commented another member of the CEP. "This looks interesting."

"I think that's great, give me some leaflets for members of my union," said a union member celebrating with the rest of her contingent of mostly immigrant workers their recent victory against a month-long lockout by the Sheraton-Four Points hotel.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Canadian Auto Workers, the Ontario Division and the Toronto District Council of the Canadian Union of Public Employees are endorsers of the conference.

At the Labor Day parade in Detroit, supporters of the conference distributed information about the event. Windsor, the site of the meeting, is across the river from Detroit on the U.S.-Canadian border.

The solidarity conference is being organized jointly by Worker-to-Worker Canada-Cuba Labour Solidarity Network and the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange in the United States. The four Cuban union leaders had been invited to speak in 25 U.S. cities and Puerto Rico, but Washington canceled visas needed by Cuban trade union leaders to enter the United States.

The conference will be held at the Canadian Auto Workers Local 444 union hall in Windsor at 1855 Turner Rd. For information on registration fee, housing, and other details, contact U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange at Phone/fax (313)561-8330 or Worker to Worker Canada-Cuba Labour Solidarity Network at www.worker2worker.net or E-Mail: wtw@web.ca.

to be reminded that they needed to vote on the proposal, since not doing so would allow the government and the auto bosses to declare the strike illegal. Both sides of the labor dispute had been expecting a federal board—at the request of the company—to step in against the strike.

Union officials have said that the pay raise is "negotiable" and have scaled back their original demand for a 30 percent hike, insisting that they will not go lower than 10 percent. The union has said the increases will bring wages closer to those of other auto workers in Mexico, who won wage increases of 10.5 percent to 16.5 percent this year. Last year, VW workers won a 21 percent package of wage raises and other incentives.

The company has argued that it can't afford wage increases greater than the current national rate of inflation and has called the union demand "disproportionate." In a previous offer VW responded with a 7 percent raise. "This year VW cannot afford to be generous," wrote columnist Patricia Nelson, repeating the company's statements that the slowdown in the U.S. economy in auto sales gives them less room for wage improvements. These are "riskier than usual times for the National Workers Union to drag out proceedings by maintaining double-digit demands in what has become a single-digit reality," she added later.

VW says the strike is costing the company around \$30 million a day. "The company feels it is a hostage in this labor conflict," stated a VW press release, "and does not understand why it should be used as [a] test case." The company warned that the labor dispute may result in canceling future investment plans in Mexico.

The plant in Puebla employs 16,000 workers and is the only one in the world where the New Beetle model is manufactured. A study by the Workers University of Mexico



Auto workers on strike at the Volkswagen plant in Puebla, Mexico rejected company's inadequate wage increase proposal and voted overwhelmingly to continue their strike.

pointed to the steady increase in VW sales and profits in the last two years and noted such conditions mean the auto giant can grant "a good" increase to its workers.

The auto workers strike is taking place at a moment when the administration of President Vicente Fox has come under criticism for his failure to deliver jobs and put a halt to the massive layoffs triggered by the economic decline in the United States. So far this year, 100,000 jobs have been cut in assembly plants, the vast majority of them located near the border with the United States. About 85 percent of exports from Mexico go to the United States.

International Monetary Fund general secretary Marcello Malentacchi wrote a letter August 23 to Francisco Bada, vice-president of Volkswagen in Mexico, to express the

IMF's "extreme concern" at developments around the strike. Malentacchi urged the company and government to desist from "ill-considered" moves to declare the strike illegal and to negotiate in good faith. "Moreover, it is unlikely to lead to the results we all desire—a resolution of conflicts, a productive workplace, and decent incomes for workers," said the IMF official.

Francisco Hernández, a leader of the National Workers Union, said actions could be organized in support of the auto workers to press for a resolution to the dispute. The union official also threatened to organize rallies at the local offices of the federal labor board and during President Fox's state-of-the-nation address. Auto workers, their families, and supporters have already organized marches through the streets of Puebla.

Sweden: 7,000 march against layoffs

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON AND ANITA ÖSTLING

DEGERFORS, Sweden—Some 7,000 people turned out here August 26 for a march and rally to protest the closing of Stainless, a part of Avesta Polarit, a manufacturer of stainless steel. The company said 330 jobs will be eliminated in this community of 12,000 people, located in the midwestern part of Sweden. Production will be moved to a plant in the United Kingdom.

Workers, a number on a two-hour leave from their shift and wearing worksuits, led the march, carrying banners demanding "Jobs must stay in Degerfors," "Let Degerfors Live," and "Open the Books." Many workers and townspeople were pleased with the size of the march, the biggest in many years in Sweden.

Peter Lundin, in his worksuit, was in a fighting mood. "We will not lie down and die. Here we have always fought back. But over the last few days I have asked myself a question: 'How does a capitalist think? How do they think?'"

The Metalworkers Union is contesting the company's motives for closing the mill, arguing that production is profitable. The central demand from the union has been that the company open the books.

The march and rally was organized by the community council, the local social-democratic party organization, the unions at the mill, and a church. Flyers for the event were posted all over the town center, on store windows and office doors, and in restaurants.

Steel production started in Degerfors in 1660. In addition to the 330 jobs lost at the steel mill, at least 150 more will be cut with the elimination of subcontractors. In all, jobs of some 13 percent of the total number of people employed in the community will be eliminated. The union estimates that a similar layoff in Stockholm would affect 6,700 people.

Workers at Smidesbolaget, which subcontracts welding for Stainless, participated in the march and rally. They now expect cutbacks in their workplace, too. "I hope this mobilization helps. But I doubt it," said one. "It's already been decided, they won't change their decision. And it's not just here. It's happening all over the country."

There has been a sharp rise in layoffs throughout Sweden this year. In August,

companies laid off more than 6,000 workers, the highest figure since August 1992. Usually the least number of layoffs occur in August. So far this year more than 30,000 people have had their jobs eliminated. The single biggest layoffs have occurred at the electronic and mobile phone manufacturer Ericsson, with 3,200 dismissed, and Flextronics, another electronics company, which has cut 1,400 jobs. The rest are

smaller in number, but very significant when they happen in smaller towns with few workplaces. The job cuts are spread throughout the entire country and among many different kinds of production.

Birgitta Isacsson is a member of the Metalworkers Union in Södertälje. Anita Östling is a member of the Transport Workers Union in Stockholm.

Strike by banana growers in Ecuador forces gov't to pay guaranteed price

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Thousands of banana growers in Ecuador brought a 12-day national strike over crop prices to a victorious conclusion August 27. Through their concerted action the small producers forced the government to agree to enforce the price guaranteed under the law.

The growers went on strike August 16 in El Oro province to protest the payment by some exporting companies of as little as 60 cents per box—less than one-quarter the price of \$2.90 fixed under law. They backed up their stoppage by blocking highways in the area. Four days later *bananeros* in Guayas, Los Ríos, and Cotopaxi provinces joined the action, organizing sit-down strikes and preventing trucks from transporting the crop. On August 27 the government promised to guarantee the payment of the full price.

The New York daily *El Diario* newspaper reported that lost earnings from the strike amounted to more than \$30 million. Next to the oil industry, the banana trade is Ecuador's biggest export earner. The international trade in bananas from Latin American countries is dominated by U.S. corporations like Dole and Chiquita.

Social struggles in this country of some 12 million people have mounted in recent years, especially in response to government attempts to slash price subsidies and to implement other austerity measures demanded by International Monetary Fund officials on behalf of the imperialist powers.

Around 41,000 public workers organized a protest strike in mid-July in support of demands for wage increases. The action was

organized partly in solidarity with 16,000 doctors in state hospitals, who had stopped all but emergency services two weeks earlier. The president of the National Doctors Federation, Héctor Jarrín, explained that doctors receive between \$52 and \$280 each month—insufficient, he said, "to live with dignity."

The government of Gustavo Noboa has been working to cobble together an agreement with leaders of indigenous peoples organizations, in fear of further protests by these working people, who have already helped to spearhead an upsurge which forced the resignation of his predecessor.

Meanwhile, Noboa and economy minister Jorge Gallardo have announced a new package of "reforms" designed to "end the country's tradition of lax fiscal discipline," according to the *Financial Times*. The government claims it will use oil export earnings to reduce the national budget deficit and public debt. "Having dollarised its economy last year, Ecuador's maintenance of a low deficit is more important than ever, because it can no longer issue money or control exchange rates," noted the big business paper.

In a country where 70 percent of the population live under the official poverty line, some 1,400 people leave each day "in search of work and better conditions of life," reported the EFE news service on August 20. The total exodus amounted to 243,000 people over the last three years. Most travel to the United States, Italy, and Spain. Remittances from workers overseas exceeded \$1.3 million last year.

Hospital workers in Pennsylvania widen backing for strike

BY JENNY PARNELL

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—Two-hundred-fifty-six union members are continuing their spirited strike against Hazleton General Hospital despite stepped-up attempts by the hospital administration to undermine their fight.

The strikers, members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 2330, have been organizing 24-hour picket lines since August 18 when they walked out over issues of health-care insurance, mandatory overtime, and wage increases. Out on strike are licensed practical nurses; radiology, physical therapy, respiratory, dietary, and lab technicians; food service, housekeeping, and maintenance workers; and medical secretaries.

Strikers report a major reason for their strike is that the company's proposed raise will be erased by its plan to increase the cost of health insurance. Prescription co-pay, for example, would go from \$5 to \$10-\$35 with a proposed wage increase of only 35 cents an hour the first year and 40 cents the second year of the contract.

"Three years ago, a family [health insurance] plan was costing \$17 per pay period," said Janet Planutis, president of the union local. "Currently, it is costing \$76 a [bi-monthly] pay period." Striker and local officer Stan Piaskowski said the hospital told them that "the pie" that benefits can be taken from is only so big. "Is that the 1970s pie, the 1990s pie, or exactly which of their 'pies' is this?" he asked.

Pickets, most of whom preferred not to have their names published at this time, said they have been overwhelmed with support from other unions, people in the community, and registered nurses and doctors from the hospital—some of whom wear green ribbons at work in solidarity with the strike. The contract of the Hazleton General registered nurses expires September 30.

"Donations have included every kind of food and the Verizon workers came by with a wad of cash," reported one striker. "Even the delivery guys bring us pizza and ice cream." A constant stream of honking cars on a main street in town testifies to the support the hospital workers have won.

This past week employees of the fish hatchery and the state transportation department who are members of AFSCME took vacation time to join the picket line. Workers from Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and the Pennsylvania State Education Association have also picketed. Striker Kathleen Yeager said that the emergency personnel from the East End Fire Department are also regular visitors, and that the hospital doctors bring food by as well.

"I know what they're fighting for," said Mark, a worker picketing at the back gate of the hospital. He was on strike as a mem-

ber of the Steelworkers union in the Hazleton area, which waged a successful two-year battle in 1994 against the company General Foam, which sought to impose a 12-hour day on its workforce.

For many of the hospital workers this is their first picket line, and it is the first strike at the hospital since state workers walked out in Pennsylvania in 1975. Some of the part-time workers have come to help out, and mentioned that they have no health insurance whatsoever. "It's not true that hospitals have better health care for their workers as some people think," said one.

Rose Marie Devaney, who has worked in housekeeping for 15 years, also pointed out that the working conditions are difficult even without the overtime. "I have to clean 20 rooms every shift. I want to do the best job I can, but it is very hard with that many rooms."

Point-man for the hospital administration, Bernard Rudegeair, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance, wrote a letter filled with company distortions that was published in the Hazleton *Standard-Speaker*. In response,

Charleston 5 win support in New Jersey

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK AND AMY HUSK

HALEDON, New Jersey—The case of the Charleston Five is a "test of the South now," said Ken Riley, president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422 at a broadly sponsored meeting of 90 people August 24 held at the American Labor Museum.

Riley spoke at several meetings in the area as part of an international defense campaign for five longshoremen in Charleston, South Carolina, who were indicted by the state on felony riot charges after a mass picket of union members in January 2000 was attacked by 600 riot-equipped state troopers. The union had been holding the picket lines to protest the use of a nonunion stevedore company by the Nordana shipping lines on the Charleston docks. The five union members have been under house arrest for the past 18 months pending a trial schedule for this fall.

Riley also spoke at an August 26 meeting of some 40 workers sponsored by the Black Telephone Workers for Justice in Irvington, New Jersey. These workers, members of the electrical workers union, are employed by Verizon and are fighting to get Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as an official company paid holiday. Ron Washington, president of the Black Telephone Workers for Justice, announced the unionists would help establish a defense committee in New Jersey to raise funds and get out the word about the Charleston Five's fight for justice.

Chicago strikers join solidarity meeting with Charleston longshore workers

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

CHICAGO—Striking workers at V&V Supremo Foods here who are fighting for union recognition and a contract, joined a meeting in solidarity with longshoremen in Charleston, South Carolina, August 18. The company, a top producer of Mexican-style cheese, has hired strike-breakers to keep the plant running and armed guards to intimidate the unionists.

"It's very hard, especially for the ones with families, but nobody has gone back in. In fact, we've had some who have come out and joined the strike," Jesús Guzmán told the *Militant*. "Workers in other plants around Supremo Foods have told us if we win, they would organize a union too. We tell them they can count on our help." The workers have been on strike for 13 weeks now as part of their struggle to get Teamsters Local 703 recognized as their bargaining agent.

About a dozen strikers joined a meeting sponsored by the Rainbow/PUSH

Coalition at which Ken Riley, president of International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422 in Charleston, spoke about the union's campaign to defend five local union members who face felony frame-up charges of inciting to riot. The charges stem from a cop attack on a mass picket line of dockworkers who were protesting the shipping company Nordana's use of a nonunion contractor to unload its ships. Twenty-seven other workers face a civil suit for "damages" that carry fines totaling \$1.5 million.

On August 17 Riley addressed a meeting of about 200 at the union hall of Teamsters Local 705. "Uniting together we can make a difference," he said. Addressing the fight to defend the five dockworkers, Riley said, "The tide is turning, the truth is coming out, and now the prosecutors are saying it will be very difficult to find a jury to convict these men in South Carolina."



Strikers at Hazleton General Hospital rally September 3, where they burned management letters encouraging them to resign from the union and return to work.

the strikers display the letter on a sign saying, "Don't Believe the Lies!"

The hospital administration has mailed strikers another letter stating that their health insurance will be terminated at the end of August unless they pay as much as \$688 per month for a family plan. The letter claimed the strikers will not be eligible for unemployment insurance and that if someone crosses the picket line they will not be fired.

The letter reads, in part, "An employee

who decides to work during a strike can avoid being fined or otherwise disciplined by the union simply by resigning his or her union membership...by mailing to the local union a written letter of resignation. The resignation is effective at 12:01 A.M. the day after the letter is postmarked."

Striking hospital workers are inviting other unionists to a Labor Day "Letter Burning" of what some call "the resignation letter." So far only one striker has crossed the line.

"The South Carolina government is hostile to organized workers," Riley explained to the meeting, "and our union local—with all but two Black members—was there in Charleston at the protests to remove the Confederate flag from the statehouse. We organized buses and led the march. We open up our union headquarters to all organizations to meet."

Riley described what he called "the hottest industrial belt in the country along I-95 in the Carolinas." While wages in the Carolinas are lower than in other states and less than 4 percent of the workforce in South Carolina is unionized, longshoremen "make the same wages as they do here in Port Newark, New Jersey," Riley said. The government is targeting the longshoremen's union "because of these and our other activities in defense of workers and against racism." That is the context in which the picket line was attacked and the charges brought against the longshoremen, he said.

At the meeting held in Haledon, Riley announced that an international day of protest will be held the first day of the trial of the five, which the ILA expects to begin sometime in November. The union has made contacts in 18 different nations from Asia to Europe to ports in North America.

ILA Local 1233, which represents workers at the ports in New Jersey, organized a fund-raiser for the Charleston Five while Riley was in town. Willie Davis, president of ILA 1233, announced plans for members of his local to either attend the trial in South Carolina or organize demonstrations in New Jersey. His local will also march behind Riley at the New York City Labor Day parade on Saturday, September 8.

Sponsoring organizations for the August 24 meeting included Bergen County Central Trades and Labor Council; Communications Workers of America Local 1034, Local 1060, and Local 1080; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 827; New Jersey State AFL-CIO; People's Organization for Progress; New Jersey Jobs with Justice; Union County Chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute; and the Black Telephone Workers for Justice.

In New York, some 200 people packed into the hall of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) of Greater New York August 23 to hear Riley speak about the defense case. The event was sponsored by the New York City Charleston Five coalition and was chaired by Roger Toussaint, the president of Local 100 of the TWU.

Riley explained that the ILA went on an organizing drive among workers at the non-union outfit used by Nordana, called WSI. A majority there voted to join the union, but the company has appealed the vote to the NLRB.

Three TWU Local 100 stewards presented Riley with \$1,000 collected from

union members on the job for the defense of the Charleston Five. Another \$1,000 was collected at the meeting.

Nancy Rosenstock is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 506. Dan Fein contributed to this article from New York.

N.J. Monorail workers strike for a contract

BY AMY HUSK

NEWARK, New Jersey—Sixty-five workers walked off the job July 24 at the Bombardier Transportation company, which operates the new monorail system at the Newark international airport. The workers, who are maintenance technicians, are members of the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) Local 1. They both operate and maintain the light-rail system, which is run by computers with no train crew on board.

Workers voted to be represented by the IUEC in June 2000 but they have been working without a contract since. Union officials say the company has refused to negotiate in good faith because they do not want to recognize the IUEC as the bargaining agent.

According to John Matos, a member of IUEC Local 1, the vote to join the union last year was only 23 to 20, but in June the vote to strike was more than 90 percent in favor. Matos and several other strikers, who were on the picket line on a recent Sunday, explained that the main issues in the strike were not about money, but about how workers are treated on the job.

"The company has replaced workers who were out on disability," said Matos, "They fired one worker who refused to bring a train into the yard without clearing it—checking the train for people or belongings. This is part of the company's own standard operating procedures."

"They treat us like we're dirty rags," said Kyle Strand, "Promotions are based on who you are buddies with and if they like you." Strand explained that since the strike began, the company has only been running half the number of trains that they are contracted to run, using nonunion workers.

Strikers were forced to move their picket lines from the airport terminals where they were visible to the general public. They are now confined to a small area near the building they work at, which is off a cargo road exit. But the workers maintain a lively spirit in their present location and have been visited by a number of other unionists. On the morning of September 1 the union organized a caravan to drive slowly around the airport, tying up traffic for two hours on the first day of Labor Day weekend, in order to bring some publicity to the fight.

St. Paul meat packers win labor board ruling

Continued from front page

begin contract negotiations despite the majority vote in favor of representation. The bosses claimed the union had agents working in the plant who intimidated and pressured workers into voting for the union, and promised thousands of dollars and work permits to the mostly immigrant workforce if they backed the organizing drive. The company went so far as to assert that union supporters threatened to turn other workers over to the INS if they didn't cooperate.

But in November 2000, a hearing officer for NLRB Region 18 rejected the company's claims in a 64-page ruling, concluding that the employer's objections were without merit and certified the union election. Rosen's Diversified then appealed the election with the national NLRB in Washington, seeking again to overturn the union victory.

The filing of the appeal effectively stalled the union recognition process, giving the company many months during which to wage an antiunion campaign, hoping turnover at the plant and frustration among workers would lay the groundwork for reversing the union victory. But continued struggles and organizing by workers in the plant meant neither the company nor the NLRB could push aside the union. Nearly 14 months after the vote, the NLRB finally issued its second ruling.

The *Workers' Voice*, the newsletter of the union members at both Dakota Premium Foods and Long Prairie Packing, was distributed by union members August 31 announcing the union victory. Entitled, "Cause to Celebrate," the newsletter quoted the NLRB ruling: "IT IS CERTIFIED that a majority of the valid ballots have been cast for the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 789, and that is the exclusive collective bargaining representative of the employees."

Workers in the plant were electrified upon hearing the announcement. In the packaging department, composed mainly of women, workers began chanting back and forth, "What do we have? UNION!" accompanied by sporadic hook banging and chanting around the production floors.

"Time for a contract"

Miguel Olvera, a boning worker and leader of the fight for the union, stated, "We have been waiting for this and fighting for this. We deserve the union in our plant. The time has come for the company to negotiate a contract."

This NLRB announcement comes in the midst of a sharp attack by the company on the union. Two workers from the boning department were called to management's office August 16 and directed to a room where an INS official and a local cop were waiting. Without any explanation from the company or the INS officer they were pressured into signing a voluntary deportation agreement, taken into custody, and then held at an immigration office.

The company alleges the workers are guilty of forging more than \$90,000 worth of company paychecks. So far Dakota Premium Foods has claimed no responsibility for the arrests, saying that it is the company's bank that carried out the investigation. The company has been unable to provide any proof that these individuals are guilty, and these workers have clearly stated that they are innocent.

One worker taken into custody was able to make bail. He is a younger brother of a worker that played a leading role in the organization of the sit-down strike. Union members have yet to find out the location of the other worker, one of eight in the boning department who was a prominent union supporter.

The INS presence in the plant received a timely response by union fighters. A meeting of workers on both the cut and kill floors began to chart a course towards finding out

the facts about this incident, defending these workers, and winning their jobs back. They organized to publish and distribute an issue of *Workers' Voice* that explained to workers the truth about the attack by the company.

"The company washed their hands," said Olvera. "They accused workers in the plant of something that was the company's fault." "Management allowed the INS to enter the plant and arrest two workers. We cannot keep quiet about this. We must fight back for the defense of the workers."

Workers at the plant are planning meetings of union committees to discuss how to win their co-workers jobs back and the fight for a union contract.

"We have waited too long," said Angelina Castro, a boning worker at Dakota on maternity leave. "We need to move now to negotiations. We demand the company end its abuses, increase our salaries, lower the line speed, and value us as workers."

"This ruling is a tribute to the hard fought battle by so many Dakota Premium Workers," UFCW Local 789 president Bill Pearson told the *Workers' Voice*. He added that Rosen's Diversified will be contacted immediately to discuss dates for beginning negotiations for a contract.

Lawrence Mikes and Bobbi Negrón are members of UFCW Local 789 at Dakota Premium Foods

Unionists rally at S. Carolina labor day event

Continued from front page

was hosted by the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422 on September 3. Hundreds of area trade unionists and their families piled their plates high with food, enjoyed music and games, listened to the speakers, and prepared for the next stage in the ILA's fight to get the state of South Carolina to drop its antiunion campaign against five of its members.

Photographs of the five longshoremen indicted by state Attorney General Charles Condon—Kenneth Jefferson, Elijah Ford Jr., Peter Washington Jr., Rick Simmons, and Peter Edgerton—made the front page of the *Charleston Post and Courier* that morning, above the headline "Indicted longshoremen adopted as union crusade." According to the paper, "Free the Charleston 5" signs "are all over town."

The paper also featured on the front page the photo of the January 2000 police riot in which 600 police attacked dockworkers who were picketing the shipping company Nordana as it attempted to use nonunion labor to unload its ships. The felony charges against the Charleston Five, which carry up to 10 years in prison, stem from the police riot.

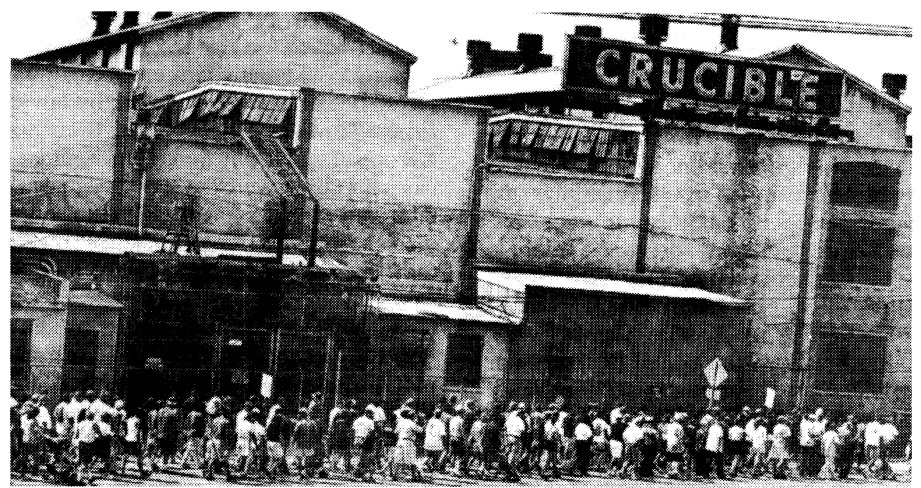
"We feel that they will be vindicated if they go to trial and get a fair hearing," said Leonard Riley, a dockworker and member of the executive board of ILA Local 1422, in an interview with the *Militant*. "But the state has the scales of justice tipped to their side," he added. Riley explained that the ILA had been expecting a court date in September. "Now it's slid to November. These guys have been under house arrest for nearly two years—for no reason. The dispute with Nordana has been settled. But the five are not allowed out of the Charleston area. They're not allowed out of their houses after 7:00 p.m."

The state of South Carolina has one of the lowest levels of union representation in the country and the rulers of the state want to keep it that way. They are taking this case seriously and hope to give a warning to all working people who may think about fighting for union rights.

Charles Condon, the state's attorney general and the main prosecutor in the case, has called for "jail, jail and more jail.... This is about the rule of law." In the *Post and Courier*, he asserted that unions "intimidate" people.

Speakers at the labor day event included ILA Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley. He denounced the continued house arrest of the five framed-up union members, explaining that the draconian conditions are intended to portray these workers as thugs. "All of labor is under attack," Riley continued. "If you think that as a working person you have a voice outside of the union, forget about it. We must unite workers all over the world and defend our unions. Because of struggles like

Unionists rally in support of striking steelworkers at upstate New York plant



Some 200 union supporters marched August 19 outside Crucible Specialty Metals plant in Geddes, New York, in support of striking steelworkers. The 600 workers struck on August 2, rejecting a three-year contract proposal that eliminated pension and retirement medical benefits for newly hired workers. "To cut pay and benefits doesn't seem right. My opinion is, if they can do it here, they can do it anywhere," said one participant, a former Crucible worker. Marchers chanted, "Unions are fighting every day so the workers can have their fair pay" on their way to the state fairground, where a band played before strike organizers spoke.

this, we have the opportunity to increase unionization like never before."

Riley reported that ILA local vice president Robert Ford spoke at the NGO forum in Durban, South Africa, associated with the UN conference on racism. Ford told the *Militant* that he also spoke to a meeting of COSATU, the South African trade union federation, in Durban and "we got a fantastic response."

Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, was the keynote speaker at the rally. Scott Wilson of the Screen Actors Guild, Ed Fire of the International Union of Electronic Workers and Communications Workers of America, David Mack from the South Carolina House of Representatives, and State Senator Robert Ford also addressed the gathering.

Workers express solidarity

South Carolina workers involved in strikes and struggles came to express their solidarity with the Charleston Five. About 75 workers, who are members of the recently merged International Union of Electronic Workers and Communications Workers of America (IUE-CWA), traveled here from across South Carolina. Many of them had also attended the June 9 rally for the Charleston Five in Columbia, South Carolina. Among them were workers from a Delphi-owned parts plant in Landrum, where the 51 production workers recently won union recognition and are now negotiating a contract.

Also part of the contingent were members of IUE-CWA Local 175, from the Enersys battery factory in Sumter. Workers from this local had come to the previous year's Labor Day Picnic in Charleston, where they discussed their fight against blatant racist discrimination and harassment of union leaders by the company. Since then, the situation has deteriorated. The company has recently laid off more than 300 workers, and is now down to about 50. Local 175 president Vincent Gailliard explained, "They say it's because of the economy. But with this company it may be to get rid of the union." Workers say Enersys did not follow seniority provisions in the layoffs. In June, management "came into what was supposed to be a negotiating session and pulled their recognition of the union, claiming they have proof that the majority of workers don't want it."

Around that time Gailliard was first suspended and then discharged June 22 "on trumped up charges of lying in an arbitration meeting. An arbitrator ordered them to bring me back to work and they refused, saying the arbitrator didn't have jurisdiction." He noted that the NLRB has laid eight unfair labor charges against Enersys.

The layoff of more than 300 workers is hard, since "other factories are laying off in the area. They have been forcing people out of the job—mostly union officers and mem-

bers—with layoffs, discharges, and forcing people to take demeaning jobs at half of their previous pay so that they will take unemployment."

Larry Maple, former vice president of Local 175, was also there. He was fired nearly two years ago and other companies in the area have refused to hire him since. Maple said, "If it's so slow, why are they sending work up to [the company's other plants in] Hayes, Kansas, and Richmond, Kentucky."

Maple and Gailliard, like most of the workers at the Sumter plant, are Black.

'This isn't our first battle'

Many generations of longshoremen attended the picnic. Marion Turner a member of Local 1422 for 42 years, said, "From the past—we stand our ground." Turner sat with a friend whose father helped to charter the Charleston local in 1936. "We did this work when it was backbreaking, when we worked by hand, when we had to grease the boards to get the freight out with four men rolling and four men pushing. We went through the strike in 1962 together, the civil rights movement in the '60s together. We are united. This isn't our first battle and I'm quite sure it won't be our last."

Louise Owens, a food service worker for the county, was one of many local residents who came out. Her late husband was a member of the ILA for 40 years, and her two brothers are union dockworkers. "I came to support the union and the Charleston Five." She said there's a lot of lawn signs up around the area where she lives in Ladson, just north of Charleston.

As participants entered the fairgrounds, they were asked to sign petitions demanding Condon drop the charges against the Charleston Five. Stacks of lawn signs were available to take home. Leonard Riley noted that while the union continues to reach out for support nationally and internationally, they have focused recent efforts on building support in the local area. This has included holding "town hall" meetings in local communities and meeting with ministers and local politicians. Speakers at the rally announced that there will be a demonstration the opening day of the trial of the framed-up dock workers.

Naomi Craine is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 1501. Arlene Rubinstein is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1996.

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Farmers speak out against discrimination at Alabama meeting

BY KARL BUTTS
AND LAUREN HART

EPES, Alabama—Two and a half years after the U.S. government agreed to settle a lawsuit for decades of discrimination by the agriculture department, many farmers have yet to see compensation they are eligible to receive. Farmers attending the 34th Annual Meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC), held here August 17–18, spoke out against the denial of thousands of applications by farmers seeking relief under terms of the lawsuit.

In April 1999, the farmers' class-action lawsuit, *Pigford vs. Glickman*, was settled through a consent decree signed by federal judge Paul Friedman. Tim Pigford, a farmer from North Carolina, was the lead plaintiff in the suit against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), claiming decades of racist practices by the agency, such as denial of loans and disaster relief. Daniel Glickman was the secretary of agriculture at the time the suit was filed. Thousands of Black farmers have lost their land because of the racist discrimination they face at the hands of USDA officials.

At the FSC conference, some 200 farmers and others attended the session devoted to an update on the lawsuit. The consent decree stipulates that Black farmers who present evidence of discrimination in applications for loans and other assistance between 1981 and 1996 will receive a payment of \$50,000 and debt relief. According to the USDA, of the 21,350 claims filed and processed under this provision, nearly 40 percent have been rejected by a panel of judges called adjudicators. Farmers whose claims were approved say payments and debt relief have often been slow in coming. The delays especially affect those who have managed to continue farming and are most in need of the relief.

Those who have their claims rejected can appeal the decision to a monitor appointed by the court to oversee the settlement. Lawyers from the monitor's office told the farmers attending the conference workshop that they review an appeal, and if they determine that the adjudicators made an "error" in their decision, they send the appeal back to the same group of judges for a second and final decision. So far the adjudicators have not made a decision on any of the cases sent to them by the monitor's office. Farmers peppered the lawyers with questions, asking if the appeal goes back to the same judge, what the timeline for appeals is, and if the adjudicators are paid by the government, won't they be biased toward the government?

Another concern of farmers was how late claims were being handled by the government. The original deadline for filing a claim under the consent decree was October 1999. Late claims were accepted July through mid-September 2000 for those who could show "extraordinary circumstances" prevented them from meeting the first deadline. Showing the scope of discrimination faced by farmers, some 65,000 submitted late applications for relief under the lawsuit. According to the monitor's office, 32,000 of these applications have been so far turned down on an unappealable judgment that they did not provide evidence of "extraordinary circumstances." Several participants in the FSC conference raised questions about this process, including elderly farmers who were in the hospital at the time of deadlines.

Many farmers pointed out instances where the lack of competent legal help to navigate the provisions of the consent decree has led to many rejections of compensation claims. Farmer Mattie Mack from

Kentucky said many farmers had claims rejected because of sloppy work by lawyers. Ernest Howard, a hog farmer from South Carolina, stated, "It looked to me like the cases approved were those that were worked on by a lawyer. I know people who couldn't meet the 120-day deadline to appeal because they couldn't find a lawyer" to take their case.

Farmers were also outraged by the tax bills they receive when they do win a settlement. Each farmer who receives the \$50,000 payment gets an additional \$12,500 to offset taxes. But the Internal Revenue Service is demanding farmers pay taxes on the entire \$62,500. Others complained that some receiving settlement checks had their Supplemental Security Insurance checks and other government assistance terminated.

Rose Sanders, a lawyer who represents many of the farmers in the suit, noted that the FBI has been harassing some of the plaintiffs, alleging fraud. She stressed that no one should speak to the FBI about their own case or anyone else's without a lawyer present.

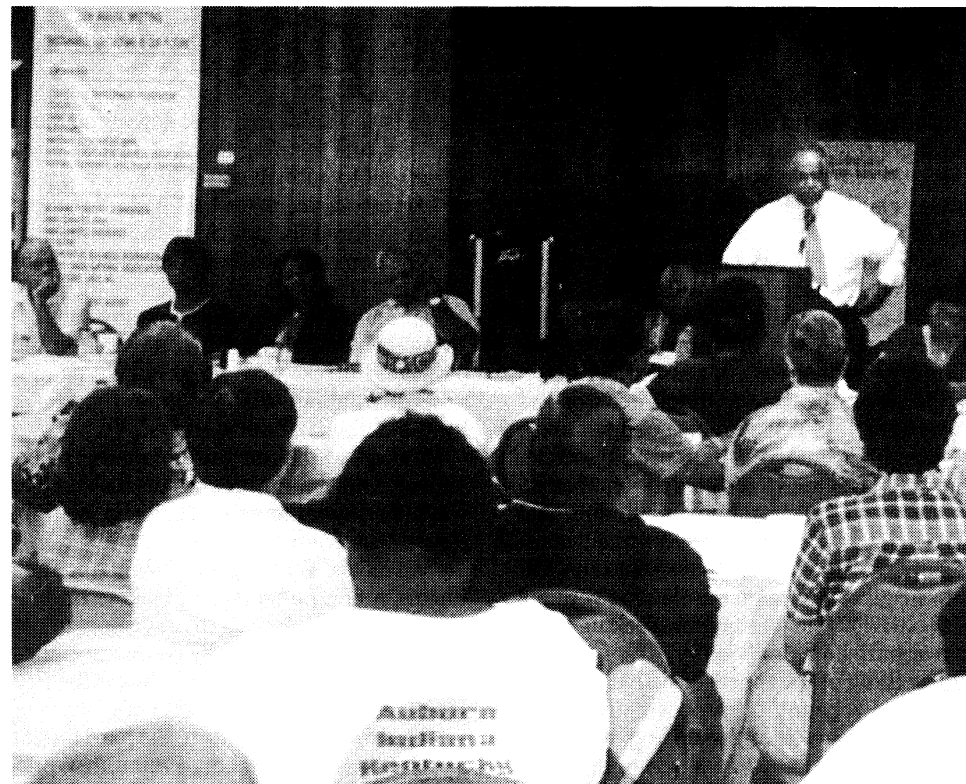
The FSC adopted a resolution on the lawsuit expressing concern over the high denial rate, the long delays in deciding claims, the fact that many USDA employees who discriminated against Black farmers in the past remain at the same posts and have not been penalized in any way, and many other problems with the settlement.

In the discussion, Charles Sherrod, a minister who would like to farm, said he supported the resolution but "there is going to come a time when we'll have to put our bodies on the line again. We've got to march again, brothers and sisters." His remarks were greeted with applause.

Squeeze on farmers continues

The fight by farmers to gain access to essential loans and disaster relief from the government, and to end the humiliating racist discrimination by USDA representatives, is part of a larger battle against worsening conditions of exploitation farmers face. Low prices paid by large agriculture companies for the food and fiber they produce, combined with the rising price of fuel, implements, and other inputs, is driving the worst crisis in the countryside in decades. Several conference sessions, such as "Trends and Issues in Sustainable Agriculture" and "Black Farmers and the 2002 Farm Bill" were part of the discussion on how to address this situation.

The theme of the Trends and Issues workshop was to urge farmer members to move away from traditional crops such as tobacco, cotton, peanuts, corn, and soybeans to instead rely on higher-priced organic produce, cut flowers, and "value-added" products, such as washed and packaged vegetables. Farmers understand that making this shift



Militant/Karl Butts

Farmers attend annual meeting of Federation of Southern Cooperatives in Epes, Alabama, August 17-18. At conference some 200 farmers and others participated in session devoted to update on discrimination lawsuit filed against USDA.

to high-input horticultural crops would require increased debt and a long-term learning curve, as well as hundreds of hours of their additional labor to produce the added "value" to their product.

In the workshop discussion, several farmers pointed to the continued cost-price squeeze that is driving more small farmers off the land. Among the first to speak was William Mack, a member of the Kentucky Minority Farmers Association, who explained that the government cuts the amount of tobacco farmers can grow as the cigarette manufacturers are pushing farmers into contract arrangements. Many small farmers depend on tobacco plots for a large portion of their cash income. There's "nothing that can make money like tobacco," Mack noted. "It's not that we agree with smoking; we're just trying to make a living."

William Mack and his wife Mattie Mack have 100 head of cattle and grow 1.5 acres of tobacco. "We used to raise 8–10 acres" of tobacco, he said in an interview. But now the market is "so competitive the small farmer can't make anything," he said. The shift to contract farming, where a farmer commits to sell the crop directly to the cigarette manufacturer, is rapidly killing the warehouse system where farmers traditionally have auctioned their crops. The companies pay a little more than the warehouses now as an enticement, Mack said, "but you don't know if that will hold up. So the minority farmers are sticking with the warehouses."

Paul Alexander, also a tobacco farmer and member of the Kentucky Minority Farmers, said he now has to travel 60 miles to the nearest warehouse to sell his crop. "They've cut a lot of jobs at the warehouses," he added. Alexander's tobacco quota has been slashed in recent years, and when the government eliminates the price support on tobacco, currently \$1.54 per pound, many small farmers like himself will be further

devastated.

According to Leon Crump, a leader of the FSC in South Carolina, 80 percent of tobacco production in that state is now grown under contract.

The program on the 2002 Farm Bill, currently being considered in Congress, centered on how to stop the lion's share of program benefits from going to large capitalist farm operations. Today, three-quarters of agricultural subsidies go to the top 10 percent of farmers, FSC program operations director John Zippert noted. The average annual payment to the wealthiest 1 percent of farmers is \$200,000; for the bottom 90 percent the average is \$6,000. As uneven as this distribution is, government moves to phase out commodity support programs will make conditions even worse for small farmers.

David Center of the American Corn Growers Association noted with concern that the support price for corn has fallen to \$200 per ton. He also argued that the increased import of crops such as peanuts is one of the major reasons for the crisis farmers face in the United States. He and Zippert were both scheduled to speak at a press conference against "free trade" agreements in Montgomery, Alabama, the following week.

Among the main legislative proposals of the FSC is increased funding for the Section 2501 Minority Farm Outreach Program, which helps provide technical support and information on government programs to minority and small farmers.

The July 2001 issue of *The Rural Agenda*, the FSC's paper, features the organization's proposals for the 2002 Farm Bill. The paper also includes a report on a visit by leaders of the FSC to Cuba earlier this year. Photos from the delegation's visits to cooperative farms in Cuba were on display during the conference.

Karl Butts is a farmer in Plant City, Florida.

U.S. gov't secretly obtains reporters' phone log

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In its latest attack on the freedom of the press, the U.S. Justice Department secretly obtained the home telephone records of an Associated Press reporter, Robert Solomon, who was researching a story about the federal investigation of Sen. Robert Torricelli, a Democrat from New Jersey.

According to an August 29 *New York Times* article, Solomon "returned home from vacation to find a letter dated August 20 from the office of the United States Attorney Mary Jo White of Manhattan, executives with The Associated Press said. The letter informed him that the phone records had been turned over in May."

"This subpoena asked MCI Worldcom to produce the records of incoming and outgoing calls to Solomon's home in northern Virginia from May 2 to May 7."

Associated Press executive editor Jonathan Wolman demanded an explanation from the government for this action. "We know of nothing that comes close to justifying such a gross violation of the editorial process," he said.

This is the first such move by the Justice Department in more than two decades. It ignores 21-year-old internal government guidelines that had virtually eliminated federal subpoenas of reporters' phone records. These guidelines, which are not legally binding, require federal prosecutors to pursue "all reasonable alternative investigative steps" and in most cases to notify in advance the journalist whose records are being sought.

In addition to the subpoena of the AP reporters' phone records, prosecutors pursuing the case against Torricelli have also subpoenaed three bookstores, seeking records of specific customers, said Stephen Rohde, a lawyer for Arundel Books, one of the stores.

This move against the AP reporter comes as the Justice Department has sent Vanessa Leggett, a freelance writer in Texas, to jail for refusing to comply with a federal subpoena ordering her to turn over all copies of her notes and interviews about a murder case under investigation by federal prosecutors. On July 20 a federal judge sentenced

Leggett to up to 18 months in jail for contempt of court. A federal appeals court reaffirmed the lower court's decision August 17, refusing to release her from prison.

In an unsigned ruling the court said that even "assuming that Leggett, a virtually unpublished freelance writer, operating without an employer or a contract for publication, qualifies as a journalist under the law, the journalist privilege is ineffectual against a grand jury subpoena, absent evidence of governmental harassment or oppression."

More than a dozen news organizations, including the Associated Press, have filed briefs on Leggett's behalf.

Meanwhile, Congress is set to once again hold hearings on a bill that would criminalize the disclosure of any kind of classified information. A similar bill was approved by Congress last year without a single public hearing but was vetoed by then-president William Clinton. The Democratic president expressed sympathy for the bill's intent, while encouraging legislators to draft a "more narrowly drawn provision."

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Oregon family farmers fight for water rights

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon—On April 6 the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the federal government water management agency overseeing the Klamath Irrigation Project, announced that for the first time in 92 years there would be no water available for irrigation, and that the headgates through which the water usually flows were to be kept closed. The government cited as reasons for their action the ongoing drought in the Pacific Northwest and the protection under the Endangered Species Act of the sucker fish in the Upper Klamath Lake and the coho salmon downstream in the Klamath River.

In addition to the 1,400 farm families who are fighting for their existence, the drought is affecting several Native American peoples, as well as commercial fishermen, because it adds to the long-term decline in the numbers of fish in the lake and river, which flow through northern California into the Pacific Ocean.

By closing the headgates the BOR denied water to about 90 percent of the farmers here. In face of this devastating act, many farmers have had to sell off their cattle, let pastures and hay fields go fallow, and give up their annual crops. Farmers, local merchants, and some local and state government officials organized several rallies to protest the BOR action. On March 9, farmers and their supporters drove hundreds of tractors and other vehicles through Klamath Falls. A second rally of some 6,000 people was held April 12, followed by a "bucket brigade" May 7. There, an estimated 10,000 people dumped water from buckets into the canal in a symbolic gesture of their demand that water be released for the farmers.

In July, protesters took over the headgates and opened them, releasing water into the canals leading to the farms. Each time the federal marshals came and closed the gates. The protesters have set up an encampment near the headgates and have promised to stay there until a long-term solution is reached that guarantees the farmers water for irrigation.

Access to water—for irrigation, hydroelectric power generation, drinking, and fishing—has been at the center of political and economic conflicts for decades in the West, as competing capitalist interests jockey for their own advantage and profit. As in the past, these forces, aided by rightist groups and the big-business media, are attempting to turn workers, small farmers, fishermen, and Native peoples against each other, blaming one or another for the crisis.

Under capitalism natural disasters such as droughts, floods, or hurricanes tend to be turned into social disasters for working people as capitalist corporations and their government refuse to mobilize available resources and aid needed to ensure the lives and livelihoods of workers and farmers are protected. This situation can be seen today from Klamath Falls to drought-ridden Central America, where tens of thousands of peasants face food shortages, loss of jobs, and homelessness as neither Washington nor the capitalist regimes in the region will take steps to benefit working people.

Bureau of Reclamation

While the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is often cast as a friend of the working farmer, it is in fact an arm of the most powerful imperialist government in the world and serves the interests of the giant agribusinesses and the energy monopolies. The agency is the largest wholesaler of water in the country and controls water access for one out of five farmers in the West, irrigating land that produces 60 percent of the nation's vegetable crop and 25 percent of its fruits and nuts. The BOR runs 58 power plants generating more than 40 billion kilowatt hours a year, making it the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the western United States.

Last month a fact-finding team of socialist workers from Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles visited Klamath Falls to report on the crisis for the *Militant*. Signs supporting the farmers are prominent in store windows throughout the town. Given the importance of agriculture to the economy, the entire population is affected by the water crisis and everyone we talked to had opinions about it. There are about 25,000 residents in the Klamath Basin, which includes the town of Klamath Falls. It does not rain often, but thanks to irrigation, farmers here can grow alfalfa, barley, potatoes, and onions.

"With irrigation the soil can produce 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of alfalfa per acre," Klamath farmer Jim Shadduck told us. "But without water, you only get 200 to 400 pounds per acre." He also explained that he relies on his family to farm "because we can't afford hiring migrant workers." Thousands of migrant workers have left the area because there is no work for them on the farms.

Jim Enman, a 70-year-old farmer who participated in a BOR pilot program for farmers to sell their irrigation water rights for the year, said that he drilled his own well. He was lucky and got enough water to irrigate his 225 acres of land where he cultivates alfalfa and raises cows. Others who drilled for water were not as fortunate.

At the irrigation canal headgates, cattle rancher Bill Oetting told us that he had to sell most of his cattle in order "to feed the cattle left through the summer and to have enough hay to go through the winter, because there is no pasture without irrigation."

Another farmer we spoke to was Gavin Rajnus, whose grandfather was one of the first Czechoslovakians to receive land here in 1911. "He came here because the project guaranteed them water," Rajnus explained. Rajnus has not cultivated his 165 acres of potatoes this year.

Government promised water

The Klamath Project was one of the first projects built through the Newlands Reclamation Act, which was signed by the federal government in 1902. The act had as its objective developing the power of capitalist agribusiness as U.S. imperialism was beginning to expand economically and militarily. The federal government encouraged working people to become farmers and began a massive project to reclaim desert land, drain swamps and lakes, and construct irrigation projects and reservoirs to convert the land for agricultural use.

Much of the land in the Klamath Project was sold to veterans of the two world wars. Today the project provides water for 240,000 acres of cropland to around 1,400 mainly small farmers. The headgates to the canals which bring water to the farmland have been opened every spring since 1909.

In face of the protests the federal government announced July 24 that they would release 75,000 acre-feet of water into the canal (an acre-foot is the amount of water that would cover one acre one foot deep). This is one-sixth of the 450,000 acre-feet normally used. The headgates were opened by federal officials until August 23 when they closed them again as some protesters watched.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced on August 17 that payments to landowners and producers will be given soon under the \$20 million Klamath Basin Water Conservation Program. Those payments will range, it said, between \$90 to



Above: Militant /Elizabeth Lariscy, right: Deborah Liatos
Above, irrigation canal of the Klamath River Basin Project that was closed. Left, Signs supporting the farmers fight for access for water.

\$110 per eligible acre.

Gloria Palacios, a former raisin grower in the San Joaquin Valley, took issue with the federal government's paltry aid to stricken farmers in the Basin. "This aid won't be enough and we'll see in whose hands it ends up," she said. Behind the water crisis, she continued, "are always big corporations that are using the environment issues for their own interests."

Rightist intervention

On August 21 some 4,000 farmers and their supporters rallied in Klamath Falls to greet the "Freedom Day" convoy, which traveled to the Basin from the states of Montana, California, Idaho, Nevada, and Washington. While many people attended the rally to show their support for the Klamath farmers, a number of the organizers of the program were rightists.

In Malibu, for example, where the California convoy originated, one of the rally organizers was the Reform Party, whose candidate for U.S. president in 2000 was ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan. Buchanan advances an American nationalist program that scapegoats immigrants, Blacks, working people who receive welfare, woman's rights advocates, and others for the crisis of capitalism. Buchanan seeks to build a cadre that is the core of a future fascist movement in the United States.

Eloza Foster, a prominent rightist politician who is Black and who stood as Buchanan's vice-presidential running mate, was the rally spokesperson. Foster told participants, "Maybe if some of the farmers in Klamath were Black they'd get some help," referring disparagingly to the class-action lawsuit won by Black farmers who fought against decades of discrimination by the United States Department of Agriculture (see article on opposite page).

Many of the speakers at rallies held on the way to Klamath Falls attacked the Endangered Species Act as the main threat to the "property rights" of small farmers. Some trucks sported bumper stickers such as "RAGE—Revolution Against Green Ex-

tremism." Environmental groups calling for farmland buyouts to reduce water demand were labeled "green bigots" and other names. Signs also said "Government Agencies Are Unconstitutional."

Because of the magnitude of the crisis in the Klamath Basin, radical rightist solutions and unscientific nostrums have gotten a hearing from some farmers. For example, the web site maintained by an organization called Klamath Basin Crisis contains articles about "environmental groups that are trying to eliminate rural lifestyles in the Klamath basin." Books extolling reactionary conspiracy theories are featured, with titles like "Ecoscam: The False Prophets of Ecological Apocalypse." The most prominent sponsor of the web site is a group called Frontiers of Freedom/People for the USA, which de-



scribes itself as having "a strong history of promoting property rights and an empowered citizenry served by a limited government."

Not everyone in the Basin agreed with these views. Allen Foreman, chairman of the Klamath Indian Tribes, disagreed with the idea that the main problem is "environmentalism." The "Freedom Day" convoys message "will actually hurt farmers and ranchers in the Basin, by raising false hopes and discouraging people from coming together to focus on the search for workable answers," he said. He pointed out that altering or eliminating the Endangered Species Act would not solve long-term problems such as the allocation of water, or poor water quality caused by agricultural chemical runoff.

Foreman issued a statement in July that explained the Klamath Tribes "gave up 20 million acres of land" in 1864 in exchange for a government treaty guaranteeing water rights to support fisheries and other resources. "Later, when the government invited farmers to move into the Basin and suggested that water would be available, the government did not tell the farmers about the Tribal water rights."

Foreman dismissed the idea that keeping the fish species from extinction was an acceptable solution. He noted that the "federal government's responsibilities to our people will not be met until fish populations are restored to harvestable levels. We also believe the federal government has a responsibility to the farm families who, like the Klamath Tribes, now depend on a water system that is simply incapable of meeting current demands. We are a people," he added, "who for years have felt the pain of being unable to meet the needs of our families and communities, and we do not want

Continued on Page 14

Palestinian students in Montreal answer attacks

BY DIMITRIS FASFALIS
AND JOANNE PRITCHARD

MONTREAL—Two Palestinian rights activists have been expelled from school by the administration of Concordia University. College officials claim Laith Marouf and Tom Keefer, both elected representatives of the Concordia Student Union (CSU), assaulted a security guard, but the students have denied the charges. Eleven people who witnessed the altercation have signed a petition demanding that a hearing be held and they be allowed to testify to the fact that it was Marouf who in fact was assaulted.

The altercation took place when Concordia's security guards escorted Marouf to the main campus of the university after he spray painted anti-Israel graffiti on the wall of a Concordia building that is currently being demolished.

Several organizations that are against the expulsions have set up a defense committee to wage a public campaign to ensure the reinstatement of the two CSU militants.

This move follows a series of other attacks against democratic rights on the campus. Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), a student-based organization, was denied the right to use Concordia land as the assembly point for a September 15 march and rally for Palestinian rights. The administration has also decided to enforce a limit on putting up posters on the campus and has called into question the right of some organizations to use university facilities.

Two English-language newspapers, *The Suburban* and *The Gazette*, have launched a ferocious campaign against the Concordia activists. *The Gazette* ran an August 25 editorial supporting the expulsions and the refusal by the university to allow use of their property for the September 15 rally, claiming that "it's important to safeguard the integrity of universities and not allow them to be subverted."

Despite these attacks, SPHR is proceeding with the September 15 rally, titled "End Israeli colonialism—Unite for Justice," as

planned. It is being built by a coalition of more than 50 organizations and is expected to attract thousands of participants.

Among those speaking out against the attacks on the students by the Concordia University administration has been Al Cappe, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal. "This is an attack on the democratic rights of all," Cappe said in a statement. "Trade unions and other organizations should protest this violation. As the Israeli rulers prepare to go to war against the Palestinian people, their pro-imperialist backers all over the world will move to stifle opposition to this war. Our response to these attacks has to be one chosen by the Concordia students who are doubling their efforts to build a successful rally."

Dimitris Fasfalis is a member of the Young Socialists and of SPHR at the University of Montreal. Joanne Pritchard is a meat packer and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Western Sahara freedom fighters host revolutionary youth

BY JACK WILLEY
AND CARLOS CORNEJO

SMARA, Refugee Camps of Western Sahara—Coming out of the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, 14 people from Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States visited the refugee camps of Western Sahara, August 19–21. The visit was hosted by the youth organization of the Polisario Front, Ujsario, which organized a full program of activity that presented the facts about the history and current stage of their independence struggle, the conditions under which they are fighting, and the advances led by the Polisario Front to improve living conditions of refugees in the camps.

Mohamed Mouloud, general secretary of the Ujsario, welcomed the delegation to the Sahrawi camps—located in southwestern Algeria, in the middle of the Sahara desert near the border with Western Sahara—and gave a brief overview of the Sahrawi fight for self-determination.

Western Sahara was a direct colony of Spain from 1884 to 1975. In 1975, the Spanish government relinquished direct control of Western Sahara and handed it over to the regimes of Mauritania and Morocco, which swiftly moved in to militarily occupy the territory.

"The majority of our people are here in the desert in four refugee camps, which are run by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Repub-

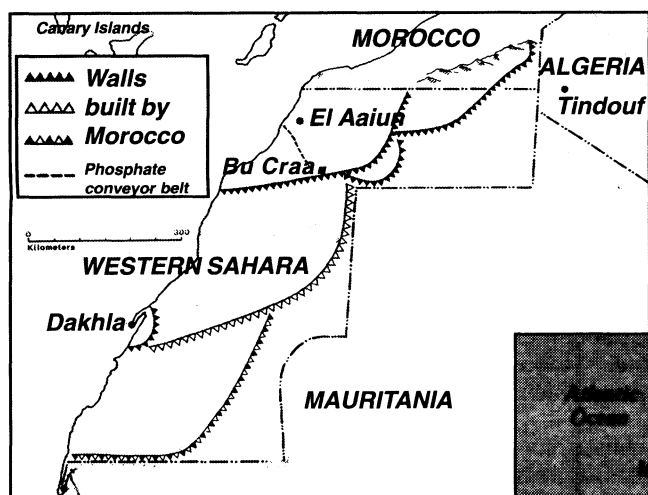
in 1991 signed a UN-brokered agreement in which the Moroccan government pledged to hold a referendum by Sahrawis to decide on independence or integration with Morocco. The Moroccan government and UN have stalled the implementation of the referendum agreement and as of today no date is set for the vote.

In July, the UN Security Council, seeking to undercut the independence struggle, adopted a resolution that would give territorial "autonomy" to Western Sahara, while allowing the Moroccan government to continue its military occupation and its control over the natural resources and domestic and foreign policy.

During the solidarity visit, the delegation met with UN representatives on the "Sahara conflict." After explaining the UN position and the refusal of the Moroccan government to recognize Sahrawi independence, the representatives said the UN Security Council is presenting a "compromise that can appease both parties." The proposal was immediately rejected by the Polisario Front and other Sahrawi mass organizations.

The Association of Family Members of Sahrawi Prisoners and Disappeared (AFAPREDESA) issued a statement that was widely distributed at the world youth festival and to the visiting delegation, stating their position on the UN proposal.

"Morocco has obtained once more what it always wanted," the statement said, "to get rid of a situation that would lead the Sahrawi people to recognize their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence. This time the protagonists of this dilatory maneuver are the two powerful nations of the United States and France. AFAPREDESA remembers the position of each of these



lic (SADR)," said Mouloud. "We came to this region because of the military occupation and terror of our country by the Mauritanian and Moroccan governments, which forced most of our people to flee." Today, some 180,000 Sahrawis live in the camps, 84,000 in occupied Western Sahara, and several thousands in the Polisario-controlled liberated zone in the east of the country.

The Ujsario leader said the years 1975–76 "were very difficult. At that time, refugees had no homes, young people had no schools, there were no hospitals or medical facilities, and no modern means of communication. On Feb. 27, 1976, the day the last Spanish soldier left Western Sahara, we established the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. But the Polisario Front had no experience administering refugee camps. International aid was very limited. We did not have enough food, clothing, or medical supplies.

"Over time we have built schools and sent thousands of our youth to other countries to study," he said. "We have established relations with organizations to receive the necessary aid and we've worked hard to advance medical services for the people in the camps. We are administering an area that is both temporary and preparing for the future at the same time," Mouloud explained.

The Polisario Front continued to lead the independence struggle and defeated the Mauritanian regime in 1979. The Mauritanian forces withdrew from the southern third of Western Sahara and recognized the SADR government-in-exile. Moroccan forces extended their occupation into the previously Mauritania-controlled region and the armed struggle waged by the Polisario Front continued.

The Moroccan government and the Polisario Front entered into a cease-fire and

two countries that are responsible for the exile and barbarity committed against the Sahrawi people."

During the trip, the delegation visited a museum of military equipment captured by the Polisario Front during its guerrilla war with Morocco from 1975 to 1989. On display were dozens of land mines the Polisario forces defused during the war, U.S.-made fragmentation bombs, tanks, personnel carriers, grenade launchers, automatic weapons, and other weaponry. The majority of weapons were provided by the U.S. and French governments, but there were also weapons that had been provided to the Moroccan military from governments in Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, South Africa, and the former Soviet Union.

The museum included a model of the 1,200-mile wall built by the Moroccan regime to separate the occupied region of Western Sahara from the Polisario-controlled liberated zone. The Moroccan government has set up military posts along the length of the barrier and lined the wall with antipersonnel and anti-artillery land mines.

Rich in phosphates

"Western Sahara is a very rich country but the Sahrawis are a very poor people," explained Omar Mansour, minister of health of the SADR.

Near the city of Bu Craa lies one of the world's richest phosphate deposits, which



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Top and left, Sahrawi leaders discuss independence struggle with visiting delegation of revolutionary youth. Right, Ujsario leader talks to guests during tour of museum in which weapons captured by independence fighters are on display.

Spain began exploiting in 1969. Under a 1975 agreement, the Spanish government was given a 35 percent stake in the phosphate mines and the remainder was divided between Morocco and Mauritania. Since then, Morocco has exported up to 3.7 million tons of phosphate annually at a handsome profit for the occupier and its backers in Madrid, Paris, and Washington. In addition to phosphate, Western Sahara has a 750-mile coastline with large fish reserves.

The Sahrawi struggle has a decades-long record of fighting against imperialist domination and of championing the position that the natural resources of the country are the patrimony of the Sahrawi people, a position that the imperialist powers view as a threat to their domination of the region.

Brahim Dahi and Mohamed Tamik, members of the Executive Committee for AFAPREDESA, met with the delegation and showed videos documenting the resistance in the occupied part of Western Sahara.

Dahi said 207 Sahrawis were "disappeared," there are more than 150 Sahrawi prisoners of war in Morocco, and hundreds of others have been arrested and held in prisons without trials. "The Polisario Front has 1,400 Moroccan prisoners of war. We released several hundred prisoners after the cease-fire," he added. "Now, the International Red Cross and UN Security Council are pressuring the Polisario Front to release more Moroccan prisoners."

After the referendum agreement, the Moroccan government carried out a major campaign to move tens of thousands of Moroccan citizens into settlements in Western Sahara, declare them Sahrawi, and demand they participate in the referendum vote on independence or integration with Morocco. The UN mission estimates some 250,000 Moroccan civilians and troops now occupy Western Sahara, compared to 84,000 Sahrawis in the occupied territory.

Protests demanding independence

In face of severe repression by the Moroccan authorities, Sahrawis in the occupied territory have organized demonstrations demanding independence.

After King Hassan II of Morocco died and Mohammed VI took the throne, Dahi said, "thousands of Sahrawis held a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun, our capital. They were attacked by the police and 1,500 were detained. Twenty-seven were arrested, convicted on false charges, and given 5–15 year prison sentences."

Dahi and Tamik showed a video of a May Day rally held in El Aaiun this year called by the Moroccan Workers Union. Although the union officially supports the regime's occupation of Western Sahara, dozens of Sahrawis participated with banners and chants demanding information about the hundreds of Sahrawis who are "disappeared" or political prisoners.

The international delegation visited the National Sahrawi Radio, which broadcasts seven hours each day through short-wave, with programs in Arabic, the native Sahrawi language, and Spanish. Technicians there explained the radio station began in Libya in 1975 and moved to Algeria a year later with a small transmitter. They have built up

from there. The main targeted audience are the people in Morocco and in occupied Western Sahara. The radio is considered subversive by the Moroccan government, which used to regularly scramble the signals forcing the station to continuously change frequencies.

Mohamed Salem Mohamed Nayem Breir, a radio DJ and antennae technician, said, "Everything changed last year when several groups and a local government council in the Basque country raised money and gave us modern equipment. The Moroccan king is very frustrated because he can no longer scramble our signal and our reach is farther and clearer."

The station plays a wide selection of music from around the world, offers international news and updates on the liberation struggle, and runs programs focusing on women, youth, cultural issues, and health.

Advances in the refugee camps

The SADR has taken a number of measures to improve the quality of life in the refugee camps, including building a national hospital. The hospital includes a laboratory to produce more than 30 kinds of medication, an X-ray facility, surgery rooms, and a dental clinic. The hospital also has a mobile dental clinic that travels to each camp and offers free dental care. All medical care is free of charge and is codified in the SADR Constitution as a right.

In addition to the Sahrawi medical staff, doctors from Cuba, Italy, Spain, and other countries take stints working at the hospital. The international delegation met with the eight-person doctors brigade from Cuba, in place for the last 25 years, with doctors rotating in for two-year missions.

Omar Mansour explained the government has built health-care centers in each camp and carried out a vaccination program. The Sahrawi infant mortality rate has dropped substantially from 250 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1975 to 60 per 1,000 live births, he said. The life expectancy has risen from 56 years 25 years ago to age 61 today.

"Our goal is to convince as many Sahrawis as we can to stay in the camps to continue the struggle, not to emigrate to other countries," Mansour said. "We are taking every step we can to provide everyone with the necessities of life and ease the hardships of living in the camps to help make this possible."

The international delegation joined several hundred Sahrawis in the Smara camp who heard presentations reporting back from the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algeria. After the presentations, there were musical and dance performances. Some of the guests were also part of a traditional wedding ceremony with music and dancing. The leadership of the liberation movement encourages and frequently hosts cultural activities.

Although there is no access to major sources of electrical power in the camps, the Polisario Front and other mass organizations have arranged for most families to have access to a solar panel to charge a car battery that can then be used to power a fluorescent light, small television, or am-

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In UK, youth discuss anti-imperialist festival

Continued from front page

London event here on August 25.

The International Socialist Educational Conference was hosted by the Young Socialists and the Communist League in the United Kingdom. It also featured a Militant Labor Forum with Norton Sandler from the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States speaking on "The Working-Class Road to Peace and a Livable Environment."

Chairing the panel were Anne Howie from the Communist League in the United Kingdom and Yonathan Moldanado from the Young Socialists. Both participated in the 33-person delegation that attended the Algiers festival from the United Kingdom. "The world festival was a very successful event for every one who is working to build a worldwide anti-imperialist youth movement," said Howie.

The process of building the festival in several countries enabled the Young Socialists to establish new links with revolutionary forces in Asia and the Pacific, said Annalucia Vermunt speaking for the Young Socialists in New Zealand. "We advanced our collaboration with organizations from Bangladesh, India, Japan, north Korea, Nepal, and Vietnam," she said. The YS in New Zealand was invited earlier this year to join the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the main organization that has initiated the youth festival.

Struggles led by students in Papua New Guinea grew in July, Vermunt said, and protests pushed back government plans to introduce individual title to the communal lands. Other austerity measures, including proposals to privatize the banks, were also met with protests.

"As soon as we contacted student leaders there," she said, "they were enthusiastic about the opportunity the festival presented to collaborate with others resisting similar conditions. They faced many obstacles getting to Algiers, including the university administration freezing student funds that eventually precluded their attending the festival, but we have already received an invitation to go there and report to them on the Algiers event," she told the crowd.

"Those involved in the struggle for independence of New Caledonia, a French territory in the Pacific," Vermunt said, "sent two delegates to Algiers who took advantage of being there to discuss with other participants their struggle for independence from French colonial domination."

Place of communist program

Carlos Cornejo was part of the 14-person delegation from Canada at the festival, which included four participants from Quebec. "When you participate in this kind of event with such wide-ranging discussions you can appreciate better the place of our communist program, codified in Pathfinder books and the *New International*. Our world movement sold nearly 600 books," Cornejo said. "The best seller was *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, followed by *Capitalism's World Disorder*, both by Jack Barnes, *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara, and issues of *New International*." The YS table became a center of discussion that hundreds of participants stopped at, said Cornejo.

"Just one example was a delegate from Paraguay who ordered 30 copies of *The Communist Manifesto* in Spanish for use by study circles organized by his group and met with Young Socialists to plan further political collaboration.

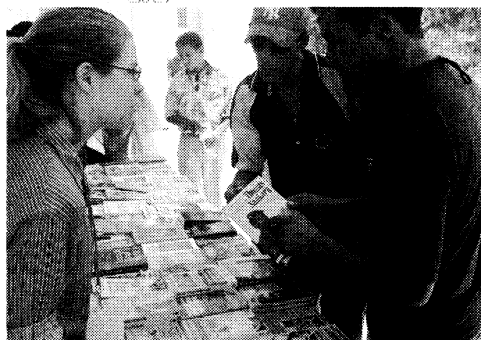
"We saw the reward for the tremendous effort that goes into editing our books, and the work by volunteers to translate them into French, Spanish, Farsi, Icelandic, and Swedish," Cornejo stated, "and the importance of the effort reprint volunteers around the world put into making sure these books are in print."

Jack Willey, from the United States, said that the success of the festival "came as a result of hard work by a number of youth organizations around the world who participated in several international planning meetings for the gathering.

"What was registered at the 1997 festival in Cuba was the decisive break with the traditions of the previous 13 gatherings. The 1997 meeting was open to all groups and individuals who wanted to join in an anti-imperialist gathering and was marked by wide-ranging discussions and debates on central



Militant/Jacob Perasso
At 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algeria: above, speakers panel; right, Young Socialists sell revolutionary books and periodicals. The festival "was a very successful event for everyone working to build a worldwide anti-imperialist youth movement," said one participant at London socialist educational conference. "There was a tremendous hunger for revolutionary ideas, for Marxism," said another.



questions of revolutionary working-class politics. Many youth groups around the world are now building on this new tradition. All groups and individuals who support the anti-imperialist character of these events are welcome to come and join in the debate.

"It was a battle all the way to the end between forces who wanted to build on the victory of the 1997 festival in Havana to bring thousands of anti-imperialist youth together again, and those who raised objections to another gathering open to everyone who agrees with the anti-imperialist slogans and where no organization has veto power over who can attend. It was a great victory," Willey said, "to be able to hold the event on the African continent, near the center of the unfolding battle of the Palestinian people fighting against Israeli occupation and an accelerating war drive. It was a victory to hold the festival in a country like Algeria, where workers and peasants carried out a victorious revolution against French imperialism.

"Social democratic parties around the world organized a boycott of the festival and held their own event a couple of weeks before in Panama," he said. "This is the same world political current that heads the governments of the imperialist France and Germany today, and was part of leadership of the French government when it tried unsuccessfully to drown the Algerian revolution in blood. The boycott effort—led by the Front of Socialist Forces, a social democratic party in Algeria, and picked up by Stalinist Communist Party youth groups in Canada, France, Italy, Japan, and elsewhere—was a failure.

As an article in the August 17 *Granma International* put it, "The 15th World Festival of Youth and Students that took place in Algeria from August 8–16 signifies the continuity of an event reinitiated by Cuba in 1997 after it had been forgotten for close to 10 years."

Attendance from semicolonial countries

The event was marked by the attendance of thousands of youth, mainly from countries oppressed by the imperialist powers who are part of popular struggles for national liberation, worker and peasant struggles, and student protests. The festival reflected the fact that imperialism is weaker today and unable to quell national liberation struggles internationally.

Ólöf Andra Proppé, a Young Socialists leader in Iceland and co-chair of the nine-person delegation to the festival from that country, described some of the experiences of the 14 youth who visited the Western Sahara refugee camps in southwest Algeria after the festival.

"The trip to the refugee camps came out of the initiative of the youth group of the Polisario Front, Ujsario, and was a natural extension of the work of the YS to link up with other groups and individuals fighting imperialism." Activists from Ujsario hosted meetings during the festival with delegations

forces backed by the French rulers. These youth were united in their opposition to imperialism."

He also said the festival presented a real opening to reclaim the call of the Third International under Lenin, "Workers and Oppressed Peoples of the World Unite."

Panel co-chair Maldonado answered a question about Plan Colombia. He said there was unanimous rejection at the festival of the U.S. government's Plan Colombia, which is not a "war on drugs" as the imperialists in Washington claim, but an attempt to deepen U.S. military domination in Colombia and the whole region.

Anne Howie responded to a question from the audience about the role of delegates from the Middle East. "After another of the Israeli regime's assaults on Palestinians in the occupied territories was carried out, festival participants held a large spontaneous demonstration at one of the large discussion centers condemning the attack. The Palestinian delegation was one of the largest from the Mideast," she explained, and added to the anti-imperialist content of the meeting.

For example, a representative of the General Union of Palestinian Students spoke at one conference session, stating, "We need to reorient our debate towards rehabilitating the national liberation struggles in the progressive youth movement to guarantee dignity and freedom of the oppressed nations and eventually peace in the world." He argued that the "anti-globalization" protests, such as those held in Seattle and Genoa, Italy, did not have an anti-imperialist character, and have confused many youth because right-wing groups are so comfortable in taking part in them, and cannot be pointed to as an example to follow.

The discussion and debate at the festival was just the beginning, said Perasso. "This was the first time that Young Socialists from around the world have worked together in such an intense world political event. The international YS has emerged stronger and more cohesive and we now have increased responsibilities and tasks internationally.

"This trip has encouraged us to study more the history and lessons of the workers movement," he said. "When we return to our respective countries we will be better able to explain the world we live in and the need to build communist parties and Young Socialists organizations. We will work with everyone who was attracted to this anti-imperialist youth gathering to prepare reportback meetings on campuses and recruit every individual we can to building a proletarian youth organization."

New York City, Sun., September 16 Communists and the World Struggle against Imperialism Today

Speakers include

Jack Barnes

National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

Mary-Alice Waters

Editor of *New International*

Jack Willey

National Committee, SWP

Steve Clark

Editorial director, Pathfinder Press

- ◆ Growing divergence of anti-imperialist struggles in the colonial world and radical politics in the imperialist countries
- ◆ The Algeria youth festival: a step on the road to a new communist international
- ◆ Energy, science, and agriculture: uniting toilers of town and country worldwide
- ◆ The disintegration of Stalinist forces and their convergence with anarchism
- ◆ The place of Pathfinder books and pamphlets: from Algeria to Cuba, to factory gates and mine portals, to street corners in workers districts, to the 'Lumumba' film show

Reception: 1:00 p.m. Program: 2:00 p.m.

Frank Altschul Auditorium, 4th Floor, 420 W. 118th St. at Amsterdam Ave. (on the Columbia University campus)

Hosted by: Brooklyn SWP: (718) 567-8014; Garment District SWP: (212) 695-7358;

Newark SWP: (973) 643-3341; Upper Manhattan SWP: (212) 740-4611;

Young Socialists: (212) 695-1809.

**Sponsors: Socialist Workers Party National Committee
Young Socialists National Executive Committee**

Socialists launch NY mayoral campaign

Continued from front page
struggles big and small.

"That is who we are bringing the socialist alternative to and in whose interests the campaign speaks," emphasized Koppel, who is the editor of the *Militant* and its sister publication in Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial*. Socialist Workers supporters are campaigning in working-class areas from Manhattan's Garment District, where tens of thousands of workers labor in clothing shops, to Sunset Park in Brooklyn and Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan. They are meeting fellow workers at factory gates and at street corners, and setting up campaign tables with the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and books on revolutionary politics.

The slowdown in the world capitalist economy and rising unemployment is already hitting working people in the United States and having a devastating impact on workers and farmers in the semicolonial countries. "Strikes, such as by auto workers in Mexico and South Africa; protests against draconian austerity moves across South America; the resistance of the Palestinian people and the Sahrawi fight for independence in Western Sahara; and struggles by coal miners, dock workers, auto workers, and others in the United States are all examples of the resistance of working people to the capitalist onslaught," he said.

"As this crisis deepens, the conflicts between Washington and the various imperialist powers in Europe will sharpen," Koppel pointed out. "The U.S. rulers will step up both their assault against the rights, union organization, and wages and working conditions of working people at home, as well as the devastating drive against workers and farmers around the world through use of the military might and the economic domination of finance capital."

"Our campaign points to a different road: one of revolutionary struggle of workers and farmers to take power out of the hands of the superwealthy ruling class and to replace it with a government of our own."

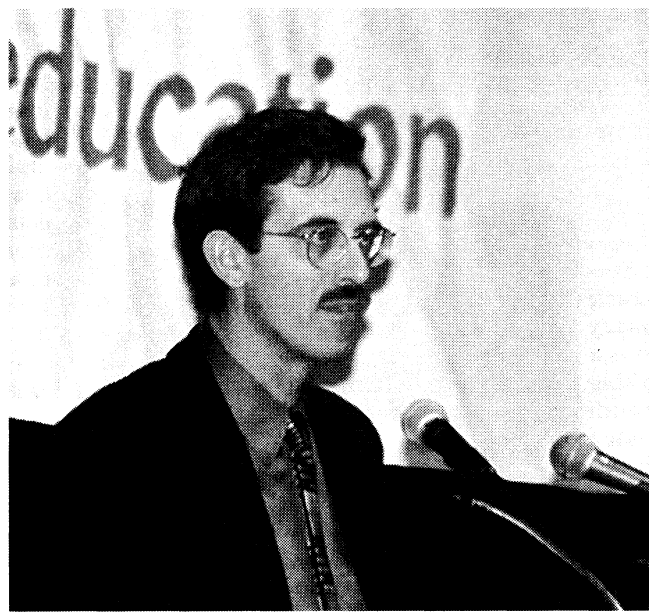
Koppel and other socialist campaigners are joining the September 8 Labor Day parade here. The event is expected to be marked by labor struggles such as the campaign to defend the Charleston Five—longshore workers battling a frame-up by the ruling class in South Carolina because of their efforts to oppose the use of non-union labor on the Charleston docks. Koppel has joined the call for dropping all charges against the five members of the International Longshoremen's Association, which stem from a January 2000 cop assault on a dockworkers' picket line.

"The defense of these five unionists deserves the active backing of the labor movement and of all working people," Koppel said. "By standing up for their rights, the Charleston dockworkers have struck a chord. They have tapped the resistance and the growing hunger for solidarity among workers and farmers around the country."

The socialist campaign will be joining and supporting other struggles by working people, from the protests by the Carpenters union and others against union-busting with the now-familiar giant inflatable rats, to the fight in Long Island to defend immigrant workers from deportations and ultrarightist thugs, to actions in defense of a woman's

right to choose abortion.

One of the main supporters of the Koppel-for-mayor campaign here is the New York chapter of the Young Socialists, a nationwide revolutionary youth organization. Local chapter organizer Bill Schmitt stated, "We're going all out to campaign for the socialist candidates. It's an exciting opportunity to meet other revolutionary-minded young people—and we're meeting quite a few—and win them to the perspective of joining the fight to build a mass working-class movement that can make a revolution in this country and join the worldwide fight



Militant/Hilda Cuzco
SWP candidate for mayor of New York, Martín Koppel, speaking at meeting earlier this year celebrating 40th anniversary of Washington's defeat at Bay of Pigs in Cuba.

for socialism. That's what the Young Socialists is about.

"For young people who are reacting against the exploitation, the racism, the inequality of women, the wars that are normal features of capitalism," Schmitt said, "there couldn't be a clearer difference between the various capitalist candidates and what the Socialist Workers stand for."

The real 'us' and 'them'

Koppel noted that "the big-business candidates—from Democrats Mark Green and Fernando Ferrer to Republican Michael Bloomberg—are working overtime to convince working people that they are going to be 'a mayor for all New Yorkers.' They say 'We must fix our broken schools' or 'We must never go back on crime.'"

"But all the talk about 'our city' and 'our country' is a giant lie," the socialist candidate said. "Working people have no interests in common with the tiny class of ruling billionaire families, or with the Democrats and Republicans who serve them. *We* as workers and farmers produce the wealth. And *they* maintain their power and their profits by driving down our wages and social gains, restricting our rights, and sending us to fight in wars to protect *their* class interests."

"But we have everything in common with fellow workers and farmers both in this country and around the globe," he said.

A clear example, the socialist candidate said, is the Israeli regime's accelerating war drive against the Palestinian people. "Working people in the United States have a big stake in opposing the U.S.-backed Israeli assault and standing with the Palestinians fighting for a homeland," he stated. "The fact that the Palestinian people refuse to be crushed into submission made that struggle a feature of the recent United Nations conference in Durban, South Africa—one that got too hot for Washington and its junior ally, Israel, who had to pack their bags and leave."

Many of the other issues debated at the UN conference highlight the fact that imperialism has no solutions to the problems faced by hundreds of millions around the world—whether they be working people in the semicolonial countries or the exploited and oppressed in the major industrialized countries.

"It is imperialist domination by Washington, Paris, London, Tokyo and other major capitalist powers that is responsible for perpetuating the oppression and super-exploitation of the semicolonial world, where the vast majority of humanity lives. Racist and chauvinist prejudice is one way they justify this plunder and underdevelop-

ment. Similarly, racist prejudice and discrimination is inherent in capitalist rule both within the United States and other capitalist countries. It is used by the wealthy rulers to try to pit working people against each other.

"Working people must fight every manifestation of racist discrimination and champion demands that unite working people around our common interests, from affirmative action to defense of rights of immigrants."

War abroad and at home

Koppel said the U.S. rulers' growing reliance on military might to strengthen their class interests abroad—from their expanding intervention against Yugoslavia to the initial moves toward developing a space-based missile shield—is a war against fellow working people abroad that is intertwined with the deepening assault on workers and farmers at home.

Over the past decade this offensive has meant a record increase in heavily armed cops on the street, longer prison sentences, and reduced protection against arbitrary search and seizure by the cops and courts.

"In New York, all the Democratic and Republican candidates are tripping over each other to be 'tough on crime,'" Koppel noted. "They praise the Giuliani administration for its police crackdown on working people, and offer their own suggestions for 'proactive policing,' as Ferrer recently put it."

Koppel argues that police violence against working people is not an aberration. "Brutalizing workers and farmers is simply part of their job of serving and protecting the rich. That's what the cops are for in this capitalist society."

By December, Koppel noted, "the federal government will cut nearly 39,000 working-class families off Aid to Families with Dependent Children in New York City alone—and hundreds of thousands more nationwide. They face the five-year cutoff decreed in the law signed by William Clinton in 1996 to 'end welfare as we know it.'"

"Under that callously brutal measure, these workers, mostly single women with children, are left jobless or pressed into often degrading, minimum-wage jobs. That indignity led a group of workers here to demonstrate last month to demand the government guarantee 'real work and real pay,' an action I salute."

"Today, more working people are unprotected by unemployment benefits, health insurance, and other social guarantees. With continuing signs of an economic slowdown, even more people will become vulnerable," he pointed out. Already, the number of homeless workers in New York has been rising sharply. "Applications for city shelters are running 30 percent higher than last year, while soup kitchens around the city now serve *half a million people a month!*"

The dismantling of the federal welfare system is part of a broader offensive by the employer class to squeeze more and more out of the hides of working people. Koppel pointed out, "Workers in the United States worked nearly a full workweek longer in 2000 than they did a decade ago. They now put in longer hours than workers of all other imperialist nations."

"This lengthening of the workday, brutal speedup, downward pressure on wages, and other employer attacks are accompanied by probes against workers' social wage, which the assault on welfare paved the way for. The bipartisan debate today on Social Security is entirely in the framework of accepting a breach in its character as a universal entitlement. In the name of 'saving' Social Security, Democrats and Republicans argue that it depends on whether there is 'enough money' and that cuts may be 'necessary' if the so-called budget surplus runs out—whether by raising the retirement age, reducing pension benefits, or shifting toward individual private savings accounts."

"But this whole debate is a fraud," Koppel said. "For one thing, the capitalist government has always 'dipped into' funds that should be guaranteed for Social Security. Its budget priorities put interest payments to billionaire bondholders above the needs of working people."

"For working people, our job is not to fig-

ure out for the bosses how to divide up the 'budget.' Our starting point is that Social Security is a question of social solidarity and that working people have a right, not just to an individual wage but to a social wage that includes guaranteed retirement pensions, lifetime health care, and other basic needs."

Uniting workers, farmers in struggle

Koppel said that working people "do not have to accept a 'lesser evil' among the capitalist politicians and their pro-boss solutions. Our unions need to stop pouring funds and resources to keep the parties of the bosses in office under the guise that they are 'friends of labor.' Our campaign points to some basic demands that the labor movement needs to wage a fight for—demands aimed at uniting workers and farmers to defend our conditions and solidarity in face of growing unemployment, rising indebtedness, and attacks on our hard-fought social gains." He outlined the following demands:

- A massive, government-funded public works program to create thousands of jobs building housing, schools, hospitals, day-care clinics, and other necessities.
- A shorter workweek with no cut in pay, spreading around the available work.
- An increase in the minimum wage.
- Guaranteed full health, disability, and pension benefits for all.
- Defense of affirmative action measures with quotas.
- The immediate end to all farm foreclosures. Instead, the government should offer small farmers cheap credit and adequate price supports to protect their livelihood.
- Canceling the foreign debt imposed by Washington and other imperialist powers on semicolonial countries, which is devastating the jobs and lives of millions of fellow toilers.
- Lifting all U.S. tariffs and other trade barriers such as "anti-dumping," "environmental protection," "fair labor," and other trade weapons wielded under the banner of "free trade."

"We should join with working people in Latin America and the Caribbean in opposing the Free Trade Area of the Americas and other imperialist-controlled institutions," Koppel added.

"Workers in this country should reject the protectionist arguments of the employers to defend 'American jobs,' which pit workers here and abroad against each other. Instead, we need to fight together against our common enemies—the employers and their government, from Washington to New York City Hall."

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Need a revolutionary organization

Koppel argued that "a successful fight for these demands points to the need to organize a movement of millions to take power out of the hands of the billionaire minority and establish a workers and farmers government, contributing to the international struggle for a socialist world."

"Revolutionary Cuba today is a living example that a socialist revolution is not only necessary, but it can be made. That's the perspective that the Socialist Workers campaign offers to fighting workers and young people today. With the growing mood of resistance among workers and farmers throughout this country, we are finding a greater interest in considering the socialist alternative."

"I am urging these militants to read and study the *Militant* and books that give a scientific explanation of world events and point the road forward." He emphasized Pathfinder's *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, and "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," contained in issue 11 of *New International*.

"Those who want to bring about a revolutionary change need to be part of a revolutionary organization. That's why I urge them to join the Socialist Workers Party or the Young Socialists. I know of nothing more rewarding than being part of this fight for a socialist future."

SOCIALIST WORKERS CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR

Boston—Sarah Ullman, garment worker

Cleveland—Eva Braiman, meat packer

Detroit—Osborne Hart, meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW)

Houston—Tony Dutrow, meat packer

Miami—Mike Italie, garment worker

New York—Martín Koppel, editor, *The Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*

Pittsburgh—Frank Forrestal, coal miner and member of the United Mine Workers of America

Seattle—Ernie Mailhot, meat packer and member, UFCW

St. Paul—Tom Fiske, meat packer

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Socialist coal miner speaks on resistance in coalfields

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK—Frank Forrestal, union coal miner and Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, spoke at an August 25 Militant Labor Forum here on "Resistance in the Coalfields." The meeting was attended by 75 people. Olympia Newton, a national leader of the Young Socialists, chaired the event.

"The fight of miners to defend our union deserves the support of all working people," Forrestal told the audience, which included garment and meatpacking workers and a worker from New Jersey who had been a gold miner in Ecuador before coming to the United States. For working people in this city, the discussion on the broadening struggles of working people in coal mining regions who are resisting the antiunion assaults by the employers and worsening social conditions was welcome, since this aspect of the class struggle gets little coverage in the press here.

Forrestal described the struggle of members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at mines owned by Robert Murray, who owns nine mines, seven of which are nonunion. It is one of the central struggles in the UMWA today. "Murray's goal is to make all nine mines nonunion," Forrestal said. "Our goal is to make all mines union." Murray is the largest family-held independent coal producer in the United States. Like other capitalists who employ miners to extract coal, Murray "is on a concentrated push for longer hours, ever more production, more nonunion mines, and more use of contract miners," Forrestal explained.

Union members have called off work recently to hold union meetings on two Memorial Days as part of their protest of speedup and unsafe working conditions in the mine where he works. Forrestal said the mine has been shut down several times in recent months by the government agency responsible for enforcing health and safety regulations in the mines due to the presence of high levels of explosive methane gas and

other safety violations.

"When Murray holds 'awareness days'—such as a recent one where he and a manager assembled miners in the bathhouse and lectured them for two and a half hours—the union responds with our own 'awareness days,'" Forrestal said, which are the Memorial Day events. As part of their fight against the company, local union members recently voted 335-10 to reject a contract offer presented by the company.

"When the bosses call us 'cowards' and 'sheep' and say we must have low IQs to have voted the current union leadership into office," Forrestal said, "you feel like you're being abused and treated like trash." Forrestal recommended that listeners read *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes, which explains how this disdain for working people expressed by the employers generates resistance.

"The mine owners' total disregard for the life and limb of miners," Forrestal said, "is matched by how they destroy the air, land, and water." One frequently-used technique of mining is "mountain top removal," Forrestal said, in which the peaks of mountains are bulldozed off and processed to remove coal. But because of the drive for profits, the coal companies leave behind devastated valleys, destroyed river basins, and land subject to erosion.

A by-product of coal mining, a sludge called slurry, is stored in ponds, many high

in the mountains, Forrestal said. When their containing walls break, as happened last year near the town of Inez, Kentucky, he said, "you get a 14-foot tidal wave of slurry coming down the hills."

Forrestal said the socialist mayoral campaign in Pittsburgh has been speaking out against attacks the capitalists and their allies have launched against a local "living wage" ballot initiative to raise the minimum wage. He noted that Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan recently called for abolishing the minimum wage, claiming this will stimulate the flagging capitalist economy.

Some of the backers of the living wage campaign have made the statement, "I want my taxes invested to pay workers minimum wage," Forrestal said. His campaign takes a different approach. "We're not for investing workers' taxes, but for ending all taxes on working people," he said. Instead, socialists demand a single tax—a sharply graduated income tax on those whose income is above that of working people.

His campaign for mayor, Forrestal said, has aided socialist miners in expanding their political discussion and debate among co-workers and winning more miners to subscribe to the socialist press. For example, a



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Frank Forrestal, union coal miner and Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, speaks to supporters during petitioning effort to get on ballot.

co-worker said he thought the U.S. government is justified in building up military capacity aimed at "foreign countries dumping their products" on U.S. markets. Forrestal said he was able to discuss why "the most protectionist government is in Washington." Overall, he said, miners are giving the campaign a positive response.

During a lively discussion period, one participant described his experience as a gold miner in Ecuador, where miners' health and safety is endangered by some of the toxic chemicals used in mining and refining gold and by the collapse of tunnels. "What is involved is the same all over the world," he said. "It makes it more important for workers and peasants to be united."

SWP campaign office vandalized in Iowa

BY KEVIN DWIRE

DES MOINES, Iowa—The campaign headquarters of Socialist Workers city council candidate Edwin Fruit was the target of vandalism September 2. At some point during the night eggs were thrown against one of the display windows of the campaign's

offices, which also house the Pathfinder Bookstore.

Fruit's campaign was mentioned in a front-page article in the August 31 *Des Moines Register*, which listed the candidates who will be on the October 9 primary ballot. "Though council elections are nonpar-

tisan, Fruit wants to share a Socialist outlook for the city," said the *Register* article. "The production worker in Perry's IBP meatpacking plant has said excessive police force, a lack of support for labor, insufficient women's rights, and big government threaten the city."

Campaign supporters reported the attack to the police, and faxed a news release to the local media. The *Register* interviewed Fruit over the phone about the attack and ran an article on the incident in its September 3 issue.

Fruit issued a statement saying his campaign will not be intimidated from speaking out on questions crucial to workers and farmers and encouraged supporters of democratic rights to speak out in defense of freedom of expression. "We will continue to explain our perspectives to working people and farmers starting with the Labor Day Parade today," the socialist meat packer said. "We will explain that the capitalist system is continuing in the direction of war and economic depression; that the only solution is for workers and farmers to break from the Democratic and Republican parties and unite to form their own government in their own interests."

Fruit, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1149, and his supporters marched in the parade alongside a pickup truck driven by Larry Ginter, a farmer from Rhodes, Iowa.

Some 1,000 unionists took part in the parade, including a good-sized contingent of members of the United Steelworkers of America who have been on strike against Titan Tire since May 1, 1998. Recent reports in the local media have said that a settlement is near in the strike.

Several strikers told campaign supporters they were going to stick with the strike however the negotiations turn out. Many have found other jobs, including at the Des Moines Firestone plant. One striker, asked if he would leave his job there to return to Titan, said he would even though it would mean a cut in pay. "Five years down the road there needs to be people in that plant who can look at Morrie Taylor and say 'you didn't beat us,'" he said.

Socialist campaigners passed out brochures to hundreds of workers and their families who lined the parade route. Fourteen copies of the *Militant* and three copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* were sold along the parade route, and a literature table was set up at the start and end of the parade.

Kevin Dwire is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 at Swift in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Meat packer runs for mayor of Houston

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign of Anthony Dutrow, candidate for mayor of Houston, have collected 1,200 signatures to put the meat packer on the ballot.

Dutrow told an August 25 Militant Labor

Forum that he will speak out during the course of his campaign "to tell the truth about the Israeli regime's war drive to try to crush the resistance of the Palestinian people."

Several people came to the forum after meeting campaign supporters. One student who met the petitioners on his university

campus commented on the contrast between the candidate's remarks and the "attempts by the press to demonize the Palestinian people."

One construction worker attending the forum took a petition to circulate in the area around the campaign office where he lives. He said he appreciated the socialist campaign's work in giving a voice to those standing up to attacks on immigrants like himself, especially the demands for union rights for all workers regardless of documentation, and for the right to drivers licenses.

Dutrow and supporters have walked picket lines with food workers at Rice Epicurean Markets, who went on strike August 27. The 300 United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) members at six food stores in Houston have been without a contract for nearly two months. Antiunion laws in Texas required the workers to train their replacements as the strike deadline neared, they told the socialist candidate. Dutrow pledged to use his campaign to urge all working people to back their strike.

Supporters have gathered most of the 1,200 signatures at shopping centers where workers shop. Many workers sign right away when they hear that a working-class candidate is trying to get on the ballot.

One older Black worker, who first responded that he wouldn't sign as he already had his candidate, decided to sign after reading Dutrow's campaign leaflet. "I'll sign for one reason," he said. "That thing with Pedro Oregon—that was not right." Oregon was a Mexican immigrant living in Houston who was killed by cops who broke into his apartment and shot him. Dutrow has been active over the past three years in building protest actions demanding the jailing of the cops who killed Oregon.

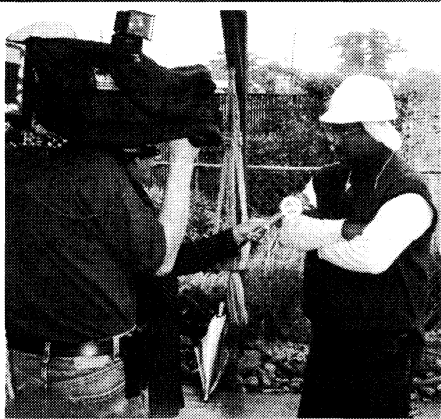
A featured activity of a petitioning weekend September 8-9 will be a Militant Labor Forum presented by former merchant seaman and a previous Houston Socialist Workers candidate, Tom Leonard. He will speak on "Why the Australian Government Bars Afghan Refugees: End Racist Attacks against Asians."

Socialist brings working-class voice to Detroit mayoral race



Militant/Chris Hoepfner

Above, Osborne Hart (at right), Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Detroit, receives greetings from co-workers during lunch break at meatpacking plant where he works, just before his interview with ABC television station reporter (bottom picture). The socialist candidate, who is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, spoke at mayoral forums sponsored by union officials and the League of Women Voters. Hart's campaign has received coverage in the *Detroit News*, *Michigan Chronicle*, and other publications in the city.



Palestinians resist Tel Aviv's war moves

Continued from front page
were forced to penetrate Beit Jala." One Palestinian security officer was killed, while telephone and electricity cables were knocked over. Residents described soldiers smashing down the front doors to their houses, threatening people, and confiscating cell phones and identity cards. "We weren't free to move in our own house," said Bishara Haroufi. Israeli peace activist Neta Golan, reported that "inhabitants in the occupied zone are under curfew, with electricity cut off and essential supplies running out."

Following an agreement by Palestinian officials to put a stop to any firing from the town, the military departed, leaving two tanks stationed nearby. When asked if the Israeli armed forces were prepared to return, defense minister and Labor Party parliamentarian Binyamin Ben-Eliezer answered, "Absolutely."

Palestinians in Beit Jala celebrated as the troops withdrew. "We feel that we proved that as long as there is occupation, there will be resistance," said Raji Zeidan, the mayor of the town.

Tactical turning point

The August 29 *Times* described the occupation of Beit Jala as a "turning point in a tactic that itself is relatively new: thrusts into autonomous Palestinian areas that are supposed to be fully under the control of [Yasir] Arafat and his Palestinian Authority. These forays became standard policy a few weeks

ago...but until now the targets tended to be police headquarters and other official buildings that the army knew had been evacuated. And the raids were in-and-out operations lasting only a few hours."

Simultaneous with the Beit Jala operation, Israeli troops lunged into the Rafah refugee camp in the south of the Gaza Strip, knocking down 15 buildings and wounding 12 people.

In leading the sharp escalation of Tel Aviv's military attacks, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon officially rejected any proposals for high-level negotiations until the Palestinian Authority brings all "violence"—that is, resistance to Israeli domination—to an end. Sharon plans to "wear down the Palestinians," reported the August 27 *Washington Post*, "through a combination of lightning armored raids into Palestinian-controlled cities, commando operations, assassinations, retaliatory airstrikes and blockades of towns and villages."

According to the Associated Press, Israeli justice minister Meir Sheetreet warned in early September that "the Israeli army could quickly retake all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip if the violence continues."

The widespread international sympathy for the Palestinian struggle was registered among many at the September United Nations conference against racism, held in Durban, South Africa. Despite intensive arm-twisting by Washington, delegates refused to remove the question of Israel's dispossession of and decades-long denial of

self determination to the Palestinian people. Unable to stop the conference discussion, Washington and Tel Aviv had to pack their bags and flee the proceedings.

Reacting to these signs of solidarity and statements denouncing Israeli government violence against the Palestinian population, journalist Sever Plotzker wrote in the popular Israeli newspaper, *Yediot Ahronot*, that "the road—ideologically, not practically speaking—from Durban to [Nazi concentration camp] Bergen-Belsen is shorter than many people think....From this standpoint, there is no difference between Nazi ideology and the ideology of Durban."

Pro-Tel Aviv voices in the U.S.

Conservative capitalist pundits in the United States continue to drum up support for Israeli policies. *National Journal* editor Michael Kelly joined the issue in his *Washington Post* columns of August 15 and 29. Arguing that Sharon's policy is "restrained" compared to the "unbridled attack" (in the words of a *Post* news item) that is also under consideration by the Israeli rulers, Kelly offered unqualified support to Tel Aviv.

"When you get down to it," he wrote, "why, exactly, should Israel continue to exercise restraint? Why shouldn't it go right ahead and escalate the violence? The only point to waging war is to win. Israel...can win only by fighting the war on its terms,



Israeli tank in Beit Jala

unleashing an overwhelming force...to destroy, kill, capture and expel the armed Palestinian forces that have declared war on Israel.

"So far, Israel has indeed chosen to practice restraint," wrote Kelly in conclusion. "But, at this point, it has every moral right to abandon that policy and to engage in the war on terms more advantageous to military victory."

Coal miners strike in UK

Continued from front page

Rossington Colliery, which is run on a lease-and-license agreement by UK Coal, there is no guaranteed bonus. The bosses have set a minimum threshold of 21,500 tons per week of saleable coal before the bonus scheme kicks in.

John Gibson, NUM branch secretary, told the media in June that the conditions "we are working in are making it impossible to reach the targets and we have asked for them to be lowered to make them more achievable." The union is proposing 17,400 tons as a target. So far bosses have refused to change their position.

According to one worker on the picket line, part of the problem is that a new coal face was opened at Rossington last year, and the longwall equipment brought in to work it is antiquated, secondhand machinery. Geological conditions are also bad.

Strikers reported that miners at Gascoigne Wood Coal Preparation Plant, in North Yorkshire, are also currently balloting for an overtime ban on the issue of bonuses. The plant processes and dispatches coal produced at the three mines in the Selby complex, also owned by UK Coal. Strike action at the preparation plant would affect all three mines.

While the strike action concerns the bonus payments, it is only one of the issues facing miners at Rossington and other mines. As part of the process of privatizing the coal industry over the last nine years, the bosses have introduced different terms and work conditions at different mines. At Rossington, for example, workers do not get a shift allowance, extra payments for working in very hot conditions, and only regained sick pay a couple of years ago. Without the bonus, face workers earn £40 per shift total. Wages have been reduced to such an extent that some miners are forced to rely on Family Credit, a welfare payment for low-wage workers with children.

At nearby Hatfield Main colliery, miners organized a demonstration August 13 in defense of their jobs, after the mine was closed down suddenly August 9 by the owners, a management consortium. Workers on the morning shift were told to stop work because the mine was closing. The government has provided money to keep the mine on a "care and maintenance" basis for four weeks, to see if a buyer can be found. Mean-

while many miners there are owed three weeks wages, outstanding holiday pay, and have been told they may only get the three weeks wages as their redundancy payment.

In response to the growing problems facing miners, the National Union of Mineworkers is pursuing a claim that would place all miners, regardless of which company owns the mine, on the same rate of pay. If the coal companies do not agree, union members will be balloted for industrial action.

Paul Galloway is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union and Anne Howie is a member of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, both in London. Jim Spaul contributed to the article.

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

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NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Crisis in the Dominican Republic. Working People Resist Austerity and Cop Brutality. Speaker: Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

The Struggle for a United Ireland. British Troops Out! Speaker: Bill Schmidt, Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists. Fri., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 693-7358.

Upper Manhattan

Defend Bilingual Education. Speaker: Craig Honts, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 540 W. 165 St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern

Italian Government Bars Afghan Refugees. Speaker: Tom Leonard, former merchant seaman, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 8, 7:30 p.m. 619 W. 8th Street. Tel: (713) 869-6550.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Reportback from the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students. Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League, participant in the festival, member of Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union. Sun., Sept. 16, 4:00 p.m. Level 1, 281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: \$4. Tel: 0412-611-474.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

How Anti-Semitism is Used Under Capitalism. A Discussion of the Book *The Jewish Question: a Marxist Interpretation*. Fri., Sept. 14, 7:00 p.m. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Donation: \$3. Tel: (09) 276-8885.

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—CALENDAR—

CANADA

Montreal

End Israeli Colonialism-Unite for Justice. Sat., Sept. 15, 12:30 p.m. Rally will start from the corner of Guy and de Maisonneuve. For more information, visit the web site at www.sphr.org.

Capitalism—it warms your heart—“We’ve become much more efficient and the jobs are not needed any more.”—A top dog at Ford explaining why they’re firing some 5,000 white-collar workers.



Harry Ring

No jail cell vacancies?—Authorities in San Francisco are hoping the courts will shut down Wins,

a garment shop that employs some 200 immigrant workers.

They produce apparel for the Army, the Air Force, Kmart, and Walmart. The workers haven’t been paid for more than three months. A company partner said they use a “slow pay” system to improve their cash flow.

Adds a touch of excitement—“A Delta jetliner pilot hurried his take-off to avoid another jet that was crossing the same runway at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. The planes missed each other by 500 feet.”—News item.

Stretch like a canned sardine—The World Health Organization is

projecting a two-year study on blood clots suffered by passengers crammed in on long, airlines flights. (Data indicates at least 30 died during the past three years after arriving on long-distance flights at London’s Heathrow airport.) Some airlines suggest passengers do leg exercises.

They should fix the planes as well—American Airlines and British Airways asked the U.S. Transportation Dept. to grant them immunity from antitrust laws so they can coordinate U.S.-United Kingdom flights and, also, fix fares. They submitted a 1,000-page application plus some 40 boxes of supporting evidence, perhaps to ensure

nobody reads them.

Ho, ho—“Gap cuts 1,300 jobs to keep from losing its shirt”—Headline, Orange County, California, *Register*.

A few more ‘bad apples’—In August, Denver demonstrators protested the cops killing two people. One man died after cops hog-tied him. Another died in a hail of 42 bullets from cops who claimed he tried to ram their car. And, in nearby Aurora, a man was killed by cops responding to an incorrect 911 dispatch.

How about office slumber parties?—The California Highway

Patrol obligingly checks traffic-jam records to verify if that’s why an employee really was late for work. Pacific Bell and Verizon Communications are the biggest users of the service. Declared a Verizon spokesman: “As traffic becomes worse, employees need to schedule more time to get to work on time.”

Start with a briefing—Avon, the door-to-door “beauty” products empire, is shaping a drive to market a vitamin/cosmetic combo to teenage women and to recruit a battery of saleswomen of like age. To potential buyers and sellers, we would suggest a wonderful book: Pathfinder’s *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*.

Ohio workers confront gov’t on radiation

BY EVA BRAIMAN

CLEVELAND—“My father died at the age of 52 after working as a laborer at Brush Beryllium in Lorain, Ohio, in 1947,” explained Jeff Bernsee, 41. “He lived through the explosion at the plant that year, and died of chronic beryllium disease 25 years later. His lungs were like tissue paper and his fingernails were blue. Brush tried to get him to sign a paper releasing them from responsibility, which he refused to do.”

This and similar stories were retold over and over by workers and surviving family members at two meetings sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy to introduce a new program being jointly administered with the Department of Labor under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act.

This act, passed last October, provides up to \$150,000 in lump sum payments and related medical expenses to workers who can prove they were exposed to beryllium, silica, or radiation while working for plants related to the nuclear weapons industry.

Brush Beryllium, now Brush Wellman, operated the Lorain site under contract with the Atomic Energy Commission to produce beryllium pebbles from 1949 to 1958. Beryllium is a metallic element used chiefly in copper alloys to reduce fatigue in springs and electrical contacts.

The act also provides some benefits for uranium workers. The U.S. government has established regional offices in Seattle, Denver, Cleveland, and Jacksonville, Florida, to process these claims. The first compensation payments for uranium workers were issued August 9 in Paducah, Kentucky, site of the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, which enriches uranium for nuclear reactors.

Representatives of the government agencies administering the act spoke and answered questions from some 80 workers and relatives who attended meetings here July 27. Joshua Silverman, a representative of the Energy Department’s Office of Worker Advocacy, began by praising those in attendance for “helping keep this country safe in World War II and winning the Cold War; the nation owes you a debt of gratitude, and we at the Department of Energy want to overcome our legacy of past practice and acknowledge your sacrifice in helping build our country’s nuclear supremacy.”

A lengthy presentation of the provisions of the law was then met by sharp testimony, as one speaker after another from the audi-

ence confronted the government officials.

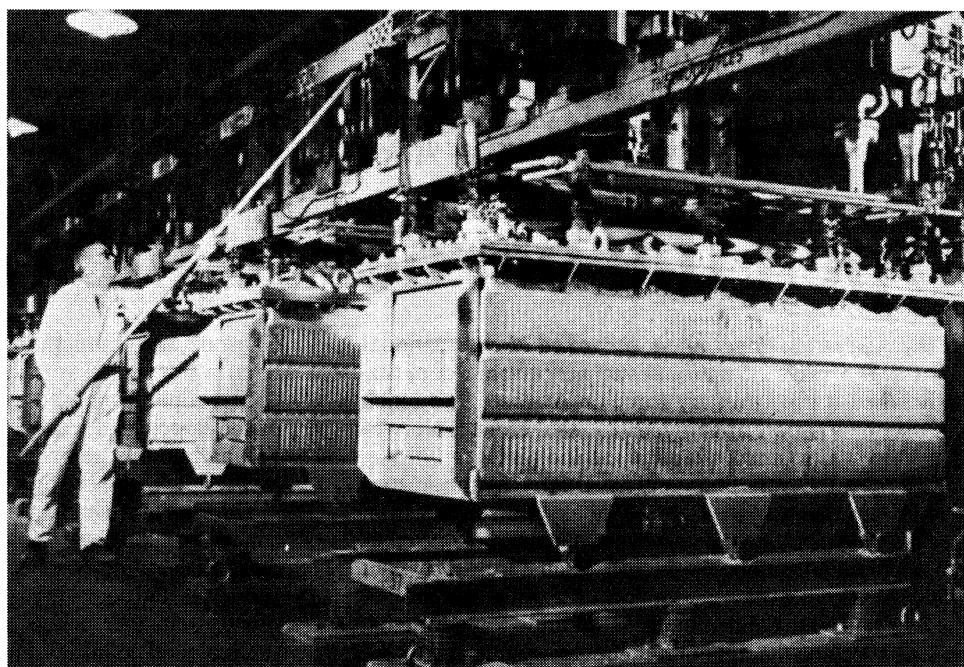
“As far as I am concerned, there has been and still is a massive cover-up here. My dad used to come home from work covered with beryllium dust. Brush told us there was no danger to the family. He died at the age of 42, barely able to catch his breath,” said Patricia Rossak. “There were no medical records back then because the workers didn’t know what they were being exposed to, so how are we supposed to document a claim?”

Her sentiment was echoed by another woman whose father worked at Harshaw Chemical Co. “Poor Blacks in those days could not afford medical treatment,” she said. “My father’s death certificate does not say anything about radiation exposure. There wasn’t even a union contract until the year after he died in 1956.” Harshaw Chemical operated a uranium refinery in Cleveland that produced black oxide and sodium diuranate, used to make nuclear weapons-grade fuel for the Manhattan Project—the first atomic bomb—during World War II.

“My father, Stanley Godanoy, was a construction worker and leadburner at Oak Ridge and Los Alamos. He worked out of the union hall, which doesn’t exist any more. There are no records of where many of these men worked and what they were exposed to. The companies just used them up and threw them away,” said one woman, whose remarks were warmly greeted by others attending the meeting.

Another worker who now suffers from chronic beryllium disease commented, “The actions of the company and the government were deplorable. We all knew we were getting sick but they denied it. Brush said berylliosis—as we called it back then, in the 1950s and ’60s—did not exist and told us that the only way to diagnosis you is to cut your lungs open, which would kill you. So a lot of the guys I worked with just went quietly to their graves. If they really didn’t know that the work we were doing was so dangerous, then why were they always pressuring us to sign waiver forms? I want to know why has it taken so long for you all to recognize this?”

In the informal discussion that took place outside the meeting afterward, a number of people expressed the opinion that the only reason the government is doing anything about this issue was because it was under pressure to protect the companies and feared a more massive outcry from workers and their families in the nuclear industry. A number were interested to read the coverage in



Worker in Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Paducah, Kentucky, where uranium is enriched for use in nuclear reactors. Workers testifying at Department of Energy-sponsored meetings in Ohio pointed to government cover-up of hazards they faced on the job.

the *Militant* of the victory of uranium miners in a long-fought Colorado lawsuit.

Many also objected to the provision of the act that allows payment only to children who were below the age of 18 when their parent died, citing the often lengthy gestation period of these chronic diseases.

When the government officials explained that by accepting the compensation provisions, claimants automatically gave up their

right to participate in any of the numerous class-action lawsuits pending against these companies, Jeff Bernsee commented, to wide applause, that this amounted to a “taxpayer bailout of Brush Wellman, and a continuation of the cover-up.”

Eva Braiman is a meat packer and the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Cleveland.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



September 17, 1976

BOSTON—Racist gangs capped the first antibusing march of the fall August 31 with rock-throwing attacks on police in Charlestown. The demonstration of 500 was called by the Powder Keg Information Center, a local antibusing group loyal to the ROAR faction led by City Council President Louise Day Hicks.

The following evening, an estimated 600 whites skirmished in gang assaults with police, attacking patrol cars and setting bonfires in Charlestown. The Boston *Herald American*, which opposes busing, termed it “a rampage.” No arrests were made.

On September 2 the cops did arrest four hooligans in South Boston during an evening protest of 200 against “police brutality.” Public transportation in the area was disrupted for three hours by groups of young white toughs who stoned city buses. Black employees refused to drive the vehicles in the area in anticipation of the planned protest.

No city officials have spoken out against the racist disrupters. There’s no question that the cops are only secondary targets. The real targets remain the Black students and citizens.

On September 3, Mayor Kevin White stepped up his year-long campaign to blame city financial woes on desegregation. Boston taxpayers may face a property tax increase of \$70 per \$1,000 of valuation to sustain the rise in the 1976–77 school department budget.



September 17, 1951

There is undisguised gloating in Washington over the signing last week at San Francisco of the pact with Japan. Publicly the pact is being painted up as notable for its “generosity,” its “humaneness,” its “enlightenment,” etc. On this there is remarkable agreement between Gen. MacArthur and the Truman administration.

In his Cleveland speech on Sept. 6, MacArthur, while attacking the Truman administration, went out of his way to laud the pact with Japan as the embodiment of “much of human justice and enlightenment.” This would-be conqueror of Asia has every reason to gloat. For the real architect of the Japan treaty is neither Dulles nor Acheson but none other than MacArthur.

The chief beneficiaries of this pact are the American imperialists and militarists; and next to them those who benefit the most are their military and imperialist counterparts in Japan.

The true meaning of the pact is that it paves the way for reviving what was formerly the strongest reactionary power in Asia, the power of Japanese imperialism militarism.

To be sure, Washington has written many “restrictive” clauses into its pact with Japan. For example, the military forces of Japan are to be limited to ground troops. “The naval and air arms will be inhibited and will remain the province of the U.S.,” assured the *N.Y. Times* editorial of Sept. 10.

Western Sahara independence

Continued from Page 8

plifier. Pooled together, they provide enough electricity to hold activities after sundown. A couple of older Sahrawis remarked how this was a major advance over the conditions of life for many years in the camps where, with rare exceptions, there was no access to artificial light after the sun set.

“We have worked hard to advance women’s rights and leave the bad traditions of the past behind,” said Selma Boulahi from the Sahrawi Women’s Union in a meeting with the delegation. “The main objective of our organization since its founding in 1974 is to organize women into the fight for independence. Through that struggle we are working to raise awareness among women about their political and social

rights and drawing them into taking more leadership responsibility.”

Boulahi explained that during the armed struggle when most of the men were at the front, women took primary responsibility for all aspects of organizing the camps. The SADR leadership took several measures to advance women’s rights, including opening up the 27th of February School, where women study government administration, teaching, nursing, weaving, and other subjects. Although many leadership responsibilities have shifted back to men since the ceasefire, the women that the delegation met on the trip exuded the self-confidence they have gained through the struggle. Pointing to the advances in women’s rights, Boulahi remarked, “The liberation movement has forced both men and women to change.”

Back Socialist Workers candidates

There is a fighting, working-class alternative to the big-business parties in the upcoming elections in a number of cities around the country—the Socialist Workers candidates. In New York, the Socialist Workers campaign is running Martin Koppel for mayor. Socialist workers are also running in the mayoral races in Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Miami, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and St. Paul, Minnesota. These candidates—which include meat packers, garment workers, and a coal miner—have been getting an excellent response, particularly from working people and youth.

This is a period of heightened resistance by workers and farmers who are confronting the capitalist economic crisis and the assault by the employer class on our wages, working conditions, social rights, and human dignity. More and more are hungry for solidarity and struggle, and are becoming open to consider new and radical ideas about the root causes of these problems.

The Socialist Workers candidates explain that the problem we face as working people is not that capitalism today is not working right. The increasing brutality and exploitation we are facing is how capitalism *works*.

Through struggle, more working people are shattering our biggest obstacle: the tendency, fostered by exploiters, to underestimate our own capacities as a class. The message of the socialist campaign is that workers and farmers have no common ground with the capitalists, and that we

need to chart a course of political struggle independent from the Democrats, Republicans, and other pro-capitalist parties and politicians. And that we can take on the ruling rich and win.

The exploiting class is well-organized, and to stand up to them our class must be too. To build a movement of workers and farmers that can confront the most ruthless ruling class in the world, we need to be part of a revolutionary party of workers.

As a result of their own experiences in struggle against the bosses and their government, numerous groups of workers and farmers around the country are becoming open to the idea that we need such a revolutionary change and organization. And a growing number of young people who both hate the dog-eat-dog system of capitalism and are attracted to the power of the working class are seeking out a road forward.

We urge you to join in campaigning for the socialist alternative. Join with the socialist candidates at picket lines, plant gates, social protest actions, and street-corner campaigning in working-class areas. Help set up meetings for socialist candidates to speak at campuses and before groups of interested workers, farmers, students, and others. Help distribute the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, the socialist campaign newspapers. Participate with other socialist workers and youth in reading and studying together books on the revolutionary lessons of working-class struggle.

Open the border to the refugees!

The Australian government provoked an international crisis and a wave of nationalistic xenophobia domestically when it used military force on August 29 to block the disembarkation of refugees rescued from a Norwegian ship at Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean.

The open use of military and naval force by the Australian government to block would-be asylum seekers from landing on Australian territory was welcomed in one capitalist tabloid's headline as the use of an "Iron Fist." But class-conscious working people in Australia and around the world need to condemn this act of brute force for what it is: an attack on the right of refugees to asylum, and on the sovereignty of ships engaged in innocent passage, including saving people from sinking boats. It was an assault on the interests of the whole working class, as the imperialist rulers prepare to get workers and farmers injured to the use of more and more military force, both against their capitalist rivals and against the oppressed and exploited.

Above all, they seek to scapegoat sections of the toiling population for the economic and social crisis caused by their capitalist system. They hope to make working people think that instead of fighting the employers and the government, which is waging an antiunion assault, that the problem lies with immigrant workers.

In this way the government and big-business parties, as well as ultrarightist formations like Pauline Hanson's One Nation, seek to turn working people in Australia against their allies in the region and to support the capitalist government in Canberra in a "Fortress Australia" campaign.

Hanson's anti-immigration policies dovetail with the hysteria in the capitalist media about the "human flood" of "boat people" supposedly about to "swamp" Australia, one of the largest and least populated countries in the world. Falling into this trap is a deadly threat to the labor movement and all who are fighting exploitation and oppression.

Far from immigrants, it is the system of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation, of which the superwealthy Australian ruling class is a part, that is the cause of the economic and social crisis working people face today. It is this system that brings wars, economically devastates semicolonial countries, and transfers the wealth of the oppressed nations into the coffers of the imperialist masters. It drives workers and farmers from their homelands to seek refuge and employment in other lands.

The Australian government's dispatch of 50 armed Special Air Service troops to board the Norwegian ship is also aimed at what the imperialists arrogantly talk of as the "arc of instability" to Australia's north, where capitalist crises are breeding battles for national rights and worker and peasant resistance. With one warlike stroke, Howard's conservative government, with bipartisan support, has sought to advance the imperialist rulers' drive for militarism and war to protect their exploitative interests in the region. This is not a ploy to get reelected but a historic course in the face of capitalism's global slowdown and disorder.

Working people have different class interests and a different historic course. We should demand: Let the refugees land! No human being is illegal! Equal rights for all!

'Militant' starts renewal drive

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"I've been reading the *Militant* since 1993," said Scott Bradley, a former coal miner who lives in the Appalachian coalfields of eastern Kentucky. "I like to read it because it tells the truth. A lot of things are printed in it before the other newspapers."

Bradley, like a number of other subscribers, recently renewed his subscription to the socialist newsweekly. The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have launched a two-week renewal campaign September 5–19 to build up the long-term readership of the two publications. A growing layer of workers and farmers impacted by the deepening economic crisis of capitalism, which impels the capitalist rulers to cut workers' wages and benefits, drive down health and safety conditions on the job; and force farmers off their land, look to the *Militant* and *PM* for a working-class perspective on labor and farm struggles and other political developments in the world.

"My brother-in-law, who was involved in trying to bring the union into the mine where he worked, bought a subscription to the *Militant* in 1993. Then later I bought one," said Bradley. "There are hardly any union mines or good jobs here. Just rinky-dink stuff. The last mine I worked was for \$6 an hour."

Bradley and his wife Jackie said they value the *Militant's* coverage of union struggles. "They're trying to get rid of unions here," she said. "I worked in a department store where you would get fired if you even mentioned the word union." Her husband has a T-shirt that says "capitalism sucks," she explained. "Che Guevara is his hero," she said, adding that "I like Castro myself."

She said she bought the renewal as a birthday present for Bradley and joked, "I wouldn't try living with him without the *Militant*."

The *Militant* and *PM* have earned respect among workers involved in labor struggles, from sewing shops and

laundry plants on the east and west coasts, to packing-houses across the United States, and in the coalfields around the country. Working people around the world appreciate the broad coverage of world politics in the two publications, from Tel Aviv's war drive against the Palestinian people to the campaign by Cuba's revolutionary leadership against imperialism and the so-called Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Partisans of the socialist press will use the campaign to get back to co-workers, students, and others who purchased subscriptions during the last sales drive and those whose subscriptions are about to expire. A good indication of the interest readers have in renewing their subscription is that since June, 184 subscribers have sent in renewals for the *Militant*, including over 60 in the last week alone. This past week we also received 34 new *Militant* subscriptions in the mail. Pathfinder Press is also offering anyone who renews their subscription 25 percent off *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, and any issue of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

"We recently moved our headquarters into a new workers district," said Becky Ellis, a garment worker in St. Paul, Minnesota. "This is the area where the Dakota Premium meatpacking plant is located and where we sold a number of subscriptions. With the recent ruling by the National Labor Relations Board upholding the union representation election at the plant, we need get back to those workers. We had already planned to organize a renewal campaign and use it to invite them to the Militant Labor Forum. Now it's easier for them to get to the forums."

So far the international goals for the renewal campaign total 215 *Militant* subscriptions and 106 *PM* subscriptions. Several areas have not reported their goals for the drive. Next week the *Militant* will print the results of the first week of the campaign.

Water rights

Continued from Page 7

to see our friends and neighbors in the agricultural community suffer."

The Klamath have fought for more than two centuries against dispossession, including a 1954 Act of Congress terminating their federal recognition, which was not reversed until a 1986 Supreme Court ruling. The court restored the Klamath's fishing and hunting rights in the Upper Klamath Lake region, but not the 1.8 million acres of land taken from them in 1954.

Some activists point to the power monopolies as the main beneficiary of the crisis. Because farmers were denied irrigation water, the electricity that they contract at a lower rate was not used, making it available for sale at a much higher rate on the open market. Additionally, water not being used for irrigation means more water flowing downstream, where Pacific Power and Light (PPL) owns and operates six hydroelectric projects along the Klamath River.

Further down the river, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA) issued their position on this issue. "The Klamath River was once the third most productive salmon river system in the United States. Today, thanks to habitat blocking dams, poor water quality, and too little water left in the river, the once abundant Klamath salmon runs have now been reduced to less than 10 percent of their historic size." Glen Spain, a regional representative of the PCFFA told the *Sacramento Bee* that an estimated 4,000 fishing-related jobs have been lost and thousands more put at risk by the decline of the Klamath salmon.

On August 6 Eureka Fisheries laid off 140 workers at its fish processing plants in Eureka and Crescent City because of lack of product. As a statement by the Klamath tribes explained, "The real problem is that the demand for water in the Klamath Basin has been allowed to exceed the supply.... The fisheries, the farming communities, the Klamath Tribes culture and economy are all at risk." The Klamath Tribes supports the closing of the head gates in order to save fish.

Allies of small farmers and fishermen

The enemies of working farmers in the Klamath Basin are not Native Americans or commercial fishermen, but the capitalist class and its government in Washington, which has been able to pit these producers who rely on the land and natural resources for a living against one another. This undercuts the ability of working people to join in a common struggle to defend their common interests against the wealthy ruling minority. Workers in the cities, farmers, the rural poor in the countryside, and individual commodity producers such as fishermen face common problems and a common exploiter—the capitalist class and the government that represents them. This makes labor a necessary ally of farmers and fishermen in the fight against the profit squeeze of big business.

The capitalist class routinely ruins the environment in their unquenchable thirst for greater and greater profits. The history of their class is the history of the extinction of whole species of flora and fauna. And legislation like the Endangered Species Act is hypocritically used to promote one or another set of big-business interests, not to protect fish or forests.

For example, Gale Norton, the U.S. Interior Secretary who oversees the BOR, has consistently opposed the Endangered Species Act as well as the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, and supported a "self-audit" law in Colorado that allows companies to monitor themselves on environmental regulations.

The Pentagon is also requesting from Congress to rewrite the Endangered Species Act to exempt their military training exercises from restrictions to protect endangered species.

Working people and our unions should and must support the fight for a viable solution to the government-imposed dilemma in the Basin, such as demanding full compensation for lost crops or fish harvests; and a ban on foreclosures of any farmers; and immediate cheap credit and loans to working farmers and fishermen. Committees of workers and farmers chosen by farm organizations, fishermen associations, Native Americans, and labor unions must be created to oversee how the water is being allocated.

The labor movement should also demand that the government pay unemployment compensation at union-scale wages to farm workers who have lost their jobs due to the lack of water. They should receive health-care benefits as well. And it is in the interests of both workers and farmers to demand that the U.S. government uphold all Native American treaty rights.

Militia-type outfits and rightist populist organizations, no matter how radical, antigovernment, or anticapitalist their appeal, do not point to the need for workers and farmers to join together in a battle to overturn the capitalist government and replace it with one of their own. Instead, they end up pitting working people against one another and undercutting the social solidarity necessary to resist and fight against the offensive of the employers and their government.

It is only through a revolutionary struggle to put in place a workers and farmers government that tens of millions of working people can be mobilized in the fight to abolish capitalism and join with toilers of other countries in the battle for a socialist society, where the rational utilization of water and other natural resources will be based on human needs, not the capitalist profit drive.

Rollande Girard is a sewing machine operator in San Francisco. Elizabeth Lariscy also contributed to this article.

Washington's historic defeat in Vietnam

Printed below is an excerpt from *Out Now! A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. against the Vietnam War* by Fred Halstead. This book is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. The excerpt is taken from the "Afterword," the final chapter in the book. Copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY FRED HALSTEAD

The Second Indochina War was the first in the epoch of American imperialism in which the United States went down to defeat. After emerging victorious from the Spanish-American War and two world wars, then encountering a stalemate in Korea, the Pentagon's military machine was ignomini-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

ously evicted from Vietnam, thanks to the persevering struggle of the Indochinese plus the antiwar resistance of the American people. This was the most sustained and, except for Russia in 1905 and 1917, the most effective antiwar movement within any big power while the shooting was going on.

The official propagandists cooked up various formulas to justify their military intervention. It was depicted as a crusade for democracy and freedom against the threat of communist totalitarianism and for the defense of the independence of the South against invasion from the North. The U.S. was there, it was said, to fulfill treaty obligations to the client Saigon regime and thwart the expansionism of China and the Soviet Union. Toward the end the excuses became exceedingly thin: to assure the return of the POWs; to prevent a bloodbath in the South if the NLF should take over completely; to protect U.S. troops as they were withdrawn. All this was demagoguery.

In reality, U.S. intervention had a thoroughly imperialistic character. The colossus of world capitalism hurled its military might without provocation against a small and divided colonial nation thousands of miles away struggling for self-determination and unification. A series of American presidents sought to do what King George

III's empire failed to do against the rebel patriots of 1776.

On one side was a state armed to the teeth promoting the strategic aims and material interests of the corporate rich on the global arena; on the other was a worker and peasant uprising heading toward the overthrow of capitalist power and property, despite the limited political program of its leadership.

These underlying anticapitalist and antilandlord tendencies were eventually clearly expressed in the reunification of Vietnam in 1976 and the process of eliminating capitalist property relations in the South. The prolonged civil war in South Vietnam thereby proved to be an integral part of the international confrontation between the upholders of capitalism and the forces moving in a socialist direction that has been unfolding since the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution....

In the early sixties the vast majority of Americans ignored the war, or accommodated themselves to it, though without much patriotic fervor. It seemed remote from their immediate concerns, something which they knew little or nothing about and left trustingly to their government. That was still a time of confidence in the wisdom and honesty of the top political leaders and above all in the benevolent intentions of the occupants of the White House. The Washington policy makers took cruel advantage of this naiveté.

Without exaggeration, most Americans were hardly aware that Vietnam existed when the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations were stealthily pulling them step by step into the bloody quagmire. The Democrats and Republicans jointly carried out the "bipartisan foreign policy" in Southeast Asia and rubber-stamped it in Congress while the major media that molded public opinion—and kept it uninformed—gave no warning of what was ahead.

Emergence of antiwar movement

The antiwar movement began with people who were already radicalized: pacifists, socialists, communists, rebellious students, and a scattering of morally outraged individuals. At the start these were a small minority, convinced of the justness of their cause and ready to face unpopularity for their stand. The energy, resoluteness, and fortitude of this vanguard brought the movement into being and remained its prime mover.



Militant/Flax Hermes

Demonstration in San Francisco demanding Washington get out of Vietnam, April 15, 1967. At the beginning those taking action against the war were "a small minority, convinced of the justness of their cause," stated Halstead. "The energy, resoluteness, and fortitude of this vanguard brought the movement into being."

The most paradoxical aspect of this profound and unforgettable chapter of American history was the central and decisive role played by the left-wing elements, which included the radical pacifists. When it began, it was almost unthinkable that they could set in motion and head a movement of such vast scope. They themselves did not really expect such a development. They just felt obliged to do whatever they could.

At the beginning of the sixties the American left—old and new—was looked upon as an esoteric fringe with virtually negligible influence. So far as numbers in radical organizations were concerned, this was close to the truth. The cold war and the witch-hunting atmosphere, in conjunction with the prolonged prosperity of the 1950s, had decimated their ranks. Even after their numbers increased manyfold during the sixties and early seventies, the tens of thousands directly supporting the various radical groupings were not very large compared to the entire population.

Yet this unrespectable, "irrelevant," and by no means homogeneous band became "the saving remnant" as it moved into the vacancy left by the established educational, religious, labor union, journalistic, and political institutions. These were tied in with the two-party system and went along with the generals and the State Department, supporting a perfectly obvious illegal and unjust war to one extent or another.

On closer examination this is not so surprising. For only those who were prepared

ideologically to defy pervasive, blind conformity could take the risk of overt opposition. If the number of such Americans was so small in the early sixties, this testified less to the irrelevance of the radicals than to the marginal place that deepgoing criticism occupied under the profound corruption and advanced senility of the two-party system.

The movement later made its impact upon that system, as the proliferation of dove Democrats and Republicans showed. But the dove politicians didn't lead, they followed, far behind, stumbling and mumbling all the way. There has since been some deft distorting of the record on this point, but the attempted rehabilitation is belied by the facts.

Only two senators, Morse and Gruening, voted against the Tonkin Gulf resolution which gave Johnson the green light in 1964. A single member of the House, Adam Clayton Powell, registered some sort of dissent by abstaining. Others knew something was wrong. But they were also aware that to avoid "irrelevance" within the two-party system you don't go around offending the powers-that-be and challenging "reasons of state" on grounds of human decency or anything of that sort. Morse, Gruening, and Powell were all knifed by their national party leadership and never won another election. Even after the dramatic switch in the public attitude made dovishness permissible on Capitol Hill, the vast majority in both parties—doves included—consistently voted for the Vietnam military budget up to 1973.

LETTERS

Protest of rightist rally

About two dozen residents of Newton, North Carolina, met informally over lunch at a Mexican restaurant August 27 to express their opposition to an anti-immigrant rally held the previous week. The organizers of that rally claim that lax enforcement of immigration laws has caused a swell of "illegal immigrants" to pour into the United States, taking jobs away from "Americans." At the rightist event about 75 participants yelled at Latino motorists and carried signs with slogans such as "It's Our Borders, Stupid," and "Now Swim Back."

The organizers of the lunch-time meeting said they had been offended by the racist rally and had thought someone should do something about it. So they decided to get a few of their friends together just to make the point. The gathering was advertised in news reports, on local TV channels, and in the *Charlotte Observer*.

Two of us who traveled to the meeting from Kannapolis were warmly welcomed at the event. We raised the importance for working people to not be fooled into turning foreign-born workers into scapegoats for the recent massive layoffs by companies in the Carolinas.

Instead, the layoffs are due to the legal workings of capitalism. It is in our interests to build our unions and the fighting unity of all working people.

Dean Hazlewood
Kannapolis, North Carolina

Macedonia intervention

Well over 2,000 people marched through the streets of central Athens August 28 to protest the deployment of a new contingent of NATO troops in Macedonia. The march received a very friendly response from working people doing their shopping in the area. Some of the slogans at the march were: "No soldier to Yugoslavia"; "We won't fight for the US and Germany"; and "People of the Balkans unite to fight imperialism." The march was organized by the Athens Peace Committee and Youth Action for Peace.

The imperialist government in Athens, seeking a wider role in the region it considers its "back yard," has contributed a contingent of more than 400 soldiers and officers to the NATO force. Defense Minister Akis Tsohatzopoulos stated 29 August in parliament that "no one can impose...a change of the borders through violence in the Balkans and expect that Greece will remain passive."

Regular protests have been taking place in the port city of Thessaloniki, which has long been central to the transport of soldiers and materiel throughout the Yugoslav wars.

Natasha Terlexis
Athens, Greece

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. Indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

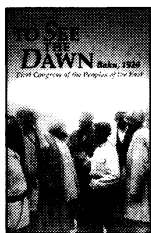
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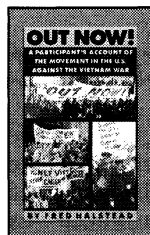
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Australian troops attack refugee ship

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—On August 29, the Australian government sent elite Special Air Services [SAS] armed troops to storm the Norwegian container ship *Tampa*, off Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean. Canberra's military action aimed to block the disembarking of 438 working people seeking asylum that the freighter crew had rescued at sea. A majority were of Afghan origin, with some from Pakistan and Sri Lanka. All were seeking to go to Australia.

A naval frigate, HMAS *Arunta*, raced north ready to force the *Tampa* back into international waters. At the end of the week-long standoff, Australia's rulers belligerently announced it was sending four more warships and four P3 Orion long-range patrol aircraft for "saturation surveillance" and rapid response in the region.

The Norwegian government accused Canberra of coming close to "piracy." The conservative Norwegian paper *Aftenposten* editorialized that Australia had "won a reputation for being an international bully." Some calls to boycott Australian products like wine also arose.

Standing reality on its head, Howard claimed the refugees were trying "to intimidate us with our own decency." Under cover of a claimed "refugee crisis," the Australian government in Canberra has rapidly escalated its military presence directed at what pro-imperialist commentators call the "arc of instability"—from the Indonesian archipelago to the Pacific islands across Australia's north.

Although Howard was initially snubbed by Indonesia's new president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Jakarta has now agreed the Australian naval flotilla can refuel at its ports. Sharing the same nationalist framework, Labor leaders have proposed setting up a coast guard force.

These aggressive war moves have built on the sensationalist and racist campaign in the capitalist media against "people smuggling" and an alleged "flood" of refugees about to "swamp" Australia.

Last year about 5,000 people arrived without papers on boats to the shores of this affluent country. Canberra quietly deported almost twice that number of so-called illegal immigrants in the past 12 months. By contrast, the impoverished countries of Pakistan and Iran are together home to about 3.7 million Afghan refugees.

On August 26, the *Tampa*, en route from Fremantle, Western Australia to Singapore, was diverted by Australian Search and Rescue to answer a distress call from a leaking wooden ferry headed southeast from Indonesia. Captain Arne Rinnan and his crew took aboard everyone from the slowly sinking boat.

After starting on his original course, the captain was pressured by the refugees to divert to Christmas Island, the closest port and an Australian territory. The remote island, about 200 miles south of Java and 1,000 miles from the Australian continent, is the closest Australian landfall for refugees coming via Indonesia. The imperialist strategic outpost was sold by London to Canberra in 1958, as Singapore gained self-rule.

On August 27, conservative prime minister John Howard and his cabinet ordered the *Tampa* to stay out of Australian waters. The ship initially stopped at the 12-mile nautical limit. Canberra began trying to pass the buck for the rescued people onto Oslo and Jakarta. Meanwhile the Australian Defence Forces rushed planeloads of troops and military equipment to the island.

As conditions on the rescue ship worsened with hundreds crowded on deck between containers, with meager food and medicine, with two women pregnant and some ill, Rinnan headed to Christmas Island's port, citing human necessity.

The moment the *Tampa* entered Australian waters, Howard launched the boarding party of 50 SAS commandos. They occupied the ship, ostensibly to prevent dock-



Australian elite Special Air Services armed troops stormed ship carrying refugees

ing or any refugees jumping overboard, while Canberra contemplated its next moves. However the captain refused to move his ship, demanding the refugees be put ashore. Christmas Island harbor was then closed off, even to the island's fishing boats. A wide media exclusion zone was imposed around the *Tampa* to prevent any human portrayal of the refugees that could elicit sympathy.

Christmas Islanders kept up protests in support of the right of the refugees to land throughout the crisis, backed by the island's trade union, shire council, Islamic council, women's group, and Chinese cultural association. The island's 1,300 people are an ethnic mixture, with 60 percent of them Chinese, 25 percent Malay, and 15 percent European.

Writing in the September 11 *The Bulletin* magazine, Tony Wright summed up the crisis as "Howard's own peculiar imitation of Thatcher's Falklands," a reference to the 1982 war against Argentina over the Malvinas Islands by then British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

"Australian sovereignty over a tiny and remote island would be invoked," he went on, "a significant military action would be mounted, the Australian government would be assaulted by outrage from the international community and from pulpits across the land, the nation would become divided,

tens of millions of dollars would be spent and an indefinite 'fortress Australia' military buildup to Australia's north would begin. And Howard, facing an election while weighed down with negative opinion polling, yet certain of overwhelming support from Australian voters on the matter of confronting illegal immigrants, would refuse to bend."

Muted bipartisan support was given by opposition Labor leader Kim Beazley to Howard's warlike stance. Most of the capitalist media backed the government's course, although some worried about an impasse or damage to external relations. The warmongering headlines of Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*, August 30 blared "Iron Fist" and the next day "Warning Shot" and later "Boarding Party."

David Penberthy, in the August 31 *Daily Telegraph*, reported on the recent Queensland election campaign meetings by ultrarightist politician Pauline Hanson and the popular response to her demagogic call for closing off immigration and for naval action to force boats with "queue-jumpers" away. "Ms Hanson wanted the ships turned around and now her policy is John Howard's policy, Kim Beazley's policy, and the vast majority of voters appear to be pleased," he said. One Nation scored a million votes in the last federal election, and could decide the outcome of the polls

later this year.

The governing Liberal and National parties then tried to ram a new law, the Border Protection Bill, through parliament, which would eliminate many criteria for refugees to enter the country and grant the military sweeping powers and immunity from prosecution to remove boats from Australian waters. A dissident Liberal MP said the bill would have excluded refugee status for Jews fleeing persecution in prewar Nazi Germany. It was defeated in the upper house by a majority of Labor, Democrat, and Green senators. In Melbourne, a federal court case was launched by civil libertarian lawyers seeking to win the refugees' right to asylum in Australia. A letter from the "Afghan refugees now off the coast of Christmas Island" via the Norwegian captain was read out in the court appealing to the government and the Australian people for asylum and wanting to know why they had been deprived of their rights.

Protests at government action

As the crisis unfolded, small but significant protests were organized around the country demanding that the *Tampa* refugees be allowed to land. About 100 marched in Sydney on September 1 with a protest reported in Melbourne as well. As their Norwegian ship left Sydney Harbour, Australian seamen, with the backing of national officials from the Maritime Union of Australia, joined Norwegian seamen around the world in flying their flag at half mast in protest at the government's action discouraging rescues at sea.

During the tense week-long standoff, Howard and his ministers scrambled to find countries willing to accept the refugees and defuse the crisis, including East Timor, still occupied by Australian-led imperialist and other troops. On September 3, the refugees were transferred to a navy troop ship for a long voyage to Papua New Guinea. From Port Moresby, 150, including the 21 women, 44 children, and their immediate family members, will be flown to New Zealand and the rest to the tiny Pacific island of Nauru, which is economically dependent on Australia. Accommodation and processing of the asylum-seekers will be fully funded by Canberra. Only the four Indonesian crewmen from the foundered boat were taken directly ashore on Christmas Island to be charged with "people smuggling."

New Zealand: striking timber workers win support

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Sonny Tawhai, National Distribution Union delegate at Carter Holt Harvey's Interior decorative wood panels plant in Manurewa, summed up the mood of the workers on strike: "We've been out for 15 days—why give in now?" Tawhai added, "And with the amount of support coming in, we don't have to."

The 50 workers at the plant are seeking a 4 percent wage increase and a one-year contract. The company is offering 3 percent and a two-year contract. The union is also resisting the company's attempts to change shift patterns on the melamine line, a laminating process, which would result in cuts in workers' income of between NZ\$10,000 and NZ\$15,000 a year (NZ\$1 = US 45 cents).

Workers from factories in the area and other supporters have been dropping off money, food, firewood, and other supplies to the 24-hour picket line. The union has bought bulk supplies of vegetables from sympathetic farmers at low cost. National Distribution Union (NDU) *Strike Alert No. 2* reports that workers at JNL Kaitia, Bluebird, Cerebos, Fletcher Steel, and Whakatane Board Mills are among those "who have set up a weekly levy to help these workers."

Three unionists have been arrested by the police who escort staff through the picket lines with up to six carloads of cops and a helicopter. On one occasion several workers were injured when they were sideswiped

by a truck's trailer. The police charged the driver with careless driving.

NDU president Bill Andersen and another union official were also arrested and charged with trespass when they attempted to enter the plant. Andersen insisted they were acting in compliance with the Employment Relations Act, recently passed by the government, which supposedly allows union representatives to "monitor" the use of nonunion labor during a dispute. The company has been trying to resume limited production using management staff to operate machinery.

Joe Filipo, a 25-year-old worker on the

door line and a picket line regular, told the *Militant* that the experience of the strike has changed his understanding of unions. "I was one of the three that first voted against the strike," he said. "But getting to know people on the picket line, and seeing union members from other factories come by to support us, I see that unions are about standing together." Filipo added that it was fun being on picket duty, "but sometimes it's like a war."

Terry Coggan is a member of the National Distribution Union in Auckland.

Maori demand land for meeting place

BY JANET EDWARDS

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Maori in Te Atatu Peninsula, in West Auckland, have been campaigning for 34 years to be allocated a site on which they can build a *marae*, or meeting place. They again took this campaign to the streets August 29 when 80 protesters marched to the monthly meeting of the Waitakere City Council and presented their claims.

Many of the councilors sat grim-faced as, for more than an hour, a number of the protesters stood up one by one and explained the history of the fight for this *marae* and its importance for them.

The marchers began at Harbourview

South, 10 hectares of which the Maori want set aside for the *marae* (1 hectare=2.47 acres). The city council has designated 80 hectares of land at Harbourview as a "People's Park" and refused to allocate any of it for a *marae*.

Melba Wellington, a protest organizer, explained that the city council had offered them land on top of an old rubbish dump, an offer they found offensive. The council has a policy of providing 2.5 hectares for a *marae* but has delayed on finding a suitable site.

"Who are these people to tell us what we can have and not have," Wellington told a local newspaper. "People need to be educated so that they recognize that we do have rights."