

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Washington's third militarization drive

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Imperialists mass troops, ships: End war against Afghan people!

Washington militarizes country with 'homeland defense'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

More than 50,000 troops and 400 aircraft have been assembled near Afghanistan by the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom in preparation for a brutal imperialist assault on the peoples of that country. At the same time Washington is targeting working people at home, reinforcing a military "homeland defense" apparatus, deploying National Guard troops at hundreds of airports, and pressing with patriotic and "national unity" appeals for acceptance of sacrifice and fewer rights.

The U.S. imperialist rulers now have a military force of 29,000 sailors, airmen and troops, and more than 300 warplanes and two dozen warships deployed from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea aimed at Afghanistan. Another 23,000 U.S. troops are in Egypt as part of what the military brass describes as a long-scheduled 10-country military exercise in the area. On October 1 the Pentagon ordered the Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier, currently in Japan, to sail toward the Arabian Sea. It will join two other aircraft carriers—the *Enterprise* and the *Carl Vinson*

equipped with 75 fighter bombers. The Kitty Hawk, whose aircraft are staying in Japan, is to be used as a base of operations for thousands of troops along with helicopters to ferry them into battle zones in Afghanistan.

True to Washington's word, there has been little coverage of the troop deployments and military activity in the capitalist media, which has gone along with the virtual press blackout without a protest.

The British imperialists have also built up a significant force in the region, including

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State workers walk out in Minnesota

Governor deploys 1,000 National Guard troops

BY TOM FISKE

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Some 2,000 workers rallied at the capitol here October 1, kicking off a strike by thousands of state employees who are fighting for higher wages and against state demands that they pay a bigger portion of their medical care.

Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura responded by mobilizing 1,000 members of the National Guard, hiring replacement workers, and organizing supervisors and some workers who crossed the picket line to carry out struck work. The National Guardsmen are replacing striking state workers at state-run veterans hospitals, nursing care facilities, and mental hospitals. The

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Rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, kicks off strike by state workers demanding a pay raise. Governor Jesse Ventura mobilized 1,000 National Guardsmen against the walkout.

Miners had told bosses of unsafe conditions

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

BROOKWOOD, Alabama—More than 1,500 people attended a memorial service here September 27 for the 13 coal miners killed four days earlier in two explosions at Jim Walter Resources Blue Creek Mine No. 5. Many union members say the disaster, the worst in a coal mine since the 1984 Wilberg mine fire in Utah, was the result of the company's refusal to heed workers' repeated warnings about dangerous conditions in the mine. The blasts killed 12 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 2368 and one boss.

Miners and their families came to the memorial from UMWA-organized mines throughout the surrounding coalfields. A small number of workers from nonunion mines also came to pay tribute.

In honor of the killed miners, the UMWA called a memorial day for union miners in Alabama the same day as the memorial ser-

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Residents of Vieques say U.S. Navy must leave

BY RÓGER CALERO

The U.S. Navy's bombardment of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques and its military exercises there "were immoral before September 11, and they continue to be immoral today," said Robert Rabín, a spokesperson for the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, responding to Washington's justification for continued use of Vieques for U.S. military maneuvers and imperialist war preparations.

A number of organizations met in Vieques September 26 in a popular assembly and decided to continue their protests demanding an end the U.S. Navy's bombardment and occupation of large sections of the island. The meeting took place as a naval battle group composed of 12 warships led by the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy began a second week of military exercises. The mock assaults include air and sea bombings of the island of Vieques. The naval group, which involves some 12,000 U.S. Marines, is expected to soon join Washington's military deployment against Afghanistan.

The U.S. Navy has occupied and used two-thirds of this small populated island as

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by Leon Trotsky

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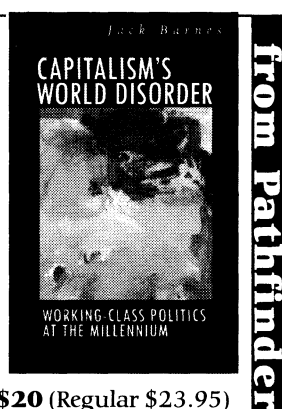
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Protests in Cincinnati condemn acquittal of cop who killed youth

BY VAL LIBBY

CINCINNATI—The cop who shot and killed Timothy Thomas, a Black teenager, on April 7 was acquitted after a one-week bench trial by county judge Ralph Winkler. In the juryless trial, Winkler found Roach not guilty on two misdemeanor charges of “negligent homicide” and “obstruction of official business,” which carry a maximum jail sentence of nine months.

Timothy Thomas, 19, who was unarmed, was the 15th Black man killed by Cincinnati police since 1995. His death touched off large protests here, especially by outraged youth in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood where the shooting took place, and a massive turnout that practically took over a Cincinnati City Council meeting shortly after the killing.

In response to the protests, city officials declared a state of emergency, imposing a citywide curfew and occupying the neighborhood with city and state police in full riot gear. The cops fired “beanbag” bullets that injured dozens, and arrested more than 60 people for “rioting” and more than 800 for curfew violations.

Daily and then weekly demonstrations continued into the summer. The protests forced the cancellation of some major city events, while putting its stamp on other events. City officials worked hard to appear as if they were responding by establishing new “race relations” groups, calling for a federal investigation of police practices, and turning to the FBI to investigate an unprovoked cop beanbag attack on peaceful protesters after the funeral for Timothy Thomas.

Hamilton County municipal judge Winkler blamed the victim in his ruling, asserting, “The shooting was a split-second reaction to a very dangerous situation created by Timothy Thomas that, under all the facts and circumstances heard at trial, was a reasonable reaction on the part of Police Officer Roach to the contact between himself and Timothy Thomas in a dark Cincinnati alley.”

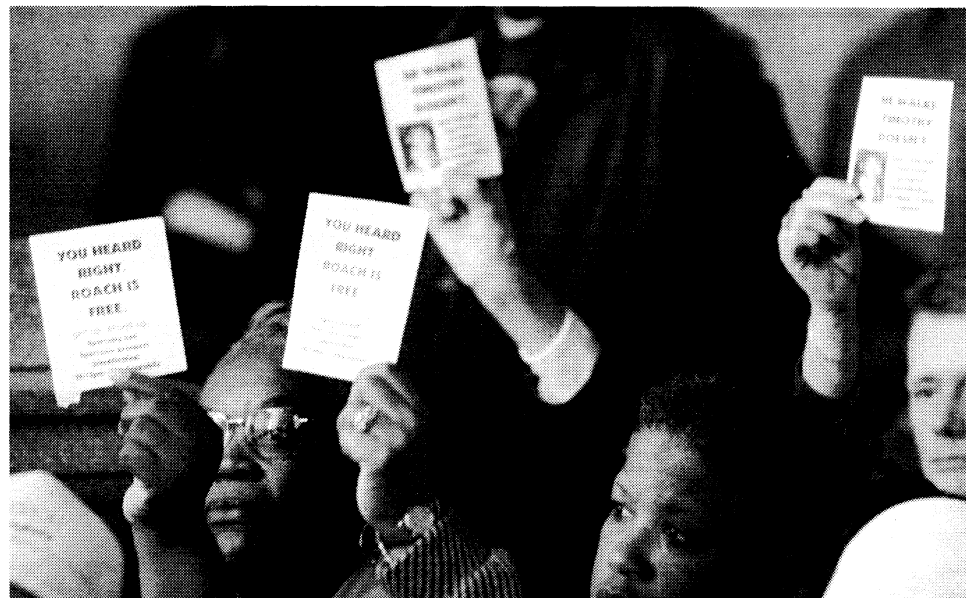
In a statement to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Rev. Damon Lynch III, a leader of the Cin-

cinnati Black United Front, said, “The officer clearly took a man’s life unjustifiably, and now he walks.... This sets us back before April. I’m just totally fed up. All this talk of healing and all that, it’s rhetoric.... There is no serious effort to heal. This community proves it day in and day out.”

About 150 protesters went to the afternoon City Council meeting to voice their anger. The Black United Front organized a community protest walk the night of the verdict. There was sporadic rock throwing and a few trash bin fires.

Cincinnati mayor Charles Luken responded to the widespread outrage by reimposing the state of emergency and a 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew. In face of opposition, city officials quickly retreated from these two measures within 36 hours, however.

While Roach was the first to be tried, two other officers, Robert Jorg and Patrick



Protestors held up small signs reading “You heard right. Roach is free,” in a silent protest at a city council meeting over the not guilty verdict for Stephen Roach, a cop who shot and killed Timothy Thomas, a Black youth.

Caton, are facing criminal charges for the asphyxiation death of Roger Owensby Jr., who died in police custody November 7. Jorg is the first cop to face felony charges of involuntary manslaughter. Caton faces misdemeanor assault charges.

T.J. Brown, an activist in the Cincinnati

Black United Front and member of United Auto Workers Local 647, said in an interview, “In light of the attack on the World Trade Center, they want to include Blacks in the ‘United we stand against terrorism’ campaign. But at the same time, they exclude us from justice in our own cities.”

Bush deploys National Guard at airports

BY RÓGER CALERO

Speaking at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport September 27, U.S. president George Bush called on governors across the country to mobilize some 4,000 National Guard troops at 420 airports across the country. Most governors immediately responded, deepening the steps taken since September 11 to militarize “security” and policing functions inside the United States.

Bush also said he would push ahead with measures to make workers at airports submit again to background checks, increase and make permanent the number of undercover cops—federal marshals—on flights, and put passenger and baggage checks under federal supervision. Agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and other federal cop agencies have been on commercial flights as “air marshals” after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Under the security package federal agents

will assume supervisory responsibilities for background checks on all baggage handlers, food service workers, and other airport and airline employees, and for passenger and baggage inspection. The measures have been applauded by the airline bosses.

Democrat James Oberstar, a Congressman from Minnesota, urged Bush to go further by having federal employees replace workers currently employed in baggage and passenger screening jobs. Oberstar advocates the government taking over the cost for greater airport security. “This nation has been at war,” he stated. “Airlines are the frontline of that war. We wouldn’t think of contracting out our Army to protect us against an open foreign invasion. We shouldn’t think of contracting out responsibility of defending the internal United States against covert attacks.”

Within hours of Bush’s announcement the state of Illinois notified military police units of the Illinois National Guard that they would be receiving instructions from the Federal Aviation Administration about their airport deployment. California governor Gray Davis informed reporters that armed National Guardsmen will be on duty for four to six months. In Colorado, Governor William Owens said the soldiers will have the authority to detain passengers and shoot if necessary. “These are fully armed combat soldiers. This is really one case where the United States is catching up to the rest of the world,” added Owens.

South Dakota governor William Janklow deployed the National Guard and offered to have the state pay for cops to be put on domestic flights. “I think all 50 states ought to do this in a very coordinated manner,” he told CNN. “We’re at war. We’ve got to kill the enemy.”

Just hours before Bush’s press confer-

ence in Chicago, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced a new set of rules of engagement authorizing U.S. Air Force pilots to shoot down hijacked commercial airlines with the approval of regional commanders of the North American Aerospace Defense Command. The *Washington Post* reported that there are more than 100 fighter jets on alert at 26 bases across the country. Fighter jets continue to patrol the skies over Washington and New York.

Rulers discuss issuing national identity cards

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In both the United States and the United Kingdom, government officials and ruling-class figures are floating proposals to impose national identity cards on working people. Such a move would strike another blow at the right to privacy, facilitate the government’s surveillance operations, and expand police powers to stop and harass individuals on the streets.

At the end of September Oracle CEO Lawrence Ellison called for a national ID card system and offered to donate software to the U.S. government that could be used to create a database of fingerprints of all citizens and residents in the country. “We need a national ID card with our photograph and thumbprint digitized and embedded in the ID card,” stated Ellison in a KPIX TV interview.

With technology known as biometrics, government officials could scan fingerprints or handprints and make this information available to a multitude of police agencies throughout the country.

The U.S. ruling class has long sought to

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Pathfinder plans ambitious sales campaign

BY BARBARA BOWMAN
AND JACK WILLEY

NEWYORK—Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, announced the launching of a \$500,000 Pathfinder sales campaign at a public meeting of 350 people held here September 30. The meeting, titled "Communists and the World Struggle against Imperialism Today," discussed the sharpening class struggle in the world and how communists are waging a working-class campaign against imperialism and its war drive.

Waters highlighted the cumulative increase in sales of Pathfinder books. "In the first eight months of this year we have already surpassed the total sales of Pathfinder books for all of 2000," she reported to those attending the meeting. "This is a registration of the increased working-class resistance as well as the ability of the Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialists, and the party's supporters to respond to the openings today."

She noted the advances by SWP branches and Young Socialists in setting up regular street tables in workers districts, opening new bookstores in these districts, selling on campuses and at plant gates, and initial steps in organizing supporters of the communist movement to place Pathfinder titles in bookstores, libraries, and classrooms.

"And that was all before September 11," Waters said. "We are already seeing the growing potential, and the thirst for these books as the U.S. rulers prepare for a war against the people of Afghanistan."

Waters reported that Pathfinder has published a record number of titles in multiple languages over the last year. These include *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, and *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

"We will now begin preparing *New International* no. 12, our response to Washington's accelerated war moves," Waters announced, referring to the magazine of Marxist politics and theory. She said Pathfinder was preparing a new edition of *Too Many Babies: The Myth of the Population Explosion* by Joseph Hansen and a Spanish translation of *The History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Cannon. Also in preparation are titles containing interviews with Brig. Gen. Delsa "Teté" Puebla, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, and Victor Dreke, a leader in the early 1960s of the campaign against counterrevolutionary bands in Cuba's Escambray mountains and second-in-command of Ernesto Che Guevara's column of anti-imperialist Cuban combatants in the Congo.

"We will also begin work on the first of several major works by Lenin, as part of a 'Birth of Bolshevism' series, now that all other sources of these books from Moscow to Peking have dried up," reported Waters. The series will include *What Is To Be Done*, *To the Rural Poor*, and *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*.

The enthusiastic and systematic efforts of nearly 200 Pathfinder volunteers worldwide who are involved in the Pathfinder Reprint Project have been essential in the production of a record number of reprints, Waters said.

A growing number of these volunteers, together with SWP and YS members, have also been taking steps to carry out regular visits to place books by revolutionaries in commercial outlets.

Expanding Pathfinder to stores, libraries

The campaign to sell \$500,000 in books and pamphlets spans 18 months from January 2001 through June 2002. The initial goal of \$325,000 by the end of this year is well within reach, with average monthly sales for this year already \$52,000 higher than for the same period last year, a 29 percent increase.

Socialist Workers Party branches, working with party supporters and Young Socialists, will set monthly goals for Pathfinder sales through literature tables, Pathfinder bookstores, Militant Labor Forums, and other events, as well as goals for the number of books placed in retail outlets and libraries. The success of the campaign will depend on the efforts of leaders of the party branches to carry out this work with other Pathfinder representatives on a consistent, weekly basis.

Many Pathfinder bookstore directors and

sales representatives attending the September 30 meeting said in interviews that their experiences to date indicate the goals can be met. San Francisco Pathfinder bookstore director Bernie Senter reported nearly \$1,400 worth of sales in September. "With war on the horizon, we've noticed that people who had read Pathfinder books before are coming into the bookstore to buy more and are renewing their Pathfinder Readers Club memberships." The club offers members big discounts on Pathfinder titles.

A year ago Pathfinder supporters began a long-term effort to organize sales visits to retail stores, campuses, and libraries. "There are a number of supporters now who want to greatly expand the availability of communist literature in the shops where workers buy books. But the main challenge is consistently leading the effort," said Tony Hunt, director of Pathfinder Press Distribution in London.

In the first seven months of this year, five supporters in London visited 10 bookstores, placing 260 books and pamphlets worth close to \$3,000. One central London store alone purchased 139 books, Hunt reported.

"Our initial progress took organization and leadership," Hunt explained. "We worked up lists of specific stores to be visited, trained supporters of Pathfinder in how to present the books, and helped collect materials they would need, such as a binder with as many covers as possible. The cov-

ers show how attractive Pathfinder books are and the back covers give a brief description of each book's content. First-time salespeople accompanied an experienced sales person on a training visit."

The placement work in retail outlets has been accompanied by an increase in sales by the Pathfinder bookshop in London from \$11,500 in the first nine months of last year to \$13,900 this year.

Claudia Hommel from Chicago described a recent visit by Chicago volunteers to regional managers of a national bookstore chain. The hosting manager explained that the "Current Events" shelves in their stores were empty. He thanked them for bringing "books with real substance" and promised to place an order. Tom Headley from Washington, D.C., reported on a visit he made the day after the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, netting a 54-book order.

Book fairs offer special opportunities

The Southeast Booksellers Association book fair was held September 20-23 in Memphis, Tennessee. After learning about the fair several months ago, Pathfinder supporters in Atlanta, Charlotte, and Birmingham raised funds and helped staff a booth there.

Bill Arth explained, "Some two dozen bookstore owners asked for a follow-up visit from a Pathfinder representative. Now the real work begins to set up new accounts in

this region." Supporters are meeting to map out a strategy to do just that.

Over the summer, the film *Lumumba* played in movie theaters around the country. Socialist workers and Young Socialists responded to this special opening by setting up literature tables at the movie sites. Reporting from Seattle, Cecelia Moriarity said, "In addition to our regular tables in the working-class area where the Pathfinder bookstore and Socialist Workers election campaign headquarters are located, we set up tables at the film showing. Our sales in the third week of August alone were close to \$700. This included 91 copies of *Revolution in the Congo* and 42 other titles. Seven books were sold to workers at Alaska Airlines."

Over a four-week period this summer when the film was showing, socialists in Chicago sold \$2,400 worth of Pathfinder titles, some 70 in all, including 277 copies of the pamphlet *Revolution in the Congo*.

Katy LeRougetel, from Toronto, reported that Pathfinder supporters there recently faxed a leaflet to bookstores they had visited earlier this year. The leaflet promotes several books that highlight the struggles against imperialism and its war drive. "You have to be persistent," LeRougetel said. "Having the sales campaign and the campaign against imperialism's war drive together gives supporters a real focus and extra motivation to re-approach bookstore and get new accounts."

Pathfinder has record sales at book fair in Sweden

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—"All the books here should be in the libraries," one young woman said as she purchased Evelyn Reed's book *Woman's Evolution* in Swedish. The annual Gothenburg Book Fair, the largest in the northern part of Europe, drew more than 107,000 visitors September 13-16, according to the fair organizers, and the overwhelming majority were young people.

Coming as the U.S. government began its war drive against the peoples of Afghanistan, and the capitalist rulers of Sweden began to use the events to bolster their assault on working people at home, the display of revolutionary literature published and distributed by Pathfinder was met with heightened interest this year.

This is the 10th year in a row that supporters of Pathfinder in Sweden organized to have a booth at the book fair. Over the weekend the team of socialist workers and Young Socialists, including one from the United Kingdom who joined the effort, set up literature tables in downtown Gothenburg that became a real hot spot of discussion.

Sales figures reached an all-time high this year, with the newly published pamphlet in Swedish, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, topping the list with 26 sold, plus one each in Spanish and English. Pathfinder supporters prepared large blowups of the cover of the pamphlet along with several quotations from the text and from *New International* no. 7 with the lead article "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq" by Jack Barnes. The title on the magazine sparked many discussions about the imperialists' war drive today. Nine people decided to purchase a copy of the Swedish edition and one did so in English.

The first day and half were open to trades people, publishers, librarians, book chain representatives, and teachers. The buyer for Stockholm's city library looked up the Pathfinder booth and took a catalogue home. Seeing the range of titles available, librarians from various schools in Sweden stopped at the booth and said students in the schools were demanding books by Che Guevara and Malcolm X. One of the librarians specifically asked for *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes.

A young woman visited the booth who had recently been involved in a project in the countryside of Burkina Faso. There she met peasants who told her about Thomas Sankara, the leader of the 1983-87 revolution in the West African country. They were eager to tell her about what they had accomplished during the revolution, about their deep respect for Sankara's leadership, and the setback they had suffered when he was assassinated in a counterrevolutionary coup.

Pathfinder publishes several pamphlets and a book of speeches of Sankara that bring



Militant

Sales figures reached an all-time high this year at the Pathfinder booth at the annual Gothenburg Book Fair in Sweden. More than 107,000 people attended the fair.

to life how the popular revolutionary government began to combat hunger, illiteracy, and economic backwardness imposed on the country by imperialist domination. The young visitor to the Pathfinder booth said she found Sankara's legacy very much alive in the memories of the peasants she worked with. She bought a copy of *Thomas Sankara Speaks* and expressed interest in contacting the Pathfinder bookstore in Stockholm for more discussion.

A buyer for the International Library in Stockholm purchased all the titles available at the Pathfinder booth in French and told team members that the books will be sent to a library in Mali. She wrote in the visitor's book: "Thomas Sankara in French is demanded in his neighbor country, Mali. Malcolm X is a big name but few have the possibility to get hold of what he said in his own words. That capitalism may not be the solution to all problems is something not widely discussed today in a country like Mali. Jack Barnes can give some counterarguments when capitalism is presented as the 'solution.'"

Many visitors to the booth wanted to discuss the attacks in New York and Washington on September 11 and Washington's response to the events. This led to three fair goers purchasing *Capitalism's World Disorder*, as well as other titles. Members of the Young Muslims in Sweden had a stand at the fair and two young women staffing it came by to give us their statement defending the rights of Muslim peoples in wake of the attacks. They decided to buy the pamphlet *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*, a title that caught a lot of interest and discussion given the Israeli

government's war against the Palestinian people. In all, eight copies were sold.

A total of 26 titles on the Cuban Revolution and the writings of Ernesto Che Guevara were sold, including 16 of the Swedish edition of Guevara's *Socialism and Man* in Cuba, which also contains the 1987 speech by Fidel Castro on the 20th anniversary of Che's death.

Three young men asked for a book in Swedish about the Cuban Revolution and decided to buy *New International* no. 2 in Swedish, which contains the article by Mary-Alice Waters *Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution*. Another topic sparking discussion and interest was on women, with 13 books and pamphlets sold. Six purchased *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed and four bought *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara. Altogether participants in the fair bought 114 books and pamphlets worth more than \$800, up from \$350 last year.

Birgitta Isacsson is a member of the Metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden. Dag Tirsén, Kristoffer Schultz, Johan Nilsson, and Claudio Burgos contributed to this article.

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BY KRISTOFFER SCHULTZ, JOHAN NILSSON AND JENNY SUSI

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—"It was a victory for working people and youth that the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students was held," said Claudio Burgos at a Militant Labor Forum here September 8. "The anti-imperialist character of the festival attracted young people engaged in struggles in different parts of the world and we should celebrate the outcome of this international political gathering."

Burgos and Daniel Ahl, both members of the Young Socialists in Sweden, were part of the Swedish delegation at the festival in Algiers, Algeria, in August. Together with YS members from Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, they took an active part in the festival, discussing politics, selling Pathfinder books, and seeking to learn from other youth involved in struggles around the world. "We were able to discuss with many other young people how to advance the worldwide struggle against imperialism," Burgos said.

Ahl spoke about a two-day solidarity tour of the refugee camps of the Sahrawi people that he and 13 others joined after the festival. The visit was hosted by Ujsario, the youth organization of the Polisario Front, which leads the struggle for independence of Western Sahara from Morocco. After the forum discussion continued over dinner with the youth who attended the meeting.

Young Socialists members traveled to Gothenburg, Sweden, September 13-16 to help staff a Pathfinder booth at the annual book fair in that city. There was intense interest among young people who saw books and pamphlets about Malcolm X, the Palestinian struggle, and the imperialists' war preparations in Central Asia. The sales turned out to be the best ever in all the years that Pathfinder has been represented at the book fair.

YS members arranged an evening event to talk with young people who expressed interest in learning more about socialism and the struggle against imperialism today. The

experiences of one YS member, who had traveled to Northern Ireland to learn about the fight against British imperialism and for a united Ireland, were of interest to youth who came to the meeting. The YS member described a march he participated in to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the death of 10 hunger strikers, led by Irish freedom fighter Bobby Sands, in the Long Kesh prison in 1981.



BY ANDY HARRIS

CHICAGO—During a three-day visit to Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, in early September, followed by a trip to Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, participants in the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange and the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algeria spoke to youth, students, and workers about the Cuban Revolution and the worldwide struggle against imperialism.

After a Militant Labor Forum in St. Paul titled, "Youth and the Fight Against Imperialism" two young women, a high school teacher, and a fighter against police brutality, invited the Young Socialists to speak at their classes.

Arrin Hawkins, a member of the Young Socialists and a meat packer in Chicago, spoke to around 15 students in a women's studies class at Loren Nicollet High School. Students asked questions about the role of women and youth organizations in Western Sahara, socialism, and the gains of the Cuban Revolution. One student said she liked the presentation and explained how young people in the United States are told lies about Cuba. She said she would like to travel to Cuba and learn more about its socialist revolution where workers took power in 1959. Several students expressed interest in learning more about the Young Socialists and participating in classes on the communist movement together with YS members.

On September 11 two hijacked airplanes flew into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, and another flew into the Pentagon. Later that afternoon, Jack Willey and Arrin Hawkins were scheduled to speak to a Political Science class at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College. Before the class, the professor asked if the two socialists still wanted to give the talk on the fight against imperialism, given the events of the day. They insisted they should.

After their talks on the internationalism

of the Cuban Revolution and the anti-imperialist struggles represented at the festival, several students and the professor asked about the fight to get the U.S. Navy out of the Puerto Rican Island of Vieques, what books to read on socialism and the communist movement, and the campaigns of the Young Socialists.

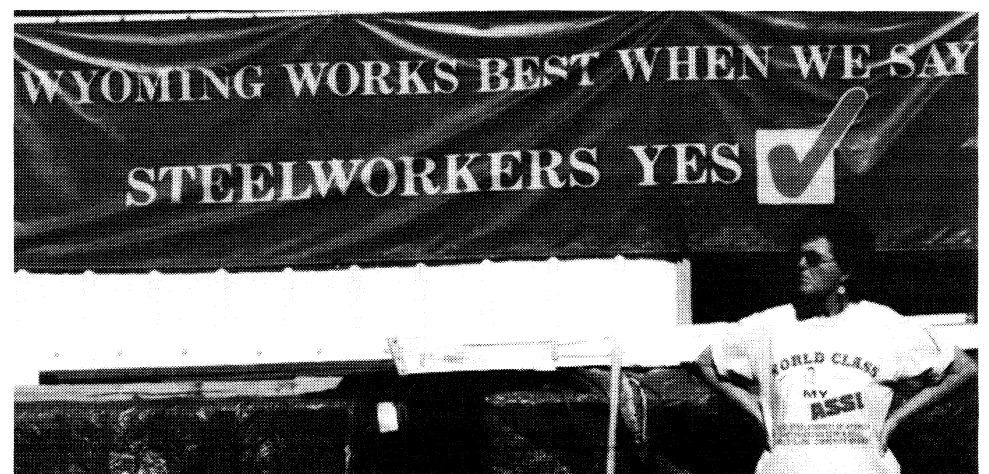
Later the professor took over the class and discussed the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. A few students said that retaliation, including massive attacks on Afghanistan and the Mideast, were necessary to "end terrorism." Others stated that the U.S. rulers directly and indirectly organize military invasions and wars all the time, which often go unnoticed. They stated that such a symbolic attack on U.S. power is not surprising.

When the class finished, students came and talked with both Hawkins and Willey, bought a few copies of the *Militant* and signed up for more information on the Young Socialists.

Hawkins was also able to speak at Ball

State University in Muncie, Indiana. The Young Socialists table, with signs reading "U.S. Hands off the Mideast and Afghanistan" and featuring a wide array of Pathfinder titles and a tall stack of *Militants*, was a focus of attention throughout the day. Some students and campus workers who came to the table disagreed with the position put forth by the YS members and several said that it was "bad timing" to put up a table against the war drive just days after the attack on New York and Washington. One woman who was hostile to the stance of the YS members complained to other students at a class that morning. After the class, one student came to check out the table and appreciated the fact that the Young Socialists was campaigning against Washington's imperialist war drive and that she "was not alone" in her ideas. Later she came to the afternoon meeting, signed up for more information on the Young Socialists, and said she is interested in linking up with other youth to build a Young Socialists chapter on campus.

Steelworkers win support for strike in Wyoming



Militant/Jack Parker

September 29 rally for workers on strike against Crown, Cork, and Seal.

BY JACK PARKER

WORLAND, Wyoming—More than 100 people rallied here September 29 in support of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 8810, whose 90 members have been on strike since June 1 against the international bottling giant Crown, Cork, and Seal. The issues in the walkout include job classifications, retirement, and medical benefits. Strikes are also under way against the company in Illinois and Maryland.

The event, sponsored by the Wyoming State AFL-CIO, was attended by mine workers, USWA members from the Green River

soda ash mines, building trades workers, rail workers, and others. Most of those who came brought donations of food and money collected from members of their locals.

Following the rally, pickup trucks full of food and dry goods caravanned to a former veterinary office that serves as the local's food bank. The donations filled the building. "We really needed this," said Bill Tibbs, chairman of the local's Strike and Defense Fund. "Strike benefits are only \$109 per week and we have been out since June 1. The international uses some of our strike

Continued on Page 6

Vieques residents say, 'U.S. Navy out'

Continued from front page

a shooting range and ammunition depot since the end of World War II, despite massive opposition from the population, destruction of the environment, and ruination of the livelihoods of fishermen and farmers on the island. Through its colonial overlordship over Puerto Rico, Washington uses Vieques without consent of the population as a joint forces training base for Navy fleets, and for preparation for wars and invasions such as against Grenada in 1983 and the imperialist assault on Yugoslavia two years ago.

The same day as the meeting in Vieques, the U.S. Congress passed a \$345 billion Pentagon budget with a rider canceling a referendum Washington had planned to hold in Vieques on continued use of the island by the Navy. Instead, the bill gives the Navy the power to decide to stay in Vieques if the military brass says it is needed for training exercises. In a ballot organized by the Puerto Rican government last July, 68 percent of the people of Vieques voted for the U.S. Navy to leave immediately and to return all occupied lands. In the wake of that vote, Washington began to reconsider holding its own referendum.

Over the past weeks, several small protests against the maneuvers have been organized at the main entrance of the base, despite threatening security forces made up of U.S. Marines and federal cops deployed to try to intimidate opponents of the U.S. Navy. Some of the organizations involved in earlier mobilizations called for a moratorium on civil disobedience actions because of the tight security measures around the base. Others decided to suspend protests in the wake of the September 11 attacks in New

York and Washington.

Following the September 26 meeting, Ismael Guadalupe of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques encouraged opponents of the Navy exercises to relaunch and extend a civil disobedience campaign that has been one aspect of the protests over the past year or more. "This struggle has to be maintained among the people," Guadalupe said. Given heightened security by U.S. forces around the military base, Guadalupe suggested alternative sites for the protests, including on the main island.

Closing ranks with Washington's call for "unity" in its drive to war against Afghanistan, some bourgeois forces and individuals that had been drawn to support the demand to close down the bases now say that the fight to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques is a secondary issue to supporting the U.S. war drive.

"To differ at this moment is to be unpatriotic and to be with the terrorists," said Congressman Luis Gutiérrez of Illinois, justifying his vote for the legislation. The congressman is one of a number of bourgeois politicians that participated and got arrested during civil disobedience protests and other actions last summer.

Others such as Dennis Rivera, president of the hospital workers union in New York who was jailed for participating in a civil disobedience action, told *El Nuevo Dia*, "The problem is that Vieques seems distant. The attention is going now to resolving the dramatic problems that the city [New York] has. We continue committed to get the Navy out, but (promoting that effort) has been made more difficult," he added.

Canadian rulers target workers' rights

Continued from Page 16

for landed immigrants in Canada, a move towards imposing mandatory identity cards on all Canadian citizens.

Ottawa's participation in Washington's war drive is responsible for the increasing victimization of workers who are Muslim or of Arab origin.

Since September 11, Nageeb Al-Hadi from Yemen has been held at Toronto's West Detention Center by immigration cops, after his Frankfurt-Chicago flight was diverted following the attacks in Washington and New York. Al-Hadi is charged with uttering a false statement to apply for and use a U.S. passport, as well as fraudulently using a U.S. visa. Even though the cops have not linked him to the attacks two weeks ago, the FBI wants him extradited to the United States.

During his September 25 court appearance, Al-Hadi, speaking through an assigned Arabic interpreter, said he has repeatedly asked for a lawyer since he can't afford one, has been told to sign documents he doesn't understand, and has been denied the use of a phone.

In one attack a Hindu Temple in Hamilton was burned to the ground. In Ottawa, a 15-year old Muslim boy was pulled from his bicycle and beaten unconscious by a dozen youth who blamed him for the attacks in

New York. Muslim organizations have advised parents to keep their children out of school.

Thousands of workers face layoffs

In his Toronto address to his big-business supporters, Chretien declared that "the Canadian economy was strong before September 11, and it is strong after September 11.... All of us have an obligation to demonstrate both resolve and confidence in the future," he said.

Thousands of workers facing layoffs are finding out what this "resolve and confidence" is really all about.

On September 26, Air Canada, Canada's largest airline, announced job cuts of 5,000 workers. The carrier is threatening to lay off 6,000 more.

Transat AT, Canada's largest charter airline, has already announced its intentions of eliminating 1,300 jobs and of freezing or cutting the pay of the remaining employees. Also on September 26, Montreal-based Bombardier, one of the world's leading regional jet manufacturers, announced layoffs of 3,800 workers—2,700 of them at its Canadian facilities in Montreal and Toronto.

John Steele is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Labor battles are key to fight against war

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"We are deepening the working-class campaign against imperialism and its war drive, which includes getting out to the picket lines and rallies of public workers on strike here in Minnesota," said Tom Fiske, a socialist meat packer in St. Paul. "Three strikers bought copies of the *Militant* as I interviewed them to report on the walkout."

Labor battles like the one unfolding in Minnesota are at the heart of the resistance to imperialism and its war drive against the peoples of Afghanistan, as well as the U.S. rulers' assault on workers' rights. Fiske, like other socialist workers and members of the Young Socialists across the United States and in other countries, is striving to win new readers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and to sell copies of *New International* as part of a subscription drive that runs through November 18.

A central axis of the circulation drive is getting the socialist press, *New International*, and Pathfinder books into the

paper. The student who joined our table asked us how she could join the Young Socialists, and said she would come to a class on Marxism we were organizing the next day."

"We took off work early to set up a literature table at the north campus of Florida International University," said Argiris Malapanis, a meat packer in Miami. "It was our best sales effort there over the past year. One Haitian student who purchased a *Militant* subscription remarked how Washington's war drive was headed toward another world war and fascism. Another student who bought a subscription saw *Capitalism's World Disorder* on the table and said he wanted to meet us at the same spot next week to buy it."

'This will last longer than 12 weeks'

From Boston, Ted Leonard wrote, "After discussing the U.S. government's war drive with a student at a literature table at Harvard University, I suggested she get a 12-week introductory subscription to the *Militant*. She said, 'This thing will last longer than 12 weeks,' and bought a one-year subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*."

At a rally in Washington September 29 attended by many young people opposed to Washington's war plans and attacks at home, socialist workers and Young Socialists sold four subscriptions to the *Militant*, 56 papers, and \$200 worth of literature. Textile worker Andrea Morell said she raised with people at the rally that to be effective in opposing Washington's imperialist war drive it's necessary to read the information provided regularly in the *Militant*. This, along with articles on the mine workers' fight for safety, the protests in Cincinnati against the freeing of the cop who killed Timothy Thomas, and the breadth of articles from around the world helped convince people to purchase the paper. Two subscribers also took advantage of an offer to get the book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* for the special price of \$10 with the subscription.

"One young woman debated which titles on the Middle East she should get, saying she was torn on the subject," wrote

Laura Garza from Brooklyn, who also went to the rally. "After some discussion she bought two pamphlets-- *Israel and the Arab Revolution* and *Socialists and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism*. After discussing the history of the Washington's slaughter of Iraqis and the devastation of that country during the Gulf War, and the bombings by Washington and London that continue to this day, another person bought *New International* no. 7 with the feature article "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq."

In New Jersey federal and local cops have organized raids targeting Arabs in several cities. One focus of these attacks has been Jersey City, home to many workers from Central Asia and the Middle East. "I went on a sales and reporting team there last week," said Abby Tilsner, a socialist worker in Newark. "At one restaurant we met Ahmed, a young Egyptian worker, who told us, 'the media lies and tries to make us Arabs look like criminals.'"

"He introduced us to his friend Nader, who also voiced his opposition to the imperialist war and the antiterror campaign," continued Tilsner. "'When I moved here they said the United States was about freedom—but it isn't free. I have friends who can't walk the streets without fear. Every day the FBI is at Jour-

nal Square. They called it 'Terror Town' in the New York *Daily News*," Nader told us. He bought a copy of *New International* no. 7 and a subscription to the *Militant*."

In the New York Garment District Maggie Trowe said that a man approached the sales table wearing a shirt with a picture of Osama bin Laden and the slogan "Wanted: Dead or Alive." Trowe said, "I showed him the *Militant*, explaining that it was a socialist weekly against imperialism and its war against Afghanistan and the attacks on workers' rights. He said, 'That looks interesting,' and decided to buy a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *New International* no. 7."

"Because our conversation was civil and relaxed I told him that one of ways the rulers draw workers into supporting their war moves is to encourage us to wear T-shirts with U.S. flags and patriotic slogans like the one he was wearing. He thought about it and said, 'Yes, I think you're right.'"

Militant supporters in Auckland, New Zealand, have been receiving a warm response to the paper's coverage of imperialism's war drive against the people of Afghanistan. "In the working-class district of Otahuhu, we sold six papers at a table September 21. At another table on the university campus we sold out of our bundle of 17 papers in half a day, meeting students from Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Oman, and Korea. Two of the students asked to be called back about a subscription," wrote Felicity Coggan.



Militant/Alice Kincaid

Selling the *Militant* to miners at Shoal Creek mine in Alabama.

hands of workers resisting the employer and government attacks on their working conditions and rights. Socialist workers are also putting a high priority on collaborating with members of the Young Socialists to get on college campuses to meet students who want to find a way to fight the assaults and brutalities of imperialism today.

After the first week of the subscription effort partisans of the campaign have sold 134 *Militant* subscriptions and 39 *PM* subscriptions. They are discussing goals for selling three issues of *New International* magazine as well. We're off to a good start, and an international target week October 6-14 will help get every area on or ahead of target by carrying out stepped-up sales in working-class districts, on college campuses, at plant gates and on the job, in coal mining regions, and elsewhere.

"I teamed up with a YS member to sell literature at the University of Minnesota last week," said Samuel Farley, a packinghouse worker in St. Paul. "One student there, who also attended the Militant Labor Forum a few days earlier, joined our table for five hours. She had purchased two Pathfinder titles: *Socialism on Trial* by James P. Cannon, and *Too Many Babies?* by Joseph Hansen.

"We were involved in numerous debates and discussions about socialism, terrorism, and democracy with several students," stated Farley. "By the end of the day we had sold five subscriptions to the *Militant* and around 18 copies of the

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial subscription campaign Sept. 22–Nov. 18

Country	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
Sweden	12	6	50%	5	1
Iceland	6	2	33%	1	
Australia	16	3	19%	3	
United States					
Tucson	7	4	57%	1	
Chicago	35	12	34%	30	3
San Francisco	50	16	32%	25	8
Des Moines	30	9	30%	20	4
Grand Junction	30	8	27%	8	1
Detroit	35	6	17%	10	
Cleveland	25	4	16%	4	3
Seattle	25	4	16%	10	1
Miami	20	3	15%	20	
NY Garment Dist.	100	14	14%	50	3
Atlanta	36	5	14%	15	1
Los Angeles	50	6	12%	30	
Philadelphia	25	3	12%	10	2
St. Paul	35	4	11%	20	4
Boston	27	3	11%	11	
Houston	30	3	10%	15	1
Omaha	11	1	9%	15	
Newark	45	3	7%	30	1
Upper Manhattan	65	4	6%	50	
Birmingham	20	1	5%	3	1
Pittsburgh	40	2	5%	5	
Allentown	25	1	4%	5	1
Washington	25	1	4%	20	
Brooklyn	60	2	3%	30	2
Charlotte	16		0%	6	1
Tampa	12		0%	5	
U.S. total	879	119	14%	448	37
Canada					
Vancouver	15	2	13%	2	
Toronto	17	1	6%	5	
Montreal	12	1	8%	5	1
Canada total	44	4	9%	12	1
New Zealand					
Auckland	10		0%	1	
Christchurch	8		0%	1	
N.Z. total	18		0%	2	0
United Kingdom	35		0%	10	
Int'l totals	1010	134	12%	481	39
Goal/Should be	1100	137	12%	500	62
IN THE UNIONS					
Australia					
AMIEU	3	1	33%		
MUA	2		0%		
Total	5	1	20%		
United States					
UAW	5				
UMWA	40		0%	5	
UFCW	55		0%	55	
UNITE	35		0%	35	
Total	130		0%	95	0
New Zealand					
NDU	2		0%		
MWU	2		0%		
Total	4		0%		

Alabama miners snap up 'Militant'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Responding to the explosion at the Jim Walter Resources no. 5 mine in Brookwood, Alabama, that killed 13 miners, supporters of the *Militant* sold 50 copies of the paper to coal miners and other working people in the area over the weekend September 28–29. Supporters of the *Militant* in Alabama are organizing special sales teams to the coalfields to reach miners, other workers, and farmers here over the next two weeks, as are those around Pittsburgh and in the West. Those who would like to help in this effort should contact the *Militant* distributors in Birmingham listed in the directory on page 12.

As soon as the papers arrived in town Friday afternoon we took them down to the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 2368 union hall, where union members have been staffing the union headquarters to provide meals and an organizing center. A union official welcomed *Militant* reporters to the local hall and put them in touch with other miners to help round out the *Militant's* coverage that tells the truth about what happened, cutting across the company's lies and cover-up about the explosion. Among those participating in the *Militant* reporting team were two workers who used to work at the Jim Walter mine for many years and knew miners still working there.

Militant sales teams took the paper to Walmart stores in Midfield and Bessemer later that afternoon, selling 25 copies in a couple of hours to workers who were eager to read the truth about the worst mine disaster since the explosion at the Wilberg mine in Utah in 1984. There was also substantial interest in the *Militant's* coverage of Washington's war drive.

Teams fanned out to sell to miners working Saturday at the Jim Walter no. 4 and no. 7 mines, which are located in the same complex in Brookwood where the mine explosion took place. One mine construction worker driving down the road swung back around to get a *Militant*. He said that he had seen it before, and wanted to read a paper that put the blame for the explosion where it belongs. Through sales at both morning and afternoon shifts, six papers were sold to miners at the two portals.

A sales team on Saturday sold another 10 papers to workers going in for the afternoon shift at the Shoal Creek mine owned by Drummond. Miners also took campaign statements issued by Frank Forrestal, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh and a coal miner in southwestern Pennsylvania, that placed the blame for the mine explosion on the bosses' profit drive.

To attract the attention of the miners driving on the road to and from the Shoal Creek mine, a posterboard sign was placed on our car that read, "Miners killed by bosses' profit drive, read the *Militant*." Among miners who didn't have time to stop, a number gave us the thumbs-up upon seeing the sign.

Two Black miners leaving work picked up a copy of the paper and stopped to talk for a little longer. One of them commented on how those in Congress speak for and represent the rich, although he didn't agree that Washington's war drive against Afghanistan is also being done in the interest of the ruling rich.

Strikers win contract at Titan Tire in Iowa

BY JOE SWANSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—Members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164, on strike for nearly three and a half years against Titan Tire, voted 363–105 at their union hall September 26 to approve a contract with the company. The vote ends the longest strike in the history of the U. S. rubber industry, which began May 1, 1998.

“We said Taylor had no place to hide,” said Tom King, a veteran maintenance worker and

“I would call this a victory for the labor movement,” said one worker of the USWA’s 40-month strike.

member of Local 164. King was referring to Maurice Taylor, president and CEO of Titan Tire Corp. “He finally felt cornered enough after years of refusing to sit down and negotiate with the union to do just that.”

Taylor’s antiunion drive at Titan plants here and in Natchez, Mississippi, was met by solid strikes by workers at both plants. Workers in Des Moines were fighting against extensive mandatory overtime and two-tier wages, and for pension and health-care benefits for retired workers. In Mississippi, steelworkers walked out in September 1998, after Titan bosses refused to negotiate with the union after purchasing the plant from Fidelity Manufacturing Co. Taylor ran the Natchez plant with replacement workers until shutting it down completely.

In 1998 Taylor had refused to bargain with the union over forced overtime. Workers reported they were working 26 days straight, often for 12 hours a day, having two days off, and then working another 26 days. Titan Tire also wanted big health and pension benefit cuts.

On the day of the vote, USWA member Denny Wicker reminded this reporter of an interview 10 months earlier when he had said, “Taylor can’t beat us because we are not going to lose even if we never go back in that plant.” Nearly all of the 670 members of Local 164 had other jobs, Wicker said, and only 15 members had crossed the picket line. Wicker is one of the strike leaders who organized the daily picket lines at the plant for the last 40 months.

“I would call this a victory for the labor movement,” he said. “It’s not just that we have a contract, but the fact that Taylor said many times over the last three years that he would never sign a contract that gave us a pension. He said we could stay out for 10 years for all he cares. Every time Taylor opened his arrogant mouth and was quoted by the media,” Wicker said, “our strike got stronger and solidarity in the labor movement increased.”

A key aspect of the fight was what strikers in both cities did to reach out for support across the country, as well as mobilizing union members in each area to back the fight. “Without the solidarity from the USWA international, other labor unions and other supporters of their strike, it might have been a different outcome,” said Wicker. He pointed to the financial aid, goods, and food the union received from supporters, including farmers who donated pork and spoke at their annual rallies. “We always got support from a layer of farmers who we met on the travels across the country at farm implement shows when we distributed information on the strike,” he said.

At the September 3 Labor Day rally, one of the largest here in years, Local 164 president John Penno said serious negotiations



Militant/Dave Ferguson
Steelworkers and supporters at solidarity rally in Natchez, Mississippi, January 23, 1999. Titan Tire owner Maurice Taylor shut down the Natchez plant completely and agreed to a contract in Des Moines.

with Titan Tire officials had resumed in August. A tentative agreement was announced September 7, and workers received a summary of the proposed pact shortly afterwards. On the day of the contract vote, most union members *Militant* reporters spoke to said the contract was likely the best they could get.

Under the terms of the five-year agreement, members of the local who want to return to work will be able to do so with all seniority rights and to the job assignment they were working on the first day of the strike. The new contract increases the probation period from 90 days to 120. Under the previous contract the company could force workers to work up to three seven-day weeks in a row plus five more days for a total of 26 days straight. The new con-

Meat packers strike for contract in Washington

BY CECELIA MORIARTY

TOPPENISH, Washington—More than 200 meat packers at Washington Beef, a cut-and-kill and processing plant of about 540 workers, went on strike September 19 to demand a new contract. After the previous contract had expired four days earlier, the company, with union officials’ agreement, had extended the pact to November 3.

Thirteen of the striking meat packers, who are members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1439, were fired the day after the walkout began, accused by the company of organizing an un-

Nebraska Beef workers step up fight for union

BY NORBERTO GOMEZ

OMAHA, Nebraska—Members of the Workers Committee of Nebraska Beef issued a leaflet announcing the existence of their committee to the workforce as part of the ongoing fight to organize the union at the meatpacking plant.

On August 16 the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union lost a representation election at Nebraska Beef. Workers involved in the organizing campaign are supporting the union’s effort to get the results of the election thrown out. The union maintains that the company used illegal tactics to harass and intimidate workers. A hearing on the charges against the company is scheduled for October 10 in Omaha.

The leaflet explains that the purpose of the Workers Committee is to “organize to win the next union election, defend the rights of all workers in the plant, and join with workers at other plants who are fighting to join the union.”

The leaflet asks that workers let the committee know about any problems with line speed, supervisors, unfair disciplining, firing or other problems. “If you have a problem you are not alone. The Workers Committee together with the union and OTOC will do everything we can to organize workers to defend our rights.” The OTOC (Omaha Together, One Community) is a local coalition of churches that has teamed up with the union to help organize Omaha’s 4,000 packinghouse workers.

authorized strike. Other workers say they have received termination notices from the company.

Manuel Rangel, a kill-floor worker for a decade at the company, said they struck partly in response to speedup on the job. “Over the past two years the company has increased the number of cows we kill each day by 125, but with the same number of workers,” he said. “This has meant a big increase in injuries. They sent me a letter telling me I was fired on Saturday. I think this was because I was on television on Thursday explaining what the strike was about.”

The strikers are angry that the contract was extended without their approval. José Montano, a 27-year-old worker on the kill floor, said, “Now is when the company is hurting. In November they will have filled their orders and will start laying off. Winter is slack time.” Montano has worked at Washington Beef for nine years.

Outstanding grievances

According to Montano, most workers receive between \$7 and \$8 an hour with inadequate medical benefits and no dental or vision benefits. Strikers reported that in addition to the line speedup, workers have a number of outstanding grievances over company mistreatment.

Sergio Hernández, who has worked on the kill floor for 16 years, said the company refused to relay messages from his family the day his father died. He said that the company told workers that in rejecting the extension of the contract expiration date, the workers had shown that they didn’t care about the events in New York September 11. “But that’s not true,” he said. “We care very much about what happened. But the company doesn’t care about us.”

Strikers are organizing picket lines at two locations at the plant and organized a car



Militant/Jeff Ford
Meat packers at Washington Beef, members of UFCW Local 1439, went on strike September 19 for a contract and in response to speedup on the job.

caravan through Toppenish to let other workers know about their fight. Native American officials have allowed the strikers to park their cars and to rally on property owned by the Yakima Nation across the street from the plant. Local stores have given food, and farmers have donated peaches and apples. United Farm Workers union members have also joined the picket lines to show their support. “They’ve been here all three days,” said striker Juan Serrano.

Company officials said the plant may have to slow production, since most of the workers had not returned to work as they had expected. A few did go back, but most of the workers who walked out remain on strike. According to Hector Roman, a fabrication worker, “We wanted to negotiate, but they never answered.”

Cecelia Moriarty is a meat packer and member of UFCW Local 81 in Kent. Chris Rayson, member of the United Transportation Union and worker at Burlington Northern Santa Fe, contributed to this article.

tract, union members say, gives workers at least every other weekend off. No one will be required to work more than three 12-hour shifts in a row, or more than 60 hours in a single workweek.

Wicker said that the pension plan is a real improvement, given the fact that Taylor refused to even discuss the issue for more than three years. The new plan will operate through the Steelworkers Pension Trust (SPT) rather than the company. Titan will pay 95 cents for each hour worked to the SPT. Wicker estimated that around 190 members of Local 164 are eligible for a company pension, and believes that a majority will take it. Union members said that health insurance contributions demanded of employees will increase. This is also what some have encountered at other jobs they have worked during the strike.

Hourly wages will rise, beginning with \$1.20 an hour immediately, with another \$1.60 to be phased in over the life of the contract. Union members say the contract contains a provision guaranteeing wage increases. Under the 1995 contract, wage increases went into effect only if the company met certain profit goals.

According to USWA staffer Tom Johnson, the Des Moines operation will be Titan’s main plant for tires for large construction equipment and tractors.

“Just because we got a contract now does not mean that Taylor or the Titan company has changed,” Wicker said. In the September 27 *Des Moines Register*, Philip Stanhope, a Titan Tire executive, was quoted as saying that strikers will have to pass a re-employment physical exam, and that Titan will “integrate” strikers back into the plant over time. Stanhope told the paper that no replacement workers will be laid off as a result of the agreement.

One union member who did not want his name to be used said the contract contains a “zero-tolerance policy,” under which the company can discipline workers for “inappropriate behavior.” The bosses can use that against the union, he said. That policy, plus a two-tier wage structure for workers hired after the strike that lasts for two years, and the fact that some grades will never reach full tier, will present a challenge to the union in winning over the scabs, he said.

Wicker pointed out that no matter what Titan boss Stanhope says, the company is obliged to reinstate any union members who want to work within 60 days of the contract ratification. Titan says it needs about 520 workers. With about 400 replacement workers currently inside and about 200 union members who want to go back, “some of the scabs will have to go,” he said.

Wicker said that a civil lawsuit filed by Titan over a year ago, based on the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization act (RICO) and charging the USWA with “racketeering,” was not settled as part of the agreement. The suit seeks damages of up to \$720 million and names at least 90 members of Local 164. “We still have to fight Taylor on that one,” Wicker said, “which is another reason we have to stay on the alert and continue to resist his harassment.”

Steelworkers strike

Continued from Page 4

money to pay for medical insurance and that limits what we can give to our members.”

Crown, Cork, and Seal makes one of every five beverage cans used in the world and one of every three food containers used in the United States and Europe. Last year the company had total sales of \$7.3 billion from products made in 223 plants.

“Crown is demanding we take a concession contract,” said Local 8810 president Tim McElhinny. “They want to double our annual medical deductible to \$200 for a single person and \$400 for a family. They want to charge us \$25 per month per dependent for the medical plan. They want to do away with our job descriptions. They want you to show up for work and find out that day what you are going to be doing.”

The Worland Crown, Cork, and Seal plant was built in the late 1970s and organized by the USWA in the early 1980s. “From the beginning, the company resisted the union coming in here,” McElhinny said. “We had to win a court fight just to get recognized. This is our fourth strike in 20 years. This one is different, all the others lasted just a couple weeks.”

Imperialists amass forces for brutal war

Continued from front page

more than 20,000 troops, an aircraft carrier, several other warships and dozens of aircraft. It's Britain's largest military deployment since sending troops to the Malvinas Islands off Argentina in 1982. In tying its fate to the outcome of Washington's military assaults, London hopes to gain an edge against its imperialist rivals in Europe, especially Germany and France, by providing cannon fodder in foreign wars of aggression.

According to an Iranian navy commander, there are now 41 U.S. and British warships in place in the Gulf and the Sea of Oman. This is in addition to U.S. forces now stationed in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on Afghanistan's northern border and the special forces that have begun operating inside Afghanistan's borders. Through the war drive in the region, Washington is deepening its military relationship with Uzbekistan and its deployments on the soil of republics of the former Soviet Union. For the past several years U.S. special forces have been deployed in that country for training Uzbek Army units.

Building on the Clinton administration's establishment of a North American Command, for the first time organizing for deployment of U.S. military forces in the United States, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld this past week appointed Army Secretary Thomas White, a retired brigadier general, to be the Pentagon's first security coordinator for "homeland defense." He will be working with the new cabinet-level Homeland Security Agency set up by President George Bush September 20. The Pentagon announced that it has now elevated domestic defense to the first of the military's four "core missions."

The U.S. Constitution prohibits the U.S. military from operating on U.S. soil.

National identity card

As of October 2, the total number of National Guard and other reservists now called up for active military duty is more than 20,000. Some 4,000 of them are being dispatched to the 420 airports across the country. Government officials and other ruling class figures are also floating proposals to impose national identity cards on working people and expand the powers of surveillance of federal police agencies.

Prime minister of Italy declares West culturally 'superior'

BY RÓGER CALERO

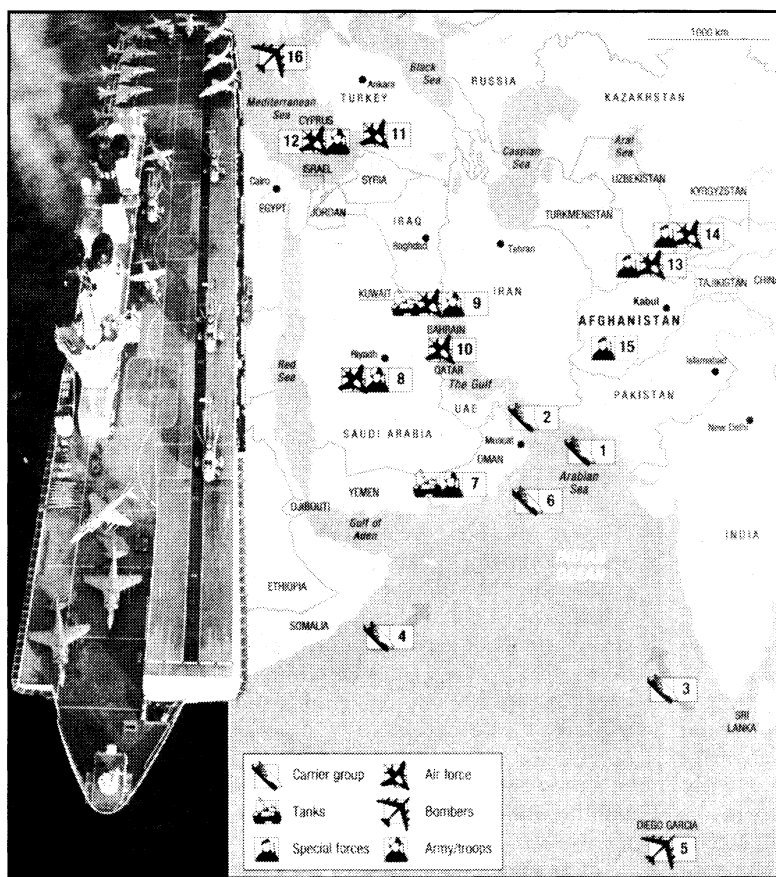
"We should be confident of the superiority of our civilization, which consists of a value system that has given people widespread prosperity in those countries that embrace it and guarantees respect for human rights and religion," said Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi September 26. "This respect certainly does not exist in Islamic countries," the superwealthy politician added, provoking public reaction and demands for a retraction from several governments in the Mideast.

Speaking to Italian senators the day after his remarks, Berlusconi refused to apologize, said that he had been misunderstood, and remarked that the criticism was "artificial," "based on nothing," and "fed by irresponsible comments from the opposition."

In his earlier remarks the rightist prime minister also praised imperialism, saying that the West "is bound to occidentalize and conquer new people." He added, "It has done it with the Communist world and part of the Islamic world," but unfortunately, a part of the Islamic world is 1,400 years behind."

A *Wall Street Journal* editorial asked people to "give Mr. Berlusconi a break" since "the starting point in defending that [Western] civilization is believing in it."

Speaking to an audience at New York University's law school in Manhattan September 28, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor spoke frankly about what course U.S. ruling class has been on, and will continue to pursue in the United States. In the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, she said, "we're likely to experience more restriction on our personal freedom than has ever been the case in our country." She said these developments "will cause us to reexamine some of our laws pertaining to criminal surveillance, wiretapping, immigration, and so on."



Map, with British aircraft carrier at left, details 16 sites of military deployments by Washington and London surrounding Afghanistan in preparation for their imperialist assault.

According to the Department of Justice, some 500 individuals are now being held in detention by authorities across the country—148 by the INS and the rest by federal, state, and local cop agencies. Among those detained are three college students arrested in San Diego—Yazeed al-Salmi of Saudi Arabia, Mohdar Abdallah of Somalia, and Osama Awadallah of Jordan. They were ordered held indefinitely by a federal judge in California in proceedings that were sealed and the news media banned from the courtroom. The three, who are all in the country legally, were forced to appear in a New York courtroom in a sealed meeting because they are accused of knowing one of those who hijacked the airliners September 11.

The roundups, detention of immigrants, and other moves against working people since September 11 have all been carried out under a range of legislation put on the books under the administration of President William Clinton in the 1990s.

New legislation demanded by Attorney General John Ashcroft has met with some resistance in Congress. After some wrangling, and repeated appearances by Ashcroft urging the bill be passed to thwart other imminent terrorist attacks, the Democratic and Republican negotiators did agree to a more limited package of measures that target workers' rights dubbed the "Patriot Act."

The proposed law would allow cops to detain immigrants for up to seven days without being charged; put e-mail communications on the same level with telephone communications and expand surveillance of both; and allow only the attorney general or the commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to decide whether individuals should be listed as suspected terrorists. The Bush administration sought unlimited authority to expand wiretapping, but the House bill puts a two year limitation on it, at which time it could be renewed by congressional approval.

Also being discussed are proposals to permit military personnel to assist in patrolling the nation's borders, to triple the number of INS cops on the Canadian border, to limit student visas, and to tighten up other immigration procedures.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat from

California, for example, has proposed a six-month moratorium on issuing new student visas, initiating comprehensive background checks on foreign students, and increased police role for school officials in verifying whether students are in compliance with terms of their visas.

The Department of Transportation is pushing for a measure that would harass truck drivers by requesting that state police agencies pull over every truck with hazardous materials placards to check the drivers' credentials and paperwork. Millions of pounds of toxic, flammable, or explosive chemicals and fuels are transported on U.S. highways and railways every day, with some 80,000 companies involved in hauling this material.

NATO invokes collective defense clause

Representatives of NATO's 19 member nations meeting in Brussels October 2 agreed to invoke the alliance's collective defense clause in relation to the United States. This states that an attack upon one member is an attack upon all. This clears the way for Washington to now utilize military resources and bases of NATO member nations for its assault on Afghanistan.

The U.S. rulers say that their target is Osama bin Laden, who they claim commands "up to 10,000 in 55 camps and other centers," according to the *Financial Times*, and the overthrow of the government of the country. But workers and peasants in Afghanistan—a country exploited by imperialism, making it one of the poorest in the world—know they will be immediately targeted and millions are trying to leave urban centers to escape the imperialists' bombings and assaults they know will come.

Many working people in Afghanistan are already suffering from the effects of an ongoing drought and lack of food after relief agencies have pulled out of the country. The U.S. rulers are using food as a weapon in their drive to topple the Taliban-led government. U.S. officials are considering an airlift of food and other aid to "Taliban-free" areas of Afghanistan, stated an unnamed U.S. official to the *Wall Street Journal*. In addition to international propaganda to portray concern for people in the country, the aim is to draw Afghans out of areas under the control of the Taliban rulers. As part of this effort, the chief of the Agency for International Development, Andrew Natsios, "is expected soon to name Bernd 'Bear' McConnell, an Air Force veteran and former Defense Department official, to head a Central Asia Task Force," noted the *Journal*.

Sizable protests against Washington's military attack against Afghanistan continue to occur in towns and cities throughout Pakistan. This sentiment has forced Washington to back off for now from stationing U.S. troops in Pakistan, though the Pakistani president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf has opened up the country's air space and bases to the U.S. military. According to the *New York Times*, in a poll conducted in the country September 28 individuals were asked whether they would support the United States or Afghanistan in a war. "Seven percent said America and 67 percent Afghanistan," the *Times* stated. Four days later after a speech by President Musharraf "those who said they would side with the United States remained the same."

Northern Alliance and a former king

The U.S. government is stepping up its aid to groups seeking to overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan, with a large chunk of these funds going to the Northern Alliance, a group that controls a small section of northern Afghanistan. These moves are an acceleration of steps already begun by the Clinton administration three years ago when CIA operatives sought to cement ties with Ahmed Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance until he was recently assassinated.

Washington is also working with Mohammad Zahir Shah, the 86-year-old

former king of Afghanistan who was deposed in 1973 under mounting protests by working people in the country of his corrupt and backward regime, to cobble together forces they can claim will be the next government of the country. After meeting with U.S. government representatives who tracked him down in a villa outside Rome, the former monarch and the Northern Alliance issued a joint statement announcing that they would convene an emergency "Supreme Council" by the end of the month to form a new transitional government or declare itself to be the new rulers of the country.

Meanwhile fighting has escalated inside Afghanistan between the Northern Alliance and Taliban forces. The Afghan Islamic Press agency reported that the Taliban had recaptured the Qadis district in the Badghis province of western Afghanistan, which was taken several days earlier by opposition forces. The news agency also reports that about 60 Northern Alliance fighters had defected to the Taliban in the Namak Aab area in northern Takhar province after the fighting there had ended.

The government of Russia, which has pledged to provide military aid the Northern Alliance, is maintaining 10,000 troops and armored units in Tajikistan on Afghanistan's border.

Scaling down their hopes for a "grand alliance" to back Washington's assault on Afghanistan, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, writing in a *New York Times* Op-Ed column September 27 now describes this alliance as "floating coalitions of countries, which may change and evolve."

The defense secretary was reacting to the difficulty the U.S. rulers are having even under the guise of fighting terrorism, of putting together a broad-based coalition to back Washington's military attacks on Afghanistan. In an article titled "Arab Allies Not Jumping to Join U.S. Side," the *Times* noted, "Only Iraq, among all Arab countries has so far failed to condemn the strikes on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But not even close American allies in the region, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia have said clearly that they would enlist in the American-led campaign against terrorism."

British official's mission fails in Iran

The governments of Syria and Iran have objected to this U.S.-led campaign. Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated September 26 that his country will not be joining the U.S. military campaign, charging Washington with trying to gain a foothold in Central Asia. "How can America which has tampered with Iran's interests, demand help from Iran to attack the suffering, oppressed and Muslim nation of Afghanistan?" he stated. "No we are not with you, and we are not terrorists," he added.

His comments came one day after British foreign secretary Jack Straw made the first visit by a high British official to Iran since the 1979 revolution there that ousted the Shah. Straw's visit failed in its aim to win Tehran to back Washington's military attacks on Afghanistan, and the U.S. imperialists. Sending Straw to do its work was not lost on the Iranian people, who waged mighty battles coming out of World War II against the British imperialists in order to regain control of the country's oil and other resources.

Seeking to shore up support in the area, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld departed for the Mideast October 2 for a trip to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt, and Uzbekistan. According to an unnamed senior Pentagon official quoted in the *New York Times*, Washington "had encountered 'bumps in the road' in working out military arrangements in the region."

Meanwhile, U.S. and British warplanes continue what has become near daily bombings of Iraq. The attacks occurred in the southern part of the country October 2 and 3. For the past decade U.S. and British aircraft have conducted this bombing operation, as they patrol "no-fly" zones unilaterally imposed by Washington over large sections of northern and southern Iraq.

Israeli military forces rolled tanks and bulldozers into the Gaza Strip October 3, killing six Palestinians following an attack on an Israeli settlement in the Gaza Strip by two members of Hamas. Palestinian security officials also said Tel Aviv launched missiles from the sea at six Palestinian National Security outposts in the northern Gaza Strip.

State workers begin strike in Minnesota

Continued from front page

National Guardsmen received a few days of training in caring for patients in these hospitals prior to the strike. The big-business press has joined in the attack on the strike, saying the walkout is "at the wrong time," because of the declining economy and the need to back the U.S. war drive.

The strikers, however, are firm in their sentiment that now is the time to strike, organizing picketing of state facilities.

The strikers are members of two unions, District Council 6 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE). They represent 28,000 workers, over half of all the employees of the state of Minnesota. The state workers perform a very wide variety of jobs and the strike had an immediate impact. Applications for drivers licenses and birth certificates were delayed. Spokespeople for the state government have admitted that most state services have slowed down.

A defining moment

Many of the strikers state that they have sacrificed in the past. "There is still a surplus in the state treasury," said Wayne Matson, a snow plow operator for many years. "In the past we have taken a wage freeze when it was requested by a previous governor. We were promised increases later on. Well, that later on never came. In my department we are doing the same work with 18 people as we did with 24 before," he said. "Our job is more complicated and more dangerous. This is a defining moment. This is the time when we should fight for ourselves. We want at least not to fall behind inflation."

"The timing of the strike was imposed on us by the state of Minnesota," stated striker Glen Kruize, a road planner with 34 years of service. "Ventura is the one who has power over the whole thing. We've had raises below the rate of inflation recently, and the state has been running surpluses. 'Now is not the time'—I've heard it from a few people. The terrible tragedy doesn't take away from what I haven't been getting. Both unions going out together is good for us."

The previous union contracts expired on July 1 of this year. Union members say that the state of Minnesota refused to begin serious negotiations until after that date. On Sunday, September 30, negotiations broke down when the state refused to budge from



Militant/Tom Fiske

Minnesota state workers rally on October 1. Unionists defend their strike in face of attacks by politicians and media, and mobilization of 1,000 National Guard troops.

its previous bargaining positions.

The negotiators offered to the AFSCME workers a raise of 3 percent for each of the first two years of the proposed contract. They offered to the MAPE workers a 4 percent raise the first year and a lump sum of \$500 to those who have reached the top of their pay scale in their job category for the second year of the proposed contract. Striking workers in both unions cite the yearly rate of inflation to be above 4 percent.

Strikers also point out that health care is a bigger issue for them than the wage increase. Negotiators for the state are demanding workers accept a big jump in medical co-payments. For example, a leaflet put out by AFSCME explains that the state wants their members to pay increases of \$20 per visit to a hospital emergency room, up to \$400 for each inpatient admission, up to \$150 outpatient admission per surgery, and a \$400 maximum drug out-of-pocket limit for their families.

One striker, Melinda Begin, an accountant for the state, said that she could lose as much as \$6,800 in medical expenses under the proposed new contract. "It is degrading what the state is offering," she said.

The timing of the strike has been put into question by the capitalist media and Gover-

nor Ventura. The strike, originally set to start on September 17, was postponed for two weeks after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. "This strike comes at a most unfortunate time," Ventura said in a written statement on the eve of the strike. "Our citizens are still hurting from the devastating attack on September 11, we are coping with the possibility of a long and difficult war, and we are facing the prospect of an economy that is on the brink of recession."

The same sentiments were echoed in an October 2 editorial of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, entitled, "Timing of 28,000 workers' walkout unfortunate for all." The editorial stated, "The timing of the Minnesota state employees' strike could not be less fortunate—for the citizens of Minnesota, state government or the employees themselves... The strike comes as the state is feeling the effects of a prolonged economic slowdown, a problem made worse by the aftershock of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The inevitable result is that more Minnesotans will be appearing at state offices seeking unemployment compensation, job training and placement services, public assistance, health care benefits and other help."

Workers defend strike's timing

Workers this reporter talked to on the picket line said that the timing of their strike was not being called into question by friends and other people they know. "It is coming from Ventura and from the media," said one. This reporter heard a news report from Minnesota Public Radio that stated, "Some

people are questioning the timing of the strike." However, the news report never specified who these people were.

Speaking at the strike rally here, Peter Benner, the executive director of AFSCME, which represents 19,000 state workers, struck a chord when he stated, "Now is the time to strike. We postponed it for two weeks, out of respect. However, this strike has been posed for many months. The negotiators for the state have been given instructions by the governor to tell us, 'We've done the best we can.' They are asking us to sacrifice, like we have been for some years in the past. However, Jesse is not going to the landlords or the grocery stores and saying, 'Hold your price increases to 3 percent.' We don't have to apologize. Our cause is just." This brought a huge applause.

One striker at the rally said that many of the AFSCME workers make little money, working as secretaries, janitors, and health care workers. "Nobody has told me that this was not the right time to strike. Except my brother told me that I was unpatriotic. I told him it was my right."

More confirmation of how Governor Ventura is using Washington's war drive to try to force workers to give up their fight can be seen in a story told to the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* by MAPE striker Jim Andersen. Andersen was picketing outside the governor's mansion when he saw Ventura arrive and get out of his vehicle. Andersen yelled, "Remember where you come from, remember what you learned about fairness growing up in south Minneapolis [as the son of a city government worker]." Andersen and another striker on the sidewalk said Ventura yelled back, "We're at war."

Ventura was elected Governor of Minnesota as the candidate of the Reform Party. His political stance is a combination of demagogic appeals "to the little man" against big business and big government and the threat to use strong-arm methods to get things working again. One of his demagogic appeals in the current strike is to claim that he has a commitment to the working people in Minnesota to contain the costs of the state government.

On September 23 the state of Minnesota organized a "memorial service" for those killed in the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The event, in reality a pro-war rally, was attended by 35,000 on the steps of the capitol building. Ventura, dressed in his Navy SEAL shirt, gave a rousing speech in support of the war drive. He concluded by shouting the SEAL greeting, "Hooyah."

Tom Fiske is a meat packer in St. Paul and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Mayor of St. Paul. Karen Ray also contributed to this article.

for further reading

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

A founder of the communist movement in the U.S. and leader of the Communist International in Lenin's time defends the proletarian program and party-building norms of Bolshevism on the eve of World War II. "The workers of America have power enough to topple over the structure of capitalism at home and to lift the whole world with them when they rise," wrote Cannon. \$21.95

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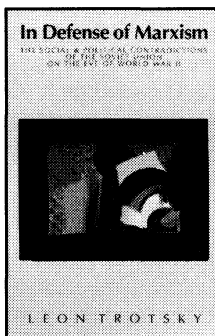
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From bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Airline bosses back off denial of benefits to laid-off workers

BY JACK WILLEY

In an about-face, the bosses at Northwest and American Airlines announced September 26 that they would implement union contract provisions that provide modest benefits for the nearly 26,000 workers the two companies laid off. Northwest will pay out between one and six weeks base pay, depending on seniority, and extend medical coverage and travel privileges through the end of the year. American workers will have a similar package.

Five days earlier, Northwest bosses had notified thousands of employees they would be laid off by the end of the day. The company invoked *force majeure* provisions in the union contracts that allow the company to tear up the clauses that are supposed to guarantee notice of layoff and severance pay. Several other airlines carried out similar measures.

Top executives at American and several smaller carriers also pressed management and union workers to accept voluntary pay cuts. American, Delta, and United indefinitely suspended companion travel, which

allows friends and relatives of employees to travel at a fraction of the cost of a full-fare ticket.

The airline bosses claimed they reversed course on the *force majeure* as a gesture to provide a "relief package" to ease the pain of the thousands of displaced workers. In the wake of the layoffs, however, and the massive \$15 billion bailout package for the airline giants, both Northwest and American faced growing worker and union protests over the high-handed setting aside of the union contract.

From the beginning, Continental, USAirways, and Delta, which is the midst of union-organizing efforts by flight attendants, mechanics, cleaners, and ramp workers, chose to avoid unnecessary labor troubles and paid severance. In addition, officials of all the major airline and aerospace unions have come under growing pressure from the ranks to respond to the massive layoffs and other attacks by the airline bosses, which they have largely done through lobbying Congress and filing grievances against the "emergency" measures.

Washington's third militarization drive

Printed below are excerpts from "Washington's Third Militarization Drive," by Mary-Alice Waters, which appears in full in *New International* no. 7. In the article, based on a report adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1985, Waters explains that Washington launched its two previous militarization drives in 1937, in preparation for intervention in the coming European war, and ten years later, in conjunction with the anti-working class witch-hunt. Copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The current militarization campaign was initiated at the beginning of 1980. In his State of the Union message in January 1980, President James Carter announced the decision to reinstate draft registration. At the time, we pointed to this as "the first real war speech of the Carter administration."

The president's pronouncement, and the political offensive it was part of, signaled a shift in ruling-class policy. It marked the end of the retreat following the 1973 defeat in Vietnam and the fallout from the Watergate crisis at home.¹ It took the rulers the better part of a decade after they began withdrawing U.S. forces from Vietnam in 1971 to get themselves back into position for a militarization offensive.

Between 1973 and 1980 toilers around the world dealt body blows to imperialism on several battlefronts. These included the revolutionary overthrow of the landlord-based monarchy in Ethiopia in 1974; the defeat of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa in 1974-75; the defeat of the capitalist-landlord regime of South Vietnam and reunification of the country in 1975-76, and the fall of U.S.-backed forces in Kampuchea [Cambodia] and Laos; the defeat of the South African invasion of Angola by Cuban and Angolan troops in 1976, and the impulse that gave to a new upsurge of struggles throughout southern Africa, including against the apartheid regime in South Africa itself; the defeat in 1977 of the U.S.-backed Somali invasion aimed at reversing the trajectory of the Ethiopian revolution; Zimbabwe's attainment of independence in 1980; the Iranian revolution of 1978-79; and the 1979 revolutions that led to the establishment of workers' and farmers' governments in Grenada and Nicaragua, along with the massive upsurge in El Salvador, advances in Guatemala, and the revolutionary boost these events gave to the fighting people of Cuba.

The 1980 Carter speech and draft registration announcement were timed to take advantage of two developments: in November 1979 U.S. embassy employees were taken

hostage in Tehran; and in December 1979 Soviet military forces went into Afghanistan in the midst of an escalating civil war.² The U.S. ruling class seized on these events to beat the drums for their opening militarization moves with an outpouring of patriotic flag-waving and anticommunist propaganda.

The steps taken by the Carter administration were part of the systematic effort to counter the retreat imposed on Washington by its defeat in Vietnam and the erosion of public belief in the truthfulness of those who spoke for the institutions of capitalist government (broadly referred to as the Watergate crisis). These moves were aimed at reducing obstacles in the way of the U.S. rulers using their overwhelming military might to defend their class rule on a world scale. At the same time, Carter's actions were directed—as are all capitalist militarization measures—against working people, the oppressed nationalities, women pressing to extend their rights, and the youth of this country—the mass candidates for cannon fodder. The militarization campaign was an integral part of a stepped-up offensive to weaken our struggles against the employing class, erode our democratic rights, diminish our effective political space, and deepen divisions among us—the better to increase profits and strengthen the U.S. capitalists vis-a-vis their competitors in other countries.



A communist policy in wartime as in peacetime

When the capitalist class is organizing for war, and when it takes the decision to go to war, the working class must have its own policies to defend its interests and advance its struggles within those conditions imposed by the rulers. It is not enough to say that we reject imperialist militarism. Until the workers are strong enough to break through that framework—that is, to reject it in struggle—we also have to chart our own proletarian course in face of that reality.

The communist answer to imperialist militarism is straightforward and simple. It has been established and tested in struggle over decades. In fact, the communist movement of the twentieth century was born in struggle against those who led millions of workers into World War I by betraying the principle "Not one penny, not one person for the imperialist war machine!" That is our guidepost; without it we would be hopelessly lost.

But that slogan doesn't give us all the answers as we confront concrete propaganda and actions by the ruling class, as it drives forward its militarization and as it wages war. We are opposed to the imperialist draft. But if the working class is not strong enough to prevent a draft from being imposed, then we need a policy toward it. We need a policy on military training for working people. We need a policy for workers and farmers in the armed forces—an approach aimed at deepening working-class consciousness and advancing the fight of workers and farmers to defend their constitutional rights and class interests as they face the class brutalities of the officer corps, racism, and restrictions on political dissent. These policies must advance the struggle of our class and its allies to break from political dependence on the exploiters, the bosses' twin parties—Democrats and Republicans—and representatives, and the petty-bourgeois politicians of all varieties. Our policies must advance our class toward taking political power and establishing a workers' and farmers' government. Success in moving along that line of march is the true measure of any antiwar policy.

This is what the Socialist Workers Party has always referred to as our proletarian military policy, a perspective for the working class in response to the militarization policies of the capitalist rulers in the imperialist epoch. It begins not with military questions but with the proletariat. It presents a line of action to defend the class interests of workers and farmers in face of the militarization drives and imperialist wars that continued capitalist rule will inevitably bring. It begins with the concrete conditions in the class struggle, the level of conscious-



Some 2 million demonstrators march against shah of Iran in 1978. Iranian revolution a year later was one of several struggles that dealt body blows to imperialism.

ness and organization of the working class, and the relationship of forces between the exploited and exploiting classes. It begins with the intertwining of imperialism and war, not war in the abstract. It begins with the reality of class struggle, not the utopian search for class peace. It begins with "we," the workers and our toiling allies, counterposed to "them," the employers, their political representatives, and their aggression abroad.

The section of the Transitional Program entitled "The Picket Line, Defense Guards, Workers' Militia, the Arming of the Proletariat" summarizes the trajectory.³ This section of the 1938 program of the SWP describes the necessary development of the workers' movement that begins with the organization of picket lines to enforce strike action; proceeds to the creation of workers' groups for self-defense against the antilabor, fascist, and racist gangs the employers will resort to as the class confrontation intensifies; and goes from there to the preparation for a workers' militia, which will be "the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings, and press" under sharpening conditions of class warfare.

This line of march culminates in the arming of the workers and farmers in the battle to defend themselves against the counter-revolutionary onslaughts and fascist terror that the capitalist class will unleash to defend its rule.

A proletarian military policy—a policy of the working class to confront imperialist militarism—is thus an integral part of working-class strategy as workers and farmers move toward establishing their own government....

We have no illusion about the character of the imperialist army and its role in the world and in this country. It is a reactionary world police force of millions. It is organized to spread murder and terror around the globe. It can't be reformed or "humanized" by adding more women to it, or anything else. Only when the victorious workers and farmers in this country take apart that military machine and put together a different one will the future survival of humanity be guaranteed.

But we also know that the ranks of the armed forces are different from those in the police forces. The army is made up of young workers and farmers who join the "volunteer" army for a couple of years to get off the streets and get some promised job training or money for future education. The overwhelming majority of these young people are not "lifers"; they don't plan to spend their lives in the army. They are not part of the officer caste. They do not see themselves as willing parts of a repressive machine. They do not identify with the ruling class. Most important, they have not been declassified, as cops are. When workers or farmers join the police force, they abandon their class. But young working people who sign up for the armed forces do so because of the economic situation they face; the last thing they want to do is to go fight and die to protect the profits of the ruling families.

What's more, these citizen-soldiers are constantly being subjected to attempts to deny them their constitutional rights. The

high percentage who are members of oppressed nationalities face organized racist discrimination aimed, in part, at keeping soldiers divided among themselves and therefore more submissive to the demands of the military brass. At all times they confront the anti-working-class officer corps—Black as well as white.

As the preparations for war increase—and as the toll on life and limb turns out to be different from what they have been led to believe—more and more GIs will seek to express their views. They will reach out with both hands to anyone they can find in civilian life who will help them do so, and help defend their rights in the process.

Among these young workers and farmers who today find themselves in the military machine are individuals who will be won to a revolutionary perspective and will join the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party.

Working-class campaign against imperialism and war

As with every aspect of our communist antiwar program, our starting point is the working class, not some special focus on the armed forces. The challenge of organizing growing numbers of citizen-soldiers into the fight against imperialism and war is not a matter of getting antiwar action coalitions to pay more attention to a "GI sector." It is part of our effort to build the kind of movement that can mobilize the social forces, the class forces, necessary to stay the hand of the U.S. rulers.

¹ U.S. forces, first sent to Vietnam in 1950 as "advisers," eventually numbered 536,000 at their high point. In January 1973, after long negotiations, peace accords were signed in Paris. By March 1973 U.S. combat forces had been withdrawn. The Watergate crisis that erupted later that year began with the public exposure of the fact that the White House under President Richard Nixon had utilized burglaries and wiretaps and authorized FBI operations against even Democratic Party political competitors. Such methods had long been used against working-class organizations and the Black movement. The ensuing political crisis, rooted in deep divisions within the ruling class over Washington's defeat in Vietnam, led to the forced resignation of Nixon in 1974. Widely publicized congressional hearings in 1975-76—during which many more facts became known about the murderous operations of the FBI, CIA, and other political police agencies, both in the United States and abroad—further undermined public confidence in the truthfulness of those who spoke for U.S. government institutions.

² Students, with the backing of the Iranian government, occupied the U.S. embassy in Tehran in November 1979 to protest Washington's decision to invite the deposed shah to the United States. Soviet troops—eventually numbering more than one hundred thousand—intervened in Afghanistan in late December 1979.

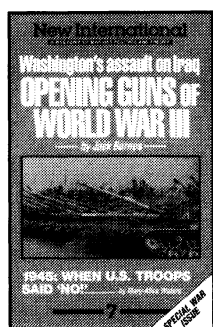
³ The Transitional Program was one of the founding documents of the Socialist Workers Party. Written by Leon Trotsky in Mexico City after discussions with SWP leaders, it was adopted by the SWP in 1938 following extensive discussion. For the section cited here, see Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder, 1977), pp. 123-26.

for further reading

Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq

Jack Barnes
The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. \$12.00



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Fidel Castro speaks on imperialist war drive

Printed below is a speech presented by Cuban president Fidel Castro September 22 to the people of Cuba. Castro was responding to a speech given by U.S. president George Bush to a joint session of the U.S. Congress September 20 on Washington's war drive against Afghanistan and assaults on workers rights at home. At the time of the speech the U.S. government dubbed its planned military assault "Operation Infinite Justice." The name was subsequently changed to "Operation Enduring Freedom."

Compatriots:

No one can deny that terrorism is today a dangerous and ethically indefensible phenomenon, which should be eradicated regardless of whatever deep origins it may have, whatever the economic and political factors behind it and those responsible for these factors in the world.

The unanimous anger stemming from the human and psychological damage inflicted on the people of the United States by the sudden and shocking deaths of thousands of innocent people whose images have shaken the world is perfectly understandable. But who benefited? The extreme right, the most backward and right-wing forces, those in favor of crushing the growing spirit of rebellion in the world and sweeping away everything progressive that is still left on the planet. It was

"No nation of the world has been excluded from the dilemma, not even the big and powerful states; none has escaped the threat of war or attacks."

an enormous error, a huge injustice and a great crime, regardless of who organized and is responsible for such an action.

But, in the name of justice and under the peculiar and bizarre name of "Infinite Justice," the tragedy should not be used to recklessly start a war that could in reality unleash an infinite massacre of people who are also innocent.

In the last few days the foundations, the conception, the true aims, the spirit, and the conditions for such a war have been hastily put into place. No one could state that it was



"Almost four decades ago, hundreds of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons were aimed at Cuba and nobody remembers seeing a single one of our compatriots who lost sleep over that. We are the same sons and daughters of that heroic people, with a patriotic and a revolutionary consciousness that is higher than ever. It is time for serenity and courage," said Cuban president Fidel Castro in his September 22 speech. Above, Cuban militia members during the October 1962 missile crisis.

not thought out well in advance, something that was just waiting for an opportunity. Those who after the so-called end of the cold war continued arming themselves to the teeth and developing the most sophisticated means to kill and exterminate human beings were aware that investing fabulous sums in military expenses would give them the privilege of imposing absolute and complete domination over the other peoples of the world. The ideologists of the imperialist system knew very well what they were doing and why they were doing it.

In the wake of the shock and sincere sorrow felt by every people on earth for the atrocious and insane terrorist attack against the people of the United States, the most extremist ideologists and the most belligerent hawks, already placed in privileged positions of power, have taken command of the most powerful country on the planet whose military and technological capabilities would seem infinite. Its capacity to destroy and kill is enormous while on the other hand its habits of equanimity, serenity, thoughtfulness, and restraint are minimal.

The combination of factors—not excluding complicity and the common enjoyment of privileges of the rich and powerful countries—the prevailing opportunism, confusion,

and panic—make it almost impossible to avoid a bloody and unpredictable outcome.

The first victims of whatever military actions are undertaken will be the billions of people living in the poor and underdeveloped world with their unbelievable economic and social problems, their unpayable debts and the ruinous prices for their basic commodities; their growing natural and ecological catastrophes, their hunger and misery, the massive undernourishment of their children, teenagers, and adults; their terrible AIDS epidemic, their malaria, their tuberculosis, and their infectious diseases that threaten whole nations with extermination.

The grave world economic crisis was already a real and irrefutable fact affecting absolutely every one of the big economic power centers. Such a crisis will inevitably grow deeper under the new circumstances. And when it becomes unbearable for the overwhelming majority of the peoples, it will bring chaos, rebellion, and ungovernability everywhere.

But the price will also be unpayable for the rich countries. For years to come it would not be possible to speak strongly enough about the environment and the ecology, or about ideas and research done and tested, or about projects for the protection of nature because that space and possibility would be taken by military actions, wars, and crimes as infinite as "Infinite Justice," under whose name they seek to unleash military operations.

Can there be any hope left after listening, barely 36 hours ago, to the speech made by the President before the U.S. Congress?

I will avoid the use of adjectives, qualifiers or offensive words towards the author of that speech. These would be absolutely unnecessary and inopportune when the tensions and seriousness of the moment advise thoughtfulness and equanimity. I will limit myself to underlining a few short phrases that say it all:

"We will use every necessary weapon of war."

"Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen."

"Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."

"I've called the armed forces to alert and there is a reason. The hour is coming when America will act and you will make us proud."

"This is the world's fight, this is civilization's fight."

"I ask for your patience [...] in what will be a long struggle."

"The great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depend on us."

"The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. [...] And we know that God is not neutral."

I ask our compatriots to reflect deeply and calmly on the ideas contained in several of the phrases I've mentioned:

• Either you are with us or you are with terrorism.

No nation of the world has been excluded from the dilemma, not even the big and powerful states; none has escaped the threat of

war or attacks.

• We will use any weapon.

No procedure has been excluded, regardless of ethical consideration, regardless of the threat however fatal it may be—nuclear, chemical, biological, or any other.

• It will not be a short battle but a lengthy war, lasting many years, unparalleled in history.

• It is the world's fight; it is civilization's fight.

• The achievements of our times, and the hope of all times, now depend on us.

Finally, an unheard-of confession in a political speech on the eve of a war, and no less than in times of apocalyptic risks: We do not know the course of this conflict, but its outcome is certain. And we know that God is not neutral.

This is an amazing assertion. When I think about the real or imaginary parties involved in this bizarre holy war that is about to begin, I find it difficult to distinguish where there is more fanaticism.

On Thursday, before the U.S. Congress, the idea was laid out of a world military dictatorship under the exclusive rule of force, irrespective of any international laws or institutions. The United Nations, totally ignored in the present crisis, would have no authority or prerogative whatsoever. There would be one single boss, one single judge, and one single law.

We have all been ordered to ally ourselves with the U.S. government or with terrorism.

Cuba speaks with the moral power of the country that has suffered the most and the longest from terrorist attacks, the one whose people do not shake with fear of anything because there is no threat or power in the world that can intimidate it. And with this moral power Cuba proclaims that it is opposed to terrorism and it is opposed to war. Although the possibilities are now remote, Cuba reiterates the need to avert a war of unforeseeable consequences whose very authors have confessed not to have the slightest idea of how events will unfold. Likewise, Cuba reiterates its willingness to cooperate with every country in the total eradication of terrorism.

Some objective and calm friend should advise the U.S. government against throwing young U.S. soldiers into an uncertain war in remote, isolated, and inaccessible places, like a fight against ghosts, not knowing where they are or even if they exist or not. Or whether the people they kill are or are not responsible for the deaths of their innocent fellow countrymen killed in the United States.

Cuba will never declare itself an enemy of the people of the United States, a people who today are subjected to an unprecedented campaign to sow hatred and a spirit of vengeance, so much so that even the music that sings to peace has been banned. On the contrary, Cuba will make that music its own, and even our children will sing their songs to peace however long the already announced bloody war lasts.

Whatever happens, the territory of Cuba will never be used for terrorist actions against the people of the United States. And we will do everything within our reach to prevent such actions against that people. Today we are expressing our solidarity while appealing for calmness and peace. One day they will admit we were right.

Our independence, our principles and our social achievements we will defend with honor to the last drop of blood, if we are attacked!

It will not be easy to fabricate pretexts to do it. They are already talking about a war employing all weapons but it will be good recalling that not even that would be a new experience. Almost four decades ago, hundreds of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons were aimed at Cuba and nobody remembers seeing a single one of our compatriots who lost sleep over that.

We are the same sons and daughters of that heroic people, with a patriotic and revolutionary consciousness that is higher than ever. It is time for serenity and courage.

The world will become aware of this and will raise its voice in the face of the terrible drama that threatens it and of which it is about to suffer.

As for Cubans, this is the precise time to proclaim more proudly and resolutely than ever:

Socialism or death!

Patria o muerte! [Free homeland or death] Venceremos! [We shall win]

From Pathfinder: for further reading

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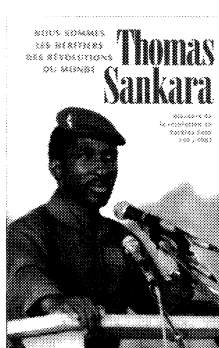
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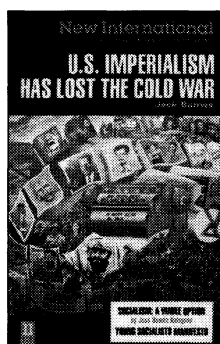
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U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War by Jack Barnes and The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today by Mary-Alice Waters. Two programmatic documents of the Socialist Workers Party. **\$14.00**



No. 10

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Miners had warned company on safety

Continued from front page

vice. UMWa memorial days are traditionally taken to protest company attacks on the union, as well as to protest serious safety violations and deaths of miners.

In the days after the explosion, miners have been speaking against the unsafe conditions at Jim Walter No. 5 mine. Many said that the main concern of Jim Walter was "getting the coal" and that the Jim Walter bosses did not listen to numerous complaints about dangerous levels of highly explosive methane gas.

Mike Boyd works as a degasser at No. 5, a job that involves extracting methane out of the coal and getting it to the surface. His brother Clarence "Bit" Boyd died in the explosion. Boyd said he warned the company at a meeting on August 24 that without some changes miners are going to be "blown up" in an explosion. He said his warning "fell on deaf ears." In addition, some miners referred to ignitions taking place on the working faces where coal is mined.

Safety not taken seriously by company

Boyd said safety was not taken seriously by the company. One example he gave is that the company didn't organize adequate roof support. He noted, as did other miners, that this is especially important in a "gassy" mine like No. 5 that consistently has high levels of methane gas produced in the mining process. Another concern, said Boyd, is that workers who were supposed to be rock dusters—one of the main ways coal dust is neutralized—were often assigned to other work. Several miners also said the volume of air was insufficient to flush out methane at the working faces.

A number of miners who the *Militant* spoke with pointed to the bosses' stepped-up productivity drive. This drive to get more coal out of the ground in less time, some suspect, contributed to the conditions that led to the explosion. Robert Tarvin, a miner with more than 20 years experience underground—most of them at Jim Walter No. 5—was one of the workers in the mine at the time of the explosion who managed to survive.

Tarvin and another worker were rock dusting one of the main belt lines at the time of the first explosion and noticed the dust change directions and come back toward them. They went out to the track to check with the motorman working with them, John Knox, but he had already left to find out what happened. Knox died in the second blast. "You can work as much overtime as you want on the sections," Tarvin explained. "On the other hand they don't work between shifts any more on rock dusting and that makes it hard to keep up."

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) will be in charge of the

investigation, joined by the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, the UMWa, and Jim Walter Resources. Joe Main, who heads up health and safety for the union, said the UMWa will conduct a parallel investigation to the one undertaken by the federal agency. Main was quoted in the *Birmingham News* as saying that "MSHA may not be effectively enforcing significant problems." Main was the UMWa's International Safety Director at the time of the union investigation of the Wilberg fire.

'No rush to judgment'

In an attempt to head off statements about safety damaging to Jim Walter, many of which have been reported on the front pages of the big-business press in Alabama, David Lauriski, the head of MSHA, said September 27, "We will not rush to judgment. We will not draw conclusions from information that is incomplete." Lauriski was a company "safety specialist" working at the Wilberg mine at the time of the mine fire there in 1984. The *Tuscaloosa News* helped out the bosses' campaign with a front-page headline, "No 'rush to judgment.'"

At the same time, Lauriski made a point of saying that Jim Walter safety record is 22 percent better than the average for underground coal mines. In a similar vein, Kyle Parks, a company spokesperson, said Jim Walter has "made significant strides in improving its safety record in recent years." Parks also said that "No. 5 has a safety record that is better than the national average," according to the *Tuscaloosa News*.

Mines had 10,930 safety citations

Statements such as these have struck many miners here as inappropriate at best, given that 13 miners are now dead due to what they see as Jim Walter's negligence. In fact, the company has been handed 10,930 safety citations at its Alabama coal mines over the past five years. Ten days before the fatal explosions at No. 5, MSHA cited Jim Walter Resources for 10 "significant and substantial" safety violations. Three had to do with unsafe roof conditions.

Following the explosion, the company exploited the charged emotions around the September 11 suicide attack to cover up their notorious safety record. "These men gave their lives to help others just as the firefighters and police of New York did nearly two weeks ago," said Don DeFosset, the chief officer of Jim Walter Resources. "These men are heroes," was another comment. U.S. labor secretary Elaine Chao made a similar comparison in her comments at the memorial service.

The memorial event was held at the Brookwood High School stadium. A highlight of the evening was the arrival of a group of about 100 Local 2368 members,



Militant/Alice Kincaid

Members of the UMWa Local 2368, accompanied by the governor of Alabama, march during memorial event at the Brookwood High School stadium. As the miners walked down the street from the union hall other Brookwood residents joined the procession.

who walked together from the union hall to the high school. As miners marched down the street, some Brookwood residents joined in. Out of respect for the miners, no cars behind the march passed by. Many of the union miners wore camouflage and union T-shirts from the 1989-1990 Pittston strike, as well as shirts from the 1993 UMWa contract strike. In the days following the explosions, Local 2368's union hall had become the center of activity. Members of a sister local that organizes the No. 4 mine took on the job of cooking meals for the miners and their families.

Speakers at the memorial service included leaders of UMWa Local 2368; several elected politicians, including Governor Donald Siegelman and U.S. senators Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby; top officers of Jim Walter Resources; and UMWa international president Cecil Roberts, who spoke last. At the end of his remarks, Roberts read the names of the 13 miners. As he mentioned each name, a member of Local 2368 lit a candle, while the 1,500 people in the stadium raised candles in solidarity with the miners.

Based on back and forth discussion, miners have pieced together some of the main events leading up to the disaster at No. 5. The explosions took place in a relatively new section of the mine. At 2,200 feet, No. 5 is the deepest underground mine in the country. It is also classified as an "ultra" gassy mine. On the day of the explosions, no coal was being produced. That day, a Sunday, 28 miners and 4 bosses were carrying out what is known as "dead" work.

At a September 26 UMWa press conference, held in front of Local 2368's union hall, Cecil Roberts said that based on information the union had at hand the first explosion was caused by a "serious rock fall." The roof fall hit a scoop battery charger, creating a spark (or arc) that ignited methane, the most dangerous gas found in a coal mine. At the time of the fall, three coal miners and one boss were putting up roof supports (cribs) nearby. The fall covered up Gaston "Junior" Adams; the other three were injured in the explosion. These miners were rescued and taken out of the mine. One of the miners, Ray Ashworth, died the next day. As several miners then tried to rescue Adams, a second explosion, described by miners on the scene as "massive," killed 12 miners. According to some miners, they did not know that the first explosion had

taken place.

Rickie Rose, a UMWa miner who was calling an ambulance at the time of the explosion, said, "It's hard to explain what happened. It was like time stood still. The next think I knew there was this roaring. Then I could see the wind swirling and the next think I know the air was full of dust." At this critical point the remaining miners close to the explosion knew they had to get out of the mine.

Several miners said the cause of the second explosion was related to the impact of the first. They believe that the explosion blew out nearby brattices—stoppings or walls that help direct ventilation to the working face, which caused an interruption of the air flow. This is what miners call "short-circuiting" the air. In a short period of time, methane built up, causing the explosion. Inadequate ventilation has caused thousands of deaths in the coal mines, many of them through explosions.

At least two miners said the explosion was so massive that flames and debris shot out of the air shaft, located about 1,000 feet from the explosion. There was no place for the miners in the section to go. As one miner said, "It would be like dodging a bullet in the barrel of a gun."

In the weeks and months ahead, Jim Walter Resources safety record will come under close scrutiny as the federal and UMWa investigations get under way. UMWa Local 2368 has a long history of fighting Jim Walter on questions of health and safety, although in the recent period the union has been pushed back.

The proceedings will be watched closely by miners and other working people. The outcome of the investigation will have an important impact on miners around the country.

After more than 37 million gallons of water were pumped into the mine to put out the fires, the first recovery team was sent into the mine on October 3 to begin the search for the bodies of the 12 miners.

The union has set up a Miners Memorial Fund. Contributions to the fund can be sent to: UMWa Local 2368, P.O. Box 99, Brookwood, Alabama, 35444.

Frank Forrestal is a member of the UMWa and works in a underground mine in Pennsylvania. He is the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh.

The 1984 Wilberg mine fire

The disaster at No. 5 mine is the worst such incident at a coal mine since the Dec. 19, 1984, fire at the Wilberg mine outside Orangeville, Utah, in which 19 members of UMWa Local 2176 and eight company bosses died.

The miners were killed while the company was pressing to set a world record for production in 24 hours using a longwall, the most modern and mechanized machine for mining coal underground. At a press conference following the disaster, UMWa safety director Joe Main said, "These things don't just happen. Usually when fires or explosions occur, safety rules have not been complied with or they have been altered." Emery Mining Corp., which manages the Wilberg mine, was notorious for safety violations. In fact, the company had been cited for 87 citations for violating fire regulations and 29 for violating rock-dusting regulations.

Most important, MSHA had approved a mining plan that allowed coal production even though one of the escape routes was blocked by a rock fall. The miners were trapped and died of smoke inhalation.

In 1983, Wilberg was rated the most productive underground mine in the country. At the same time it had one of the worst accident rates.

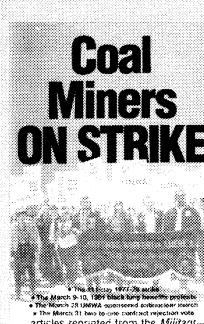
The UMWa called the deaths "needless." In their official report, the union investigators concluded, "The UMWa determined through the course of the investigation that the source of the fire was not the cause of the deaths of the miners. It was the failure to provide escape routes that were safely ventilated and the failure to protect miners from fire and smoke that killed them. The company's mining system (approved by MSHA) that was in use at the Wilberg Mine was the cause of the loss of 27 miners' lives."

The *Militant* wrote several articles on the mine disaster, including "Company greed killed coal miners in Utah," and others on the unsafe conditions and speedup drive at Emery's mines. The articles were so popular that the *Militant* put out a special four-page supplement so that miners and other working people could have the truth about the disaster, along with information on what the unions can do to fight for safe working conditions.—F.F.

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UK coal miners face lockout, continue strike

BY PAUL DAVIES
AND HUGH ROBERTSON

ROSSINGTON, England--Miners at Rossington colliery in Yorkshire held a mass meeting October 2 to discuss how to continue their fight for increased pay in the face of threats by their employer UK Coal to lock them out.

The members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) voted unanimously at the meeting to return to work—for one day only on October 10—and to notify the boss they will strike again the following day. Holding a second ballot is aimed at preventing the coal bosses from declaring a lock-out of the 260 workers after eight weeks on strike as allowed by UK federal law. A spokesperson for UK Coal claimed in the *Yorkshire Post* that “a second ballot will not work” and threatened to sack the miners if they continued their action. Miners approved resuming the strike on October 11 with 54 percent in favor.

John Gibson, secretary of the Rossington NUM branch and one of the striking miners said the union is trying to prevent a lock-out, but the company may do so anyway. But, Gibson said, “They will find it hard to run the mine with scabs.”

NUM striker Chris Skidmore said the

union is taking legal action to establish in law that workers can extend the eight-week protection from sacking by holding a second ballot vote.

The Rossington mine had been closed and reopened by UK Coal on a “lease and license” basis from the government. The coal bosses have used this arrangement to impose substandard conditions relative to workers at other mines. For example, miners at Rossington work an eight-hour shift while those at other UK Coal mines work seven-and-a-quarter hours for the same pay. Miners say UK Coal has set production targets at Rossington that are used to decide bonus payments at a level that cannot be met given the conditions in the mine. Lack of bonus pay hits the miners hard, since it usually makes up a significant proportion of worker’s weekly income.

“UK Coal has put the mine supervisors back on three shifts to prepare for our return to work,” Gibson said. “We are willing to negotiate with them over bonus rates, but they are adamant that their position is non-negotiable.”

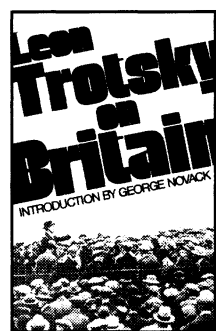
Support and financial contributions have come in from miners across the country. The Yorkshire Area NUM has decided to raise £3 per week from each miner in the area

(£1=US\$1.40). “We’re in weekly contact with the NUM at Ellington colliery because their situation is similar to ours. They are watching our fight closely,” he said. The Ellington Colliery in the northeast is also under the “lease and license” scheme.

Meanwhile, national officers of the NUM met with UK Coal representatives September 28 to discuss what the coal bosses call Project 105. This “project” is an attempt by the coal operators to lengthen the workday

to 12 hours, with seven-day continuous production without raising pay. In addition to driving down production costs, this move would further erode safety conditions in the mines.

Paul Davies is a member of the Transport and General Workers’ Union. Hugh Robertson is a member of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union.



for further reading

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Rulers discuss identity card

Continued from Page 2

establish a national ID card system. A debate has been under way since 1935 when Social Security cards were first introduced. The card was supposed to only be used for tracking an employee’s wages, though over the years it has been used for a variety of purposes, including identification on drivers licenses issued in 29 states. Protests by working people in California, Minnesota, and elsewhere over the past year have demanded an end to state regulations requiring a person to show a valid Social Security card in order to receive or renew a drivers license. The actions have been made up in large part by immigrant workers.

In the 1990s the Clinton administration probed issuing national health-care cards that would have computer chips containing medical records, but backed down in face of opposition pointing out that it would become a national ID card. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat from California, along with others in Congress, advocated issuing such cards as a move aimed at preventing undocumented workers from obtaining employment.

One of the measures adopted under the Clinton administration in the anti-worker Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act is a mandate that starting October 1 all those entering the United States from Mexico use special identification cards embedded with a fingerprint mark. Authorities have pushed back the deadline for use of the cards because the computer system used to scan the cards is not yet in place.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service is also starting up an ID-type system

for international students studying in this country. A computerized database is now supposed to keep track of the estimated 500,000 people who travel to the United States on student visas.

Meanwhile, the British government is discussing issuing mandatory identity cards to all its citizens. David Blunkett, the home secretary stated that he gives the question of issuing such cards “a fairly high priority.”

“Britons carried identity cards during World War I and again in World War II and beyond,” stated a September 28 *New York Times* article. “The cards were abolished in 1953, after a court ruled that the police powers that went with them—including the power to stop citizens at random and demand that they present identification—tended to make people resent the authorities.”

The new cards, if they are introduced, will be more sophisticated with encoded information such as fingerprint or iris identification.

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to find out go to:
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The justice system—In California's Sacramento County, officials dodged a court suit by awarding teenager Michael Mendez



Harry Ring

\$47,000 (minus legal and medical fees). Mendez had both his wrists broken by a probation cop. The cop is still on the job—but he was reprimanded.

Jingle, jingle—"Investments may pay as war looms"—Lead headline, September 24 business section, *Los Angeles Times*.

No shotgun marriages?—"Wade Horn, the nation's new welfare chief, believes a ring, a walk down the aisle and a promise to love, honor and cherish may be the key to moving families out of poverty. Horn...admits he has no evidence that government can do anything to persuade poor people to get married."—News item.

No muckin' around—Tough-minded California environmental enforcers ordered an end to the

creek-borne flow of trash responsible in large measure for the heavy pollution of the Santa Monica Bay. The state order, apparently nonnegotiable, demands the cleanup be completed in 14 years.

First things first—In the past decade, milk sales in Idaho schools have dropped 29 percent and soft drinks have zoomed more than 1,000 percent. Nutritionists say this contributes to a third of the state's young adults being overweight. This has posed the question: Why not yank the soft drink machines? We think that's the wrong answer. But not for the reason given by school bureaucrats, namely, that it would mean a

big-time revenue loss.

Now that's an upgrade—In California's spiffy Laguna Beach, a chap is unloading his beach house for \$11.5 million. and has bought another for \$16.5 million.

Isn't that great?—A glowing report from the Census Bureau said that in the year 2000 the number of people living in poverty had shrunk by half a percent, the fourth annual decline in a row. For those who are Black, the poverty rate was 22.1 percent, double the national rate; for Latinos, 22.2 percent; for single mothers, 24 percent. The census turned up 31 million people living

in officially defined poverty.

Downbeat—Reporting on the census findings, the *Los Angeles Times* observed: "But analysts cautioned that the...golden era [?] has abruptly ended, given the many woes that now beset the U.S. economy."

How long did it take to shut them off?—Hit by soaring rates, 60,000 Georgia residents have had their gas shut off. And even when they scrape up the money to pay their bills, they will still wait for their gas. The Atlanta Gas Light Company says it takes four to six weeks to turn the gas back on.

Ontario government attacks workers on welfare

BY ROSEMARY RAY

TORONTO—The Progressive Conservative government of Ontario, headed by Premier Michael Harris, implemented a wide-ranging attack on working people in Canada with the Social Assistance Reform Act, Bill 142. The measure will allow the Ministry of Community & Social Services to administer literacy and drug and alcohol addiction tests to all welfare recipients in the province.

Claiming that illiteracy and drug addiction are hindering people from getting off government welfare rolls, John Baird, the provincial minister of Community and Social Services, says the tests will help welfare recipients "get back into the workforce and make them productive citizens."

Since first being elected in 1995, the Harris government has made welfare recipients a special target of its attacks on workers and farmers. In 1995 more than 1 million people were on welfare. That year the government reduced welfare payments across the board by 21.6 percent. Since then, the government has driven 579,000 people off the welfare rolls and the remaining 430,000 could be cut off from welfare unless they agree to the literacy and drug tests.

Currently, 50,000 people on welfare have been forced into "workfare" programs where they either work 17 hours a week in "community employment placements" or face having their welfare checks cut off.

The drug testing will be administered by "specialized staff" in government welfare offices who will screen welfare recipients who they "suspect" of having an addiction. Those suspected will then be forced to take oral or written tests that the government says can "indicate an addiction." Those who decline to take the tests have a "choice" of providing blood or urine samples to a doctor to prove that they are drug free. Refusal to take the test or provide body samples will result in the government ending the person's welfare benefits.

The literacy tests to measure math and literacy skills will be given to welfare recipients who do not possess high school diplomas. If those failing this test refuse to then enroll in government literacy training courses they will lose their benefits.



Some 14,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in Ontario went on strike in February 1999 to demand higher wages and job security. CUPE has answered the Ontario government's latest attacks on working people by refusing to participate in a drug screening program of people receiving welfare.

These attacks on the human dignity and the right to privacy of working people on welfare have not gone unanswered. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), which represents 15,000 workers who interact with welfare recipients in Ontario, voted at its annual conference last November that its members not participate in the drug screening program. Sid Ryan, president of Ontario CUPE, said union members will not do the government's "dirty work for them" and will not participate in "any type of work which will further marginalize poor people."

Individual doctors have also objected to the Social Assistance Reform Act because it requires doctors perform the urine and blood tests. Dr. Phillip Berger, chief of family and community medicine at St. Michael's hospital in Toronto, has called the act "a complete contradiction to the ethics of the doctor-patient relationship" because it violates the right of patients to take medical tests on a voluntary basis. "Welfare recipients are not criminals," he said. "They have not lost any of the civil rights that the rest of us enjoy." Berger has criticized the Ontario Medical Association and the Col-

lege of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario for refusing to oppose the measure.

Keith Norton, who heads up the Ontario Human Rights Commission, has said that the commission may challenge Bill 142 in

court because drug and alcohol testing "as a condition of receipt of public assistance" could violate Canada's federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms which prohibits discrimination against those with an alcohol or drug disability.

Ontario is the only province in Canada that imposes lifetime bans on receiving welfare to anyone convicted of so-called "welfare fraud." The impact of these criminal prosecutions was highlighted in August when Kimberly Rogers, a student who was eight months pregnant, was found dead in her apartment in the town of Sudbury in Northern Ontario. Rogers had been charged with welfare fraud in April 2000 because she had taken out a government student loan totaling \$49,000 to help pay for her education while she was receiving welfare benefits. Rogers was sentenced to six months house arrest and cut off welfare benefits for three months.

Although an autopsy was unable to determine the cause of Rogers' death, Shelley Martel, a New Democratic Party member of the Ontario parliament, called on the Sudbury coroner's office to hold an inquest into Roger's death to determine if the government's prosecution of Roger's had contributed to her death.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

October 15, 1976

CLEVELAND—More than 100 steelworkers turned out here on Sunday afternoon, October 3, to meet and hear Ed Sadlowski, insurgent candidate for president of the United Steelworkers of America.

The crowd ranged from veterans of many years in the mills to young union activists, including some women. They came from about twenty different locals in the Cleveland area, USWA District 28.

Sادلowski, who is director of District 31 in Chicago, said he was running because neither incumbent president I.W. Abel nor his handpicked successor Lloyd McBride is "responsive to the membership."

"We have to get back to the basic concepts of what the trade-union movement is all about," Sadlowski said. "Not concerning itself with the profits of management, but addressing itself to the problems that confront the members, solving those problems, and creating new goals and new ideals to benefit the membership."

Sادلowski was interrupted by applause when he said that a six-hour workday was "long overdue" in order to "create employment and create more leisure time for workers."

The life-and-death issue of safety, he said, "is not a bargainable question. I've seen safety issues projected across the bargaining table and then be withdrawn in order to get another penny, another two pennies."

Instead, he stated, the union should insist on the "safety standards humanly and technologically possible, and then police those standards."

In response to other questions, Sadlowski said that both racism and red-baiting are incompatible with trade unionism. "That's the bosses' game," he said "That's the divide-and-conquer game."

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

October 15, 1951

Developments in Egypt, following hot on the heels of the British retreat from Iran, show that the Near East is boiling with revolt against continued imperialist domination.

The Egyptian government, acting under popular pressure, has denounced two treaties with Britain which it says it signed under "duress." One of them, signed in 1899, gives Britain control over the Egyptian Sudan, and the other, signed in 1936, holds the Suez Canal Zone under British military occupation.

These treaty abrogations, demanded by the whole Egyptian population, have been speeded by the powerlessness of British imperialism to cope with a similar situation in Iran, where the nationalist movement recently succeeded in expelling the British oil interests. Big demonstrations of Egyptians have hailed the government action with rejoicing.

Not only British, but French imperialism as well is feeling the blows of popular nationalism in the Near and Middle East. The North African territories of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria have witnessed a great growth of nationalist sentiment.

The British, together with the French and American imperialists, face an extremely difficult decision. If they try to resist the nationalist wave, they may face a full scale war against colonial uprisings in the Near East. This would cripple their efforts to assemble an alliance against the Soviet bloc of nations. If, on the other hand, they continue to retreat as the British did in Iran, they face the loss of a privileged military position, and the loss of colonial areas essential to their imperialist economy.

Thus the imperialists appear to face a growing Near East crisis comparable to the Far Eastern crisis that exploded with the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949.

Explosion at chemical plant in France

Continued from Page 16

safety definitely took a back seat to profitability," he said in an interview. "Normally you have to have a plant shutdown for maintenance every six months, but I've seen shutdowns delayed to meet production goals." He added that the bosses have "also attacked the workforce: in the plants around Marseille there are half as many workers as 10 years ago, but they're still producing just as much or more chemicals and gas."

Some reports on the accident point to the extensive use of temporary workers by the company at the Toulouse plant, questioning their training and capacities. Guilpain, who has been employed as a temporary worker, said, "I think they try to blame part of the workers to get us to point the finger at each other, when really it's the fault of the bosses and the government."

In the period before the explosion, the AZF plant in Toulouse produced as much with 470 workers as it did in the 1980s with more than 2,000 workers. Among the jobs cut by the bosses were a large number of

the professional fire-fighting force, which is obligatory in any large plant. Instead, workers were trained to be "auxiliaries" and were expected to change clothes and rush to the scene in case of an incident. According to press reports, regular in-plant safety inspections have suffered as a result.

The DIRE, the government agency which inspects safety conditions at chemical sites, shuffled off its responsibility by saying it has only 40 inspectors to cover the 1,500 chemical factories in the area from Marseille to the Italian border, and only 16 inspectors to cover the 2,000 plants in the area around Toulouse. "We inspected the AZF plant in May but did not look at the storage silo. We only have time to check for toxic gases," one inspector told a television reporter.

Marc Kinzel works as a maintenance mechanic at SNCM in Marseille. Nat London works at the Renault auto parts plant at Choisy-le-Roi, near Paris. Both are members of the CGT union confederation.

War at home and abroad

“Who is next?” is a question that many working people around the world are asking, as they face the possibility of being the new target of a U.S. imperialist military onslaught unleashed on a handy pretext; the loss of life and limb from the speedup, collapse of safety procedures, and longer workweek of the bosses’ profit drive; being tossed out of a job as the capitalist economy slows; brutality at the hands of the cops; or lack of access to health care, electricity, food, and other basic necessities due to imperialist exploitation of the semicolonial world.

Washington and London are massing troops, ships, and warplanes around Afghanistan for their next military assault in a long history of imperialist aggression around the world. Their war drive has already hit workers and peasants in that country especially hard, giving the lie to the cynical claims by U.S. officials that they will try to minimize civilian casualties in their war. Millions facing drought conditions have been cut off from needed food aid, and tens of thousand have fled their homes to find protection against the bombing they know is coming.

Working people around the world need only look two countries over, to Iraq, to see the kind of devastation, brutality, and wanton terror the U.S. imperialists are willing to inflict on humanity as they drive to reinforce their domination around the world. It is to subdue the workers of the world and their exploited and oppressed allies that the U.S. rulers are waging their war at home and abroad.

Unfortunately for the imperialists, millions of workers, farmers, and peasants around the world continue to

act in their own class interests, defying the dictates from the employers and imperial Washington—the world’s last and declining empire. From protests in Pakistan against the impending war by Washington and London to mobilizations of peasants in Mexico to oppose further ruination; and from strikes in the United States and Korea to the steadfast stand of the Cuban people, the imperialists must take on and defeat workers and farmers in order to salvage their outmoded and crisis-ridden system.

Wars, brutality, racism, economic depression, and assaults on workers’ rights are what capitalism has to offer humanity. And working people in the United States and other imperialist countries are becoming more a part of the world the superwealthy capitalist class has created. Opportunities to unite workers and farmers—whether they be across national boundaries, between urban and rural areas, between the employed and unemployed, or along the lines of race and sex—are more open today as a result. Solidarity arising out of resistance by working people is the beginning of the answer to the imperialist drive to fascism and war.

It opens up the possibility of revolutionary struggle by millions of workers and farmers in the United States, who, in finding their own self-worth and capacities through acting together in their class interests, will find they can replace the imperialist rulers in Washington with a government of their own, eliminate capitalism, and turn the productive capacities of the United States to serve the common needs of working people around the world.

Standing up for our class interests

The thousands of state workers on strike in Minnesota to defend their wages and health benefits against the concession demands of the government are setting an example to all working people. In standing up to the employer class, its media, and its government, which has deployed the National Guard to break the strike, these workers need the backing of the entire labor movement. All the voices of big business have joined the chorus to condemn the union action as being “at the wrong time” because of the U.S. government’s war moves and the slowdown in the capitalist economy.

By refusing to get on their knees and surrender to the bosses’ patriotic blackmail and demands for “sacrifice,” the workers’ actions are an obstacle to Washington’s war drive against Afghanistan, which is an extension of their war on working people at home.

Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura’s mobilization of National Guard troops against the strike is an example of the U.S. rulers’ steps to militarize the country. In the guise of “fighting terrorism,” the Bush administration, with bipartisan support, is prioritizing “homeland defense”—the use of the military on U.S. soil—that was put together by the Clinton administration. The steps to increase the military’s presence at airports and on city streets, to expand FBI spying and disruption operations, and other “antiterrorist” moves will all be used to target working people and our defensive organizations, the unions.

This is not the first time the military has been used against working people at home. In the mid-1980s the Minnesota government deployed the National Guard on behalf of the Hormel bosses to try to break the strike by

meat packers in Austin, Minnesota. During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the U.S. rulers mobilized the National Guard to crack down on Black workers and youth in Detroit, Newark, New Jersey, and other major cities where revolts had erupted against police brutality and racist discrimination.

During World War II the Roosevelt government sent in the National Guard to try to break the strike by 500,000 coal miners facing deteriorating safety conditions. But the United Mine Workers, defying the bosses’ demands for wartime “national unity,” successfully shut down coal production nationwide four times in 1943, declaring, “You can’t mine coal with bayonets.”

In their resistance today, the Minnesota workers are not alone. They are joined by coal miners and their union in Alabama, who are protesting the deadly assault on their lives and safety by the coal bosses, whose profit drive was responsible for the September 23 mine disaster that killed 13 workers at the Jim Walter mine. The United Mine Workers today also needs active solidarity from the labor movement.

By their actions, the Minnesota workers, the miners, and other working people engaged in strikes or other struggles are a source of strength for all workers and farmers under attack today, such as the thousands of airline workers facing massive layoffs and the attempts to intimidate them through intensified police “security checks.”

Those who oppose the U.S.-led war on Afghanistan should support the resistance by these workers to the bosses’ assault at home and reach out to them with the truth about the imperialist war drive.

Join campaign to sell Pathfinder

We urge you to join the campaign to sell \$500,000 in Pathfinder books and pamphlets to help get the speeches and writings of revolutionary and communist leaders into the hands of thousands of workers, farmers, and youth. The campaign goes through June 30 of next year, with an initial goal of \$325,000 by the end of this year.

The U.S.-British imperialist buildup for war against the people of Afghanistan and the resulting political polarization under today’s war pressures are driving a growing number of working people and youth to look for answers to the big political questions that millions face today.

The stiffening resistance by workers and farmers to the employers’ decade-long assault on our job conditions, wages, social gains, and employment continues to spread. It ranges from Minnesota public workers facing down the state government’s deployment of strike-breaking National Guard troops to protesters against cop killings of Black youth in Cincinnati, from the strike by coal miners in the United Kingdom to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and against Israeli aggression.

An increasing number of working people in struggle are open to radical ideas about the root causes of the economic and social ills facing working people and are open to a communist perspective—that is, to a working-class road forward in the world. A graphic illustration was the anti-imperialist world youth festival in Algiers last August, where many young people involved in fights for national liberation, for land, and other social struggles made a beeline to the Young Socialists table and its stacks of Pathfinder books. The significant rise in Pathfinder sales in the last several months is another measure of that thirst for solidarity and struggle.

There are a number of ways you can join this campaign to sell revolutionary literature. One is by joining with socialist workers and Young Socialists on literature tables in working-class neighborhoods and on college campuses. Many communists were first introduced to Pathfinder and the *Militant* through these weekly sales.

Many union militants will appreciate a working-class explanation of Washington’s war drive and the intertwined assaults on workers’ rights in the United States. Sales of Pathfinder titles to co-workers in plants, mines, and mills are a central part of this campaign.

You can also join the organized effort to get books into bookstores, libraries, and other commercial outlets where most workers and youth go to buy their reading material. An important component of this work is seeking out professors who will be interested in using Pathfinder books in their classes.

Nearly 200 volunteers participate in the Pathfinder Reprint Project, which aims to put the entire arsenal of books into electronic form, making it possible to keep them in print. The project’s steering committee is continually on the lookout for new volunteers to incorporate into the effort.

Finally, Pathfinder would not exist or continue to expand its publishing program without the generous financial contributions that many supporters of the revolutionary publishing house make. Pathfinder supporters have just launched a campaign to raise \$125,000 that will go through December 15.

If you want to join the campaign to sell half a million dollars in revolutionary literature by end of next June, contact the Pathfinder bookstore listed on page 12 nearest you.

Socialist candidate joins picket line in New Zealand

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Felicity Coggan, Communist League candidate for mayor of this city, and her supporters joined a picket line of watersiders employed by the Ports of Auckland who were on strike on September 27 and 28. More than 200 members of the Waterfront Workers’ Union were striking to protest the company’s plans to expand the number of casual (temporary) workers and to exclude casual and other groups of workers from the collective contract.

Coggan saluted the unionists for setting an example to the entire working class in standing up to the employers’ antilabor assault at home and to the pressures of their war drive abroad. She called on the labor movement to back the workers.

The wharfies had gone ahead with their strike despite heavy pressure from the port company, the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, and opposition politicians in parliament to call off the strike “at this time.”

National Party industrial relations spokesperson Lockwood Smith denounced the workers for striking “at a time when New Zealand must make every effort to remain credible in the eyes of our international trading partners.... To block seagoing trade through the nation’s largest port shows the Waterfront Workers’ Union is putting its own interests ahead of the nation’s at a time of great jeopardy to our economy.” The bosses here are using the imperialist war drive against Afghanistan to demand that workers subordinate their needs to the “national interest.”

Communist League mayoral candidate Coggan is a sewing machine operator and a member of the National Distribution Union. Also standing in the elections is Annalucia Vermunt, the Communist League’s candidate for mayor of Christchurch. Vermunt is a meat packer and member of the Meat Workers’ Union. The voting, which is by mail, concludes on October 13.

Coggan has made opposition to the U.S.-led war drive, and the New Zealand rulers’ part in it, a centerpiece of her campaign. Speaking at a September 29 rally of 500 people following a march in Auckland against the war moves, Coggan said, “Working people in New Zealand need to resist pressure by the rulers and their government for us to accept measures which affect our ability to organize and act to defend our interests in the name of backing a war that is not of our making and not in our interests.”

The Communist League candidate pointed to the increased funding promised by the government for the Security Intelligence Service, special police operations such as one announced that day to probe so-called “terrorist links” in the Auckland area, and increased detentions of immigrants. These included two Afghan youths from the *Tampa*, a freighter carrying hundreds of Afghan workers and farmers seeking asylum who have been at sea for weeks, denied entry in Australia and other countries. The two teenagers were locked up in Auckland’s Mount Eden prison after arriving as part of a group of 150 people who were finally allowed to enter New Zealand.

Communist League campaigners have been receiving a good response from working people. Sales of the *Militant*, their campaign newspaper, have picked up. Many have read a leaflet that campaign supporters have been handing out along with the paper on campuses, at factory gates, in working-class shopping areas, and workplaces.

The statement points to a September 23 headline in the *New Zealand Herald*, “World faces war, threat of recession,” and explains that this sums up the future the capitalist system has to offer working people. It adds, “Working people have common interests internationally and face a common enemy—the capitalist system. In order to advance our interests, we need to look to a revolutionary struggle like that carried out by the workers and farmers of Cuba, to replace the government of the superwealthy exploiters with a workers and farmers government.”

Terry Coggan is a member of the National Distribution Union.

As we go to press...

The Socialist Workers campaign in Houston called the *Militant* to report that the city’s board of elections has certified Anthony Dutrow, a meat packer and candidate for mayor, for the ballot. Supporters of Dutrow’s campaign collected more than 3,000 signatures to secure a ballot spot.

'They use the press to make the victims look like criminals'

Printed below is an excerpt from *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X, a collection of speeches and interviews from the last three weeks of his life. The book is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October (see ad below for special offer). Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY MALCOLM X

We are living in a society that is by and large controlled by people who believe in segregation. We are living in a society that is by and large controlled by a people who believe in racism, and practice segregation and discrimination and racism. We believe in a—and I say that it is controlled not by the well-meaning whites, it's controlled by the segregationists, the racists. And you can see by the pattern that this society follows all over the world. Right now in Asia you have the American army dropping bombs on dark-skinned people. Now you can't say that—there's no way you can justify being that far from home, dropping bombs on somebody else. If you were next door, I could see it, but you can't go that far away from this country and drop bombs on somebody else and justify your presence over there, not with me. [Applause]

It's racism. Racism practiced by America. Racism which involves a war against the dark-skinned people in Asia, another form of racism involving a war against the dark-skinned people in the Congo, the same as it involves a war against the dark-skinned people in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia,

and Rochester, New York. [Applause]

So we're not against people because they're white. But we're against those who practice racism. We're against those who drop bombs on people because their color happens to be of a different shade than yours. And because we're against it, the press says we're violent. We're not for violence. We're for peace. But the people that we're up against are so violent, you can't be peaceful when you're dealing with them. [Laughter and applause]

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

They accuse us of what they themselves are guilty of. This is what the criminal always does. He'll bomb you, then accuse you of bombing yourself. He'll crush your skull, and then accuse you of attacking him. This is what the racists have always done—the criminal, the one who has criminal processes developed to a science. He'll practice his criminal action, and then use the press to make you victim—look like the victim is the criminal, and the criminal is the victim. This is how they do it. [Applause] And you here in Rochester probably know more about this than anybody anywhere else.

Here's an example of how they do it. They take the press, and through the press, they feed statistics, [Inaudible] call them crime



Malcolm X with students at Tuskegee Institute, February 3, 1965. The U.S. rulers use the media to paint Black working people "in the image of a criminal," Malcolm explained. This "paves the way to set up a police-type state in the Black community."

statistics, to the white public. Because the white public is divided. Some mean good, and some don't mean good. Some are well-meaning, and some are not well-meaning. This is true. You got some that are not well-meaning, and some are well-meaning. And usually those that are not well-meaning outnumber those that are well-meaning. You need a microscope to find those that are well-meaning. [Applause]

So they don't like to do anything without the support of the white public. The racists, that are usually very influential in the society, don't make their move without first trying to get public opinion on their side. So they use the press to get public opinion on their side. When they want to suppress and oppress the Black community, what do they do? They take these statistics, and through the press, they feed them to the public. They make it appear that the rate of crime in the

Black community is higher than it is anywhere else. What does this do? [Applause]

This message—this is a very skillful message used by racists to make the whites who aren't racists think that since the rate of crime in the Black community is so high, this paints the Black community in the image of a criminal. It makes it appear that everyone in the Black community is a criminal. And as soon as this impression is given, then it makes it possible, or paves the way to set up a police-type state in the Black community, getting the full approval of the white public when the police come in and use all kind of brutal methods to suppress Black people, crush their skulls, sic dogs on them, and things of that sort. And the whites go along with it. Because they think that everybody over there's a criminal anyway. This is what—the press does this. [Applause]

LETTERS

Question of civil liberties

Last weekend I attended the first Oakland Athletics baseball game played at home since the September 11 events. Security was heavy at the ball park. Fans carrying back packs, tote bags, picnic coolers and other items had them confiscated (they were returned after the game) and were given clear plastic bags to carry their belongings in.

Only two of the six stadium gates were open, causing long lines of fans waiting to enter. There was a heavy police presence both inside and outside the stadium. Most fans I spoke with agreed these measures had little to do with "security" for baseball players, fans and stadium workers.

Many fans felt it was for show, to convince people they are "doing something."

While I agree the measures had nothing to do with our safety, I think it is wrong to say they are just for show. Rather, the clear message was that we must expect more inconvenience and fewer civil liberties and must accept the fact that we can no longer do everyday things, even something as minor as a ball park picnic, that we used to take for granted. In a small way, what happened at sports stadiums is an indicator for what the U.S. rulers have in mind for us as they pursue their war.

Carol Sholin
Castro Valley, California

Bush and 'rule of law'

I would like to see more discussion in the *Militant* of President Bush's use of the "rule

of law" language in his propaganda supporting war and attacks on the sovereign nation of Afghanistan and concurrent attacks upon democratic liberties in the United States.

In particular, certain voices among peace activists call for the application of international law to "bring the terrorists to justice" as a counterposed strategy to the U.S. rulers obvious intention to mount a ground invasion of Afghanistan. Is there a just way to "bring the terrorists to justice" under the conditions of capitalist rule and social crisis which prevail in the world today?

Ben Fiering
Peekskill, New York

A working-class analysis

Although I can understand what was being said in the letter "A sterile exposition" in the October 1 edition, I would have to say that it is not the *Militant's* job to provide emotional support during a tragedy. On the contrary, its job is to give readers a rational working-class analysis to a situation.

The statement by Martin Koppel was exactly what I was looking for from the *Militant*. As a member of the Young Socialists it helped me to explain our position about the terrorist actions.

Julian Santana
Tucson, Arizona

Solid guide to action

This is in response to the October 1 letter by John Rubinstein which scored the September 11 statement issued by Martin Koppel, New York mayoral candidate of the Socialist Workers Party.

The statement did not specifically add its voice to the outpouring of sympathy, including a good slug of cynical exploitation and war drive ammunition. Nor did the statement offer an expanded explanation of its political stand. It was written and issued within hours after the assault.

The "buried" paragraph so apparently upsetting to Rubinstein, expresses concisely, and with total Marxist accuracy, that actions such as those of September 11 "have nothing to do with the fight against capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression." Hardly "perfunctory," as Rubinstein asserts.

A reader could be left with the impression that such statements "issued at a moment of profound political crisis," are a dime a dozen. For my money, the statement is,

for now, an against-the-stream declaration that revolutionaries can be proud of and use as a solid guide to action.

Harry Ring
Los Angeles, California

Airline layoffs

The day of the terror attacks, all entrances to the departure area from the public side of the airport were locked down. Workers with airport ID badges had to stand in line with passengers and go through the X-ray machines. Security personnel were backed up by U.S. marshals and armed custom officers. Random pat downs were introduced.

The tension is high. A co-worker witnessed an American passenger plane escorted by two fighter jets land at O'Hare, after its radio failed. Passengers have refused to get on board planes because they felt security was not good enough.

Within days the media was full of figures on a number of layoffs among the airlines. That refocused the discussion among my co-workers, especially those with lower seniority.

We finally got the figures September 21 and they had to be implemented by the next day. We were called into the office and given five to 10 minutes to decide if we want to take layoffs or elect to fill an open position or bump into a low seniority position. This despite the fact that we are running about the same number of flights as before the devastation of September 11.

There is no severance pay for the laid off workers but the company agreed with the union demand to continue full medical coverage until the end of the year. Northwest Airlines sees this as an emergency situation over which it has no control and there is an escape clause in the contract.

While the airline companies were given \$15 billion in cash and credit, workers wonder where that money is going? The day after the layoffs overtime was reintroduced.

Dave Lee

Chicago, Illinois

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

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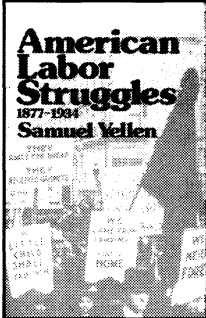
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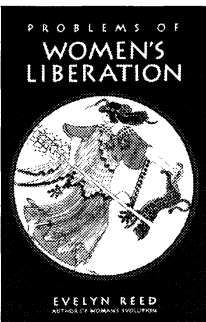
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Plant explosion in France shows bosses' disregard for workers' lives

BY MARC KINZEL
AND NAT LONDON

PARIS—"Tous coupables" (Everyone's guilty) read the headline in the local paper, *Tous Toulouse*, in the wake of the devastating explosion September 21 that killed 29 people, injured more than 2,500, and destroyed the AZF chemical plant in the southern French city of Toulouse. "No matter the source of the explosion...we, the citizens of this city, are all responsible," the accompanying article claimed.

Capitalist politicians have been trying to point the finger away from the real culprits—the bosses and their efforts to downsize the workforce, including job safety personnel, in their search for ever-greater profits—and instead blame everything from "foreign terrorists" to "uncontrollable urban sprawl" for the disaster.

The FCE-CFDT, one of the unions at AZF, said its representatives have had "difficulties" in "obtaining the maintenance of safety" at the plant, and alerted "the heads of industry and the public authorities to their responsibility to ensure maximum safety for their personnel and for the surrounding population, without systematically racing to compete or opting for profitability at all costs."

The explosion could be heard 30 miles away. The Global Physics Institute in Strasbourg, almost 620 miles distant, registered the event as equivalent to a 3.4 magnitude Richter-scale earthquake. Of the 29 dead, 22 were workers at AZF. Thirty-four of the injured were still listed as being in "extremely critical condition" one week later. The factory employed 470 workers. Around 170 were in the plant at the time of the explosion.

Schools, apartments damaged

The blast shook the entire Toulouse area which, with close to 1.5 million inhabitants, is France's fourth largest metropolitan area. The factory stands only about three miles from the city center, and breakage was evident throughout the downtown area. The first floor of the Marks and Spencer department store in central Toulouse was destroyed. Three hospitals, more than 60 schools, a university campus of 25,000 students, and a soccer stadium are classified as unusable.

As many as 10,000 low-income apart-



Wreckage of chemical plant that exploded September 21 in Toulouse, France, killing 29 people. Bosses try to claim blast was caused by sabotage instead of safety cutbacks.

ments in the nearby working-class neighborhoods suffered breakage. Damage to factories and other workplaces in the area has at least temporarily put tens of thousands of workers out of a job.

The factory is the largest producer of agricultural chemical products in France and the third largest in Europe. It is owned by Atofina, the chemical division of TotalFinaElf, the world's fourth largest petroleum company. The explosion took place in a storage silo where some 200 tons of ammonium nitrate, used to make fertilizer, were being stored.

Three days after the explosion the first official reports indicated that it was "99 percent certain" that the blast was of accidental origin. Some officials at the plant had previously hinted that foreign terrorists or a

disgruntled worker were to blame.

AZF management have pointed to the supposedly stable characteristics of ammonium nitrate to imply that the explosion was deliberately set off. When soaked in diesel fuel and ignited at more than 200° C, the compound is used as the basic component of some 10 percent of all the explosives produced in France. Furthermore, if impurities are present in the mixture and there is sufficient humidity, the ammonium nitrate can change to a form that explodes at only 60° C.

The chemical was stored on the bare floor of a 70-year-old building because of impurities, making it unfit for sale. Police are looking for the wreckage of a diesel-powered bulldozer that workers claim was illegally used in the silo. Investigators now say

they suspect that a diesel fuel leak may have helped trigger the explosion.

Some ecology-oriented groups, claiming that it is impossible to make chemical factories safe, have called them "ticking time bombs in our cities." A demonstration of 3,000 called for closing the AZF plant, as well as the SNPE plant next door that produces rocket fuel, a move that would put some 2,000 workers out of a job.

While some of those who demonstrated were workers from neighboring housing projects deeply concerned about the possibility of another explosion, the organizers of the action did not address the problem of safety conditions in the plant itself. A leader of one local ecology group told television reporters that the AZF plant should be closed for good because "we produce too much fertilizer in France already."

Union representatives said government officials have irresponsibly allowed "urban development around such industrial sites." They said they had recently "once again alerted the public authorities and management to this phenomenon and called for measures to be taken."

The FCE-CFDT said the "safety of employees and the population, respect for the environment, employment levels and employment conditions are interdependent issues" that cannot be addressed by "condemning [workers] to unemployment."

"The bosses at the plant in Toulouse showed a complete disregard for the lives of the workers at the plant and the inhabitants of the surrounding neighborhoods," said Philippe Guilpain, a 47-year-old maintenance mechanic and member of the CGT union at the Societe Nationale Corse Mediteranee (SNCM) navigation company in Marseille. Guilpain has 10 years' experience working as a maintenance mechanic in refineries and chemical plants across France.

"I know that at plants where I've worked,

Continued on Page 13

Canadian rulers target rights of workers

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Taking advantage of the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, the Canadian government is moving ahead with initiatives that target the

rights of working people, particularly immigrants, and backing the Canadian airline and aerospace bosses in their drive to cut thousands of jobs.

Speaking to 2,000 representatives of Canada's business elite here September 24, Prime Minister Jean Chretien pledged the Canadian government's support for Washington's drive to war. Earlier that day Chretien had met with U.S. president George Bush in Washington. The *Star* reported that Chretien told Bush, "'You're not alone' in a fight against killers who struck a blow at the values of free and civilized peoples. 'We are with you. The whole world is with you.'"

Chretien reported that Bush did not request Canadian military assistance for the military assault being prepared against Afghanistan. "I said to him that if there is a need, we will be there to help him," he said. The previous day Finance Minister Paul Martin announced that Ottawa had followed Washington's lead and ordered a freeze on the assets of some 27 institutions or individuals identified by Bush as having links to terrorism.

Ottawa has been preparing a new "anti-terrorism" law for some time. As part of the war buildup, Justice Minister Anne McLellan announced September 25 that the legislation would for the first time designate a list of terrorist groups, making it illegal to engage in fundraising activities on their behalf. "We are considering both a definition for terrorist organization and the addition of a list of designated organizations that would be defined as terrorist organizations," she said. McLellan said that the new law would be similar to one introduced this

year dealing with criminal gangs. In both cases, she said, it would be legal to be a member of the group, but participation in its activities would be a criminal act.

Ottawa is also speeding up the passage of Bill C-16, which would remove the charitable tax status of organizations that the government claims raise money for so-called terrorists.

Transport Minister David Collenette announced that airports would soon install new advanced detection systems for explosives, and said that his department is tightening security for crop dusters to ensure they are not used by terrorists for biological warfare. However, he rejected proposals to station armed marshals on Canadian planes or to allow pilots to arm themselves.

Mirroring an announcement by U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft that Washington will tighten security along the Canadian border because it is being used by terrorists as a "transit point," Canadian Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan declared she had ordered that refugee claimants be subjected to a tough new screening process. Before the new moves, Caplan had already been preparing a new, more restrictive immigration law.

As a result of the new order, immigration officials are not allowing those claiming refugee status to enter the country until they have undergone extensive security checks. Refugees were previously given basic checks and were often allowed into Canada, even if they did not have valid identification documentation. Caplan also announced that she had ordered her department to speed up plans to adopt a high-tech identity card

Continued on Page 4

Strikers win at New Zealand fish plants

BY STUART NEEDHAM

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—After two months on strike, fish workers at Sanford's Timaru and Bluff factories in the South Island have returned to work, having won significant gains in wages and working conditions. Workers at both plants struck June 25 to demand a new contract that would bring their wages and conditions closer to those of other workers in the industry. They also wanted a joint contract covering both sites. The company offered a 6 percent wage rise over two years, later raising this to 7 percent over 20 months.

At both plants the workers, who are members of the Service and Food Workers Union, formed round-the-clock picket lines and won significant solidarity and financial support from other unionists and local communities. At the Bluff plant an overwhelming majority of the workforce stayed out for the duration of the strike. About half the workers on the day shift and three-quarters of those on the night shift at the Timaru factory had crossed the picket line by the beginning of August.

The striking workers at the Timaru plant voted August 15 to accept a new proposal from the company, and returned to work the next day. Packers and trimmers won a 12

percent increase and filleters 10 percent over two years. They will get 8 percent and 6 percent respectively in the first year, and the balance in the second. Workers at the Bluff plant stayed out for another week in an attempt to gain a single increase, rather than a split increase over two years.

Gary Butterfield, a union delegate at the Timaru plant, told the *Militant* that the gains brought the Sanford workers up to around the middle-of-the-range wage level for the industry, comparable to that of workers at the Sealord plant in Dunedin—one of the biggest fish factories in the lower half of the South Island. "It was a big gain for us," he said. "The company now knows that when the contract expires next time and negotiations begin, we won't be there to muck around."

Although workers did not gain a multi-site contract, the contracts at both plants are now similar. The Timaru workers made gains in conditions and allowances that brought them up to the same level as the Bluff workers. This will put the Sanford workers in a better position to fight for a multi-site contract in the future.

Stuart Needham is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.