

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Federal agency slaps mine bosses on wrist for Quecreek disaster
—PAGE 3

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Workers fight for union in Georgia meat plant

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

MOULTRIE, Georgia—"I don't like what I see in the plant. I believe a human being should be treated with respect," said Willie Pace, a quality assurance worker at the National Beef plant here and a leader of the fight for unionization at this plant of more than 350 meat packers.

Quality assurance workers won a vote for union recognition in the spring of 2002 and are still fighting for their first contract. The production workers in the plant lost votes for union representation by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1996 in the spring of 2002 and 2003. The recent election was hotly contested and

Continued on Page 10

U.S. youth discuss defense of revolution with Cubans

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND PAUL PEDERSON

HAVANA—"I've heard a lot about Cuba. I wanted to see it for myself," said Agustín Cheno Eichwald, 23, a student at East Los Angeles College. Many of the nearly 300 youth from the United States who took part in the Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange gave the same reason for why they took part in the one-week visit to the island.

The trip, which took place July 23-31, was sponsored by the Federation of University Students (FEU), the Union of Young Communists (UJC), and other Cuban youth organizations. They organized an itinerary designed to address some of the questions participants had about the Cuban Revolution today. Many returned home identifying more strongly with the revolution and its example for all those around the world fighting exploitation and oppression. They went back anxious to win others to their

Continued on Page 7

Blackout hits northeast U.S. and Ontario

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

NEW YORK—The biggest power outage in North American history spread through a large part of the northeastern United States and adjacent parts of Canada on the afternoon of August 14. A transmission line failure that originated outside Cleveland caused another power line to heat up and sag, hitting a tree. Over the next 25 minutes, further lines in northern Ohio failed. The breakdowns were followed by a cascade of transmission line failures and successive power plant shutdowns, leading to a blackout over some 9,000 square miles, disrupting the lives of more than 50 million people.

Continued on Page 3

Strikers in Chile resist effects of social crisis

Workers carry out first nationwide walkout since 1973 coup

BY SAM MANUEL AND ROMINA GREEN

Hundreds of thousands of workers honored the call by the Central Workers Union (CUT) for a nationwide walkout in Chile August 14. It was the first general strike in the country since the 1973 U.S.-backed coup that brought the military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet to power. Pinochet's rule ended in 1990.

Chilean police used tear gas and water cannon against demonstrators and arrested hundreds. The government had pledged to crack down on the strikers "with the full force of the law," according to a Reuters dispatch. Riot police were used to prevent 3,500 strikers from marching along a main avenue, the Alameda, near the presidential palace in Santiago, the country's capital. Striking workers responded with sticks and stones, according to Agence France-Presse. At least 130 people were arrested that day. Additional protests and arrests were reported August 15, bringing the number of those detained to more than 300 people, two-thirds of them in Santiago.

Some were arrested while trying to block roads near Chile's copper mines, stated police reports. Other protesters were detained in at least three other cities around the country, including seven in the far southern city of Punta Arenas.

The strike was called by the country's largest trade union federation to protest poor health insurance and other deteriorating social benefits, government proposals for more "flexibility" in the length of the workweek that now stands at 48 hours, and substandard working conditions at many



Workers marching in Santiago, Chile's capital, are attacked by cops with water cannon during August 14 one-day general strike to protest deteriorating wages and social benefits, as well as rising unemployment while average workweek is getting longer.

private companies. In addition, workers demanded a raise in the minimum wage. Working people are also suffering from high rates of joblessness, officially now at 9.1 percent, and underemployment.

The CUT has 400 union affiliates and an estimated 640,000 members. Workers in construction, transportation, and health care, as well as teachers, taxi drivers, and most public employees, were among those who joined the walkout. CUT president Arturo Martínez said the strike was aimed

at defending "workers' dignity," and called it a success. The union said that 80 percent of business activity was affected.

The government of President Ricardo Lagos, of the Socialist Party (SP), tried to downplay its impact, saying that participation was low. Lagos warned government workers who went on strike that they would be fined, calling the strike "a lost cause."

"Our salaries are very low, the minimum wage is 115,000 pesos [\$165] per month,"

Continued on Page 10

SWP leader runs for California governor

BY DIANA NEWBERRY AND BETSEY STONE

LOS ANGELES—A Socialist Workers candidate is on the statewide ballot in California for the first time since 1976. Longtime SWP leader Joel Britton and 134 other candidates for governor were certified by the secretary of state August 13, two months before the vote to determine whether current governor Gray Davis, a Democrat, will be recalled.

Britton will appear as an independent candidate under the "nonpartisan" provisions of the state's election code, with "Retired Meat Packer" after his name. "A socialist worker," Britton's first choice designation, was denied him by California's secretary of state. Britton is a longtime trade unionist active in efforts to build solidarity and strengthen the labor movement.

"I have opposed Democratic and Republican moves to put the economic crisis of capitalism on the backs of working people," Britton said in a statement he submitted to the state, which will appear in the guide distributed to all registered voters. "I'm for a workers and farmers government which will abolish capitalism in the U.S. and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism."

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists from the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California met here August 9-10 to discuss the political framework for the socialist campaign. Their first decision was to set up "Joel Britton for Governor—Vote Socialist Workers!" tables in several workers districts near the Pathfinder Bookstore on south Central Avenue here, where the campaign rents space.

August 9 was the final day to turn in signatures on nominating petitions. Los Angeles county election officials had declared "invalid" 40 percent of the signatures Britton had turned in. The additional signatures gathered that day put him comfortably over the 65 registered voters required.

Supporters of the socialist campaign mobilized earlier in the week to collect signatures and contributions so the \$3,500 filing fee could be paid as the nominating petitions and other documents were turned in. Supporters also raised another \$2,000 to

Continued on Page 6

200 U.S. Marines land in Liberia

BY SAM MANUEL

Washington deployed a "quick reaction" force of 200 Marines to Liberia August 14, tripling the U.S. forces inside the country. Nine military helicopters carried the troops to the airport in Monrovia, the capital, from warships off the coast, where another 2,000 Marines are stationed.

The deployment was accompanied by a show of U.S. military force. "Cobra helicopter gunships bristling with rockets circled the city all day," reported the

Continued on Page 5



Joel Britton, Socialist Workers candidate for California governor, speaks to media in Los Angeles August 9.

Also Inside:

- Job-loss trend marks U.S. 'recovery' 2
- Gore speech highlights debate in Democratic Party over Iraq 2
- California professor fights 'terrorism' frame-up, deportation 4
- Socialist Workers candidates on ballot in nine U.S. cities 6
- Cuban magazine discusses cultural contributions of Cubans abroad, legacy of racism 9

Gore speech highlights debate among Democrats over Iraq

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

A debate has broken out within the Democratic Party and broader ruling-class circles over Washington’s invasion and occupation of Iraq. At the end of July, Sen. Joseph Lieberman assailed fellow Democrats for their attacks on U.S. president George Bush over Iraq.

The latest example is an August 7 speech by former U.S. vice president Albert Gore at New York University before an audience of 500. The Democratic Party politician criticized “the manner in which the White House went about the invasion of Iraq.” Attacking “the false impressions” that made up Bush’s justification for the invasion, Gore said, “It is obvious to most Americans that we have had one too many wars in the Persian Gulf.”

In the presentation sponsored by the College Democrats and Moveon.org, a liberal lobby group, Gore said that “too many of our soldiers are paying the highest price, for the strategic miscalculations, serious misjudgment, and historic mistakes that have put them and our nation in harm’s way.” He listed six “false impressions” that the Bush administration had used to justify the war on Iraq. These include linking former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein to Al Qaeda and the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon or the claim that Hussein “was on the verge of building nuclear bombs and giving them to the terrorists.”

Gore said that the Bush administration used “an effective propaganda machine” to win support for the invasion in “a systematic effort to manipulate facts in service to a totalistic ideology” in favor of “narrow special interests.” Gore counterposed to the current president the administration of William Clinton for its “honor and

integrity” and success in “strengthening the military.” Gore added, “I’ve just about concluded that the real problem may be the President himself and that next year we ought to fire him and get a new one.” A Democrat in the White House is needed to protect “American values,” he said.

Whitewashing the history of U.S. imperialism from Vietnam to Panama—and the fact that most major wars have been carried out by Democratic administrations—Gore criticized Bush for carrying out “the first pre-emptive war in U.S. history.” During the eight years of the Clinton/Gore White House, Washington maintained the “no-fly” zone over two-thirds of Iraqi territory, carried out regular aerial bombardment of that country, and pressed to keep in force United Nations sanctions that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis from malnutrition and disease. That government also carried out the U.S. war on Yugoslavia, bombardments of Afghanistan, and an aborted invasion of Somalia. Gore added that the same “hidden social objectives” that drive Bush’s foreign policy are also behind “the threat posed to America’s economy by his tax and budget proposals.”

The 2000 Democratic presidential hopeful spoke just 10 days after his former running mate, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, had taken to task several of his opponents in the race for the Democratic nomination in the 2004 presidential election for their

criticisms of Bush over Iraq. Lieberman emphasized his support for the assault on Iraq in a July 28 press conference, and charged that by their criticism of the White House several of his rivals “are sending out a message that they don’t know a just war when they see it.”

The *Washington Post*, one of the country’s most prominent liberal dailies, criticized “Mr. Gore’s Blurred View” in an August 10 editorial. Weighing in on the debate on how the Democrats can best challenge Bush in the 2004 campaign, the *Post* editors said, “Mr. Gore, who not so long ago was describing Iraq as a ‘virulent threat in a class by itself,’ validated just about every conspiracy theory of the antiwar left.” They chided Gore for promoting the notion that Bush “has put one over on the nation, and not just with regard to Iraq” with his warnings that the president’s economic and environmental policies serve only “powerful and wealthy groups and individuals who manage to work their way into the inner circle.”

In response to Gore’s attack on the Patriot Act as “a broad and extreme invasion of our privacy rights in the name of terrorism prevention,” the *Post*’s editors ask “how to explain that 98 senators—including all four Democratic senators now running for president—voted for it?” They warn that if the Democrats adopt Gore’s theme “they will all go off the cliff” and that “he isn’t the only Democrat who thinks he can



British troops attack protesters demanding fuel, electricity, and unpaid wages outside the occupation regime’s headquarters in Basra, Iraq, August 11.

have it both ways, pandering to anti-Bush passion while protecting his national-security flank. Sen. John Kerry has been trying something similar with, for example, this applause line... ‘We shouldn’t be opening firehouses in Baghdad while closing them in Brooklyn.’”

The *Post* favored Lieberman’s stance of finding “plenty to criticize in the Bush administration foreign policy without abandoning his longstanding support for American strength and democracy promotion.”

On the other hand, four of the nine contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination—former Vermont governor Howard Dean, and Senator John Kerry, John Edwards, and Robert Graham—isued statements praising Gore’s speech.

Job-loss trend marks U.S. ‘recovery’

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

“America’s economy is now supposedly on the road to recovery, but somebody forgot to tell the labour market,” said a column in the August 9–15 issue of the *Economist*, a British business magazine.

“Non-farm payrolls fell by another 44,000 in July,” it continued. “Since the recession began in early 2001, 3.2 million jobs disappeared in the private sector. If the early 1990s’ upturn was the jobless recovery, this, says Merrill Lynch, is ‘the job-loss recovery.’”

In the first 20 months of previous up-

turns in the business cycle since World War II, employment rose by an average of nearly 6 percent. “The latest recession officially ended in November 2001,” the *Economist* said, “but in the 20 months since then employment has fallen by almost 1 percent.”

U.S. government figures showed that unemployment fell slightly in July from 6.4 to 6.2 percent. But this is misleading. The drop is largely due to hundreds of thousands of workers not being counted as unemployed because they stopped looking for jobs, discouraged by dismal prospects for employment.

“America’s GDP [gross domestic product] growth seems to have picked up,” the magazine said, “so why are firms still not hiring? One reason is that this has been America’s slowest recovery in modern history. Real GDP has increased at an annual pace of only 2.6 percent since the recession ended, compared with an average growth rate of 4.7 percent over the first two years of previous post-1945 recoveries.

“In addition, faster productivity growth means that fewer new jobs are created for any given increase in output,” it continued. “By hiring more temporary and part-time workers, firms have increased their flexibility and hence productivity; they are reluctant to hire new permanent staff until they are confident about the recovery.”

The magazine also reiterated the now

well-known reality that the biggest job cuts have taken place in manufacturing, where the percentage of men in the workforce is higher.

As a result, “women now have a lower jobless rate than men,” it stated. It also pointed out that, “Young people have suffered the biggest rise in unemployment over the past few years. The jobless rate for those under 20 has increased from 12.6 percent in 2000 to 18.4 percent in July, and the average jobless rate has risen from 3.8 percent to 6.2 percent.”

The column concluded that “jobs are getting harder to find; the average duration of unemployment has increased to almost 20 weeks, already higher than at its recent peak in 1994, and only a touch below its all-time record of 21 weeks in 1983. Some are getting desperate.”

Correction

The article “Vancouver protesters expose cop brutality” in the August 25 issue wrongly attributed the deaths of Natives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Those responsible are Saskatoon police officers. The RCMP is conducting the investigation.

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THE MILITANT

Gives you the facts on fight of rural poor

Peasants and others among the rural poor in Latin America are demanding land and credit needed to work it. The ‘Militant’ tells the truth about these struggles, like that led by Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil militants (right), who have occupied thousands of acres to farm. Don’t miss a single issue!



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Gov’t slaps mine bosses on wrist for Quecreek disaster

BY JEREMY ROSE

PITTSBURGH—The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has issued its report on the July 2002 Quecreek disaster, when nine miners were trapped underground for 78 hours as water from a nearby abandoned mine filled the Quecreek mine in Somerset, Pennsylvania. Nine other miners narrowly escaped being trapped or killed by the flooding.

Evidence suggests criminal negligence by Mincorp and its subsidiaries—PBS Coals, Rox-Coal, Quecreek Mining, and Musser Engineering. Tax records in the Somerset County office and other materials available to the public, which the bosses were supposed to check, indicated that mining at the adjacent Saxman mine went on until at least 1963, two years beyond what some maps showed, thus bringing the water-flooded cavity the nine miners unknowingly tapped into hundreds of feet closer than what the company plans alleged.

While echoing an earlier Pennsylvania state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) report, which contended the main culprit for the disaster was “bad maps,” MSHA issued citations against the mine owners, operators, and an engineering firm for negligence. PBS Coals, Black Wolf Coal, and Musser Engineering were found liable of failing to provide accurate, certified abandoned mine maps. The state agency’s report had not held these compa-

nies responsible.

Fines could range from \$60 to \$60,000, according to U.S. deputy secretary of labor David Lauriski, who heads MSHA.

The report also criticized state procedures for issuing mining permits.

Lauriski said the citations were based on findings that those involved “did not take additional steps to confirm or address the potential hazard, such as drilling to determine the extent of mining, or dewatering the abandoned works.” The report also stated that if the company had properly dated and cross-checked maps in its possession against production records, a picture of the true extent of mining at Saxman would have been clear.

Nevertheless, Lauriski defended the bosses with the formal assertion that investigators found no indication that the companies involved knowingly violated federal regulations.

The MSHA report dismissed many of the arguments raised by most of the trapped miners and others pointing to the bosses’ disregard for the lives of the workers.

Among them was testimony made public by a state Inspector General’s report released in early August. That document revealed that a Pennsylvania Deep Mine Safety engineer reported that PBS representatives had shown him a more accurate map of the abandoned mine, but refused to file a copy of it with the state

and consistently ignored his warnings. Lauriski said that although the Inspector General’s report said that engineer Tom McKnight’s statements appeared credible, MSHA could find nothing to back them up.

Joe Main, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) national health and safety director, expressed concern that the Inspector General’s report was getting short shrift. Earlier, Main had commented on this report, saying: “It gives all the appearance of being a smoking gun document. The public was not told there were such maps available. And here we’re given information that it existed, that they talked about it and they asked for a copy of it, and that it was known by a state agency and the coal company before this ever happened.”

Howard Messer, attorney for six of the trapped miners who have filed suit against Mincorp, said of the Inspector General’s report: “This shows they had the map and it depicted the Saxman mine workings.... It’s now time to produce the map. Where is it? And are there others we don’t know about?”



Militant/Chris Remple

Ron Hileman, one of the nine miners trapped at Quecreek mine in July 2002, testifies at Oct. 22, 2002, hearing of the Pennsylvania governor’s commission.

Among the other issues set aside by the MSHA report were:

- The fact that local residents and former coal miners in the area warned of underground voids during the process of the state issuing the mining permit
 - Deteriorating conditions in the mine as the working section approached the Saxman mine (other sections of the mine far away from Saxman had similarly wet conditions, MSHA said)
 - Tax records showing the true dimensions of the Saxman mine (tax records up to 1980 showed 121 acres of that facility had been mined out, but were inexplicably changed in 1981 to show they hadn’t been)
 - An underground conversation between trapped miners and their foreman Randy Fogle in which he told them he had urged upper management to stop mining in the area where the flooding began and relocate to another section of the mine earlier than planned (Fogle told MSHA investigators he was concerned about the low productivity of mining in that section of the mine, not the risk of flooding)
- State and federal grand juries are still investigating the accident. The MSHA report leaves open the possibility of altering its findings based on the outcome of these investigations.

Blackout hits parts of North America

Continued from front page

and causing at least four deaths.

Initial evidence points to the private ownership of utility companies and their drive to increase profits, as the reason for the massive failure. This is behind the lack of investment by utilities in transmission-line maintenance and upgrading and a more broadly deteriorating infrastructure.

The impact of the outage was heaviest on workers in city factories, shops, and buildings, farmers, and small businesses people such as restaurant operators (see accompanying reports).

“This particular incident has made it abundantly clear to the American people that we have an antiquated system,” U.S. president George Bush said August 15. “The grid needs to be modernized.” Technicians described an overloaded transmission system, which is badly in need of maintenance and new construction.

“I am most pleased by the fact that our emergency response was good, it reacted well,” Bush said. He didn’t comment on the thousands of people who were forced to spend the night of August 14 in city parks and streets.

“I’m from New Orleans. We have hurricanes. We don’t put people out on the street. We put them in the Super Dome,” Mike Smith, an industrial designer who was stranded in New York during the outage, told the August 16 New Jersey *Star Ledger*.

In Manhattan, the warm weather made the night in the open or the long walk home more bearable than it might have been. The New York subway system was out of action for almost 36 hours. According to the *New York Post*, up to 500 people had to walk out of subway cars stranded in tunnels, while almost twice that number were rescued from jammed elevators.

Millions across the region went without an income for one or two days as workplaces closed. In Detroit, General Motors, Ford, and Daimler Chrysler shut down a total of more than 50 plants. With auto parts companies also closing their doors, 300,000 workers or more were affected.

One hundred miners at the Falconbridge nickel mine, 200 miles north of Toronto, were forced to spend more than 12 hours underground until the morning of August 13, when power was restored to the elevators that bring them up to the surface.

Behind the blackout

“The system has been designed and rules have been created to prevent this escalation and cascading. It should have stopped,” Michael Gent, president of the North American

Electric Reliability Council (NERC), told the Associated Press. NERC is charged with establishing rules to govern the flow of power generation, transmission, and use.

Gent and other NERC officials said August 17 that the first power line failures occurred near Cleveland. The breakdowns cascaded around the Lake Erie Loop, which moves power “from New York to the Detroit area, Canada and back to New York State,” in the words of the *Wall Street Journal*.

The *New York Times* reported Gent as saying, “300 to 500 megawatts, enough to electrify a small city, were moving east to west, from Michigan to New York through Ontario” when the flow reversed direction. It destabilized the flow of power, producing a cascading series of power station failures.

New Mexico governor William Richardson, a Democratic Party politician who served as energy secretary in the administration of William Clinton, described the United States as “a major superpower with a third-world electrical grid.” His condescending remark alluded to the reality that blackouts are a regular fact of life in many cities in the semicolonial world.

Inadequate infrastructure

Two years ago, according to the UK *Guardian* newspaper, NERC’s David Cook told the U.S. Congress that “\$56 billion was needed to update the aging power infrastructure.”

Denise VanBuyren, vice president of Central Hudson Gas and Electric, complained of the “bottlenecks” in the system. “We’ve got excess power in upstate New York, but there’s no way to get it to New York City,” she said.

Many utility companies have sold off their generating plants under the banner of deregulation. At the same time, Con Edison and the other traditional utilities maintain a monopoly on the transmission lines. Denied the rate increases they seek, they have held back on maintenance or construction of new facilities.

According to an article in the August 17 *New York Times*, the first known failure on August 14 hit a transmission line near Cleveland. As the power from that line was transferred to another one nearby, this second transmission line heated up, expanded, and sagged into a tree, causing it to shut down. Trees near transmission lines, however, are supposed to be cut back to prevent such accidents. Of the first five lines that failed, four belong to FirstEnergy, one of the country’s biggest utilities. A statement by the company said that an alarm system that was supposed to alert controllers of the

failure did not function.

In 2001 the power industry spent \$3.7 billion of the \$5.3 billion needed to upgrade the power lines, reported the August 17 *Star Ledger*. The paper cited a study by the New Jersey-based R.J. Rudden energy consulting firm. The survey concluded that the cumulative shortfall at the end of five years could top \$20 billion. The Electric Power Research Institute in California has estimated that electricity demand will grow by a total of 17 percent between 1998 and 2007. Transmission capacity, by contrast, is forecast to increase only 4 percent.

Ilona Gersh in Detroit contributed to this article.

Blackout diaries

BY HELEN MEYERS

CLEVELAND—Workers at the Ford Motor Company’s casting plant in Brook Park face a more protracted layoff than most. The power outage caused molten metal to cool and solidify inside the plant’s furnace. A week will be required for cleaning and rebuilding. United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 150 president Willie Hubbard said 2,000 workers would be laid off for “days... and possibly a week.”

Within minutes of the outage the system that supplies water to the city, county, and 69 surrounding communities shut down. Millions of gallons of raw sewage were released into Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River.

It turns out that the city’s four major water stations have no backup generators. Officials did a study in 1999 and concluded that the risk did not merit the cost.



BY ILONA GERSH

DETROIT—“Detroit has fewer amenities than the white suburbs. Why should it be any different with electricity?” a worker in a sewing factory said on hearing of Detroit Department of Energy’s announcement that it would begin restoring power with the wealthier outer suburbs.

As it turned out, inner city power is essential to providing water pressure to outlying areas, so city mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and water director Victor Mercado convinced the company “to bring some

areas up earlier so the city could once again supply water to 125 communities along with Detroit,” reported the August 17 *Detroit News and Free Press*.

The African World Festival, which draws hundreds of thousands annually downtown to explore African music, art, and handicrafts, was cancelled, as was a rock concert scheduled for Comerica Park. Shamil Baker, another garment worker, told this reporter she thinks that city officials canned the events because “they don’t want too many African-Americans or young people getting together because they’re afraid we’ll be violent.”



BY ELIZABETH WALLADOR

TORONTO—The power outage hit this city during rush-hour traffic, bringing subway and trolley cars to a halt. It took this reporter seven hours to get home by bus in a trip that would normally take just over an hour.

The driver on one bus described the blackout as “another Walkerton”—a reference to events in Walkerton, Ontario, where several people died and hundreds were made ill after drinking poisoned water. The incident is attributed in part to the fact that the government had cut funding for water quality monitoring.

Two days later, at the time of writing this report, transportation service had still not been restored. However, only six hours after the blackout, service in upscale Rosedale was restored, quickly followed by the downtown business core.

Calero welcomed in Pennsylvania, Detroit

BY ELLEN BERMAN

DETROIT—Seven workers at the Eastern Market meatpacking plant greeted Róger Calero outside the factory here August 5. They congratulated him for winning his fight against deportation. Fernando Reyes, who brought the other workers out to meet with the associate editor of the socialist magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*, told them, “This is a victory for all of us because we all participated in it.”

These immigrant workers were active in spreading the word about Calero’s case in the plant immediately after his arrest by immigration agents last December. Several circulated protest petitions among co-workers and raised money during the six-month fight to stop the government from deporting Calero. Together with other Detroit supporters of the Róger Calero Defense Committee (RCDC), they helped organize a public meeting in Detroit for Calero in March.

Calero was arrested Dec. 3, 2002, at the Houston Intercontinental Airport while returning home from reporting assignments in Cuba and Mexico. Immigration authorities threw him in jail and the government began proceedings to deport him to his native Nicaragua, based on a minor plea-bargain conviction 15 years earlier, when he was in high school, for selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop.

After dozens of protest letters poured into the Houston immigration office, Calero was freed in mid December. He then began a nationwide speaking tour, through which he won widespread publicity and backing for his anti-deportation fight from trade unionists, immigrant rights fighters, and many others. On May 1 the government filed a motion to drop the case, which was formally closed three weeks later. Since June, Calero has been speaking across the United States to spread the lessons of his successful fight. He will begin visits to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Sweden, and Iceland at the end of August.

The Eastern Market workers spent their half-hour lunch break listening to Calero’s explanation of the government’s decision to drop the case and discussing how his experience is applicable to other fights.

One worker described an experience inside the plant defending the job of a female co-worker who was fired by the company. A group of workers at that plant, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, went to the union office after work to talk to the union leadership about what they could do to help get her job back. The company was forced to reinstate her with back pay.

Later that evening Calero addressed a public meeting held in a community art gallery in Southwest Detroit. Present were several workers who were instrumental in making Calero’s visit in March a success. Calero described his visit to the plant gate earlier in the day, thanked the workers for their help, and let them know that “we have every intention of deepening this fight by making the lessons of it available to others.”

These workers and others contributed more than \$600 to help ensure that all the expenses incurred by the Calero defense committee are met in full and that the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF), which helped the RCDC get started, will have enough of a “grubstake” in its war chest for the next such struggle.



BY JANET POST

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—“We have proven through this fight that deportation is not automatic” said Róger Calero at a reception here July 31. “They tell us there’s nothing you can do about it. But you can beat back their laws.”

Some of those who came to the reception at the Pathfinder Bookstore asked Calero questions and expressed opinions on the difficult conditions and decisions immigrant

workers face every day.

One man from Chile asked, “From what I understand, the U.S. government is benefiting from using undocumented workers to drive down the cost of labor—so what is the problem the government has with us?”

“They are using immigration policy as a spearhead to attack the entire working class,” said Calero. “They deny rights to immigrants by saying, ‘You’re here illegally. You broke laws, so constitutional rights cannot be extended to you.’ And this is parallel to attacks on workers who are not immigrants.”

Another worker asked, “Why are they trying to deport you now? Is it because you are part of a movement?”

Calero responded, “No. It is because of the movement I belong to that I am here today. It would have been much more difficult to fight and win without being a member of an organization—the Socialist Workers Party—that was instrumental in putting together this kind of campaign.

“There is no reason to think that I was singled out. They throw a wide dragnet and by doing that it is almost guaranteed that other militant workers will fall under the net,” he said.

Calero added, “The government’s problem is that they picked a fight they did not want right now. This happened at a moment when they are summarily deporting thousands of people, and they prefer to do so silently.

“In the face of this, what we do is maximize the possibility of winning by increasing the confidence and unity of those who stand up to fight,” he stated.

A woman in the audience asked Calero whether it was likely that workers without documents who marry for legal reasons would have the same ability and confidence to fight for their rights, since they “think they did something wrong.”

“Our position should be to defend unconditionally anyone in this position,” said Calero. “We start from the point of view that each one of us should be defended the same and each one of us should have the same ability to fight.”

Earlier in the day Calero visited workers at Hollander Home Fashions in Frackville, Pennsylvania, to thank them for signing a petition demanding the government drop its effort to deport him.

The workers at Hollander are members of UNITE, the largest union organizing workers in the garment and textile industry in the United States. Calero explained both why he was touring the country now and why it is crucial to understand that the trade unions are the organizations that can defend the working class internationally.

Calero was also interviewed by the *Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald*, the most widely circulated paper in the southern anthracite coalfields. The paper has been covering the case of Imam Shiraz Mansoor, who has been threatened with deportation to his native South Africa by the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Long Beach professor fights deportation

BY EMILY PAUL

LONG BEACH, California—Hasan Hasan, a mathematics professor in the Long Beach/Orange County area, is seeking broad support for his fight against the government’s effort to deport him. A hearing on his case is scheduled for October 20, set after the postponement of his July 7 hearing.

Hasan, a Kuwaiti citizen, received his masters in mathematics from California State University (CSU) at Long Beach, and proceeded to teach in the math department at the same institution.



Militant/Glova Scott

Militant/Jane Harris

Above, Róger Calero meets with workers at Briggs meatpacking plant in Washington, D.C., July 25. Inset, Patrick Ferry, whose brother Ciarán Ferry is fighting deportation from United States, spoke at meeting in New Jersey as part of Calero’s tour.

Mansoor is a leader of the Islamic Society of Schuylkill County. He was arrested at his home by DHS agents and locked up in the Berks County Prison in Reading, Pennsylvania, May 28. He is currently out of jail awaiting a hearing.

The DHS says it will deny Mansoor and his family residency on the grounds that being an “imam” cannot be counted as legitimate employment. The Unity Coalition at St. Mark’s United Church of Christ in Cressona, Pennsylvania, of which Mansoor is the vice president, is helping to organize his defense.



BY CINDY JAQUITH

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania—Calero visited here July 29–30 to speak with fellow fighters about his recent victory against a deportation order.

Calero met here with activists in the fight against police brutality and supporters of immigrant rights. He had lunch with Joyce Rogers, mother of Bernard Rogers, a young Black man who was shot to death by a housing authority cop in November 2002. Through the efforts of the Rogers family and the group, People Against Police Violence, the county coroner’s office decided to recommend that homicide charges be filed against the cop who shot the youth. But the district attorney has refused to do so.

Islamic Center president Adel Fergany also met with Calero. The Islamic Center has been active in opposing government harassment of immigrants, particularly those from predominantly Muslim countries.

On July 29 Calero spoke on his case at a public meeting held at the Community House. Joining him on the panel were Cici Wheeler of Hispanics for Peace; Renee Wilson, founder of People Against Police Violence; Sarah McAuliffe of the Irish American Unity Conference; and Christopher Remple, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Allegheny County Executive.

“I’m happy to be meeting a fighter, to be in a room full of fighters,” said Wilson.

She thanked Calero’s party, the SWP, for its support for actions against police violence, and said the *Militant* “shows you that people are fighting all over the world.”

Remple spoke on behalf of the SWP. He thanked “all those who stood up with us during this fight.” The SWP has a long tradition of defending its members and others facing victimization, based on the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all, he said.

Sarah McAuliffe reported on the immigration cases of Irish activists John McNicholl and Ciarán Ferry. A fighter against British occupation of Northern Ireland, McNicholl was jailed in the infamous Long Kesh prison and escaped in 1975, making his way to the United States. He lived in this country for more than 20 years, working as a pipe fitter. On July 17 of this year he was kidnapped by immigration cops and deported the next day to Ireland.

Ciarán Ferry, a former member of the Irish Republican Army who also was imprisoned in Long Kesh, was released in the summer of 2000. Facing death threats in Ireland, he moved to the United States. In January he was arrested and charged with overstaying his visa even though he was in the middle of paperwork to resolve his status. He is imprisoned in Denver under a deportation order.

In his talk Calero noted that Ferry and Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti are both in jail on immigration charges and are both being held in solitary confinement. “The government is doing this more now to try and break prisoners,” he said. On the previous day Calero visited Abdel-Muhti at the jail where he is being held near York, Pennsylvania. “Farouk wants to be put in the general prison population. He knows those are his people, just as I knew in immigration jail in Houston that the other inmates were just like my co-workers,” Calero said.

The meeting raised \$320 toward the expenses of Calero’s defense campaign. A reception prior to the meeting was catered by the Oakland Café, a popular Middle Eastern restaurant.

ment of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti people, and whether I knew any of the September 11 hijackers.” He was then arrested and jailed again for three months. Charges were finally dropped in August 2002, said Hasan.

In January of this year, authorities announced they were starting deportation proceedings against Hasan for violation of his work visa, which had expired a month earlier. Because of the pending INS case against him, Hasan had been unable to renew his visa or find employment.

A number of organizations have backed his fight against deportation thus far. He continues to seek support prior to his deportation hearing. Hasan has asked his backers to show up in solidarity at the hearing, scheduled for October 20 at 1:00 p.m. at the immigration court in Los Angeles, 606 South Olive St., 14th floor, Department F.

Róger Calero Fight to Win/‘Sí se puede’ Tour

The Róger Calero Defense Committee is organizing a speaking tour for Calero in cities across the United States and around the world to build on his successful antideportation fight. Below is the schedule for the tour. Requests for additional tour dates can be made to: Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; phone/fax (212) 563-0585; calerodefense@yahoo.com

Montreal	August 20-21	Australia	Aug. 31–Sept. 1
Toronto	August 22–23	Britain	Sept. 4–7
Vancouver	August 24–25	Sweden	Sept. 8–10
New Zealand	August 28–30	Iceland	Sept. 11–13

THE MILITANT

online

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Marines in Liberia

Continued from front page
Washington Post. “Harrier jets screeched again and again over downtown in late morning,” while transport helicopters landed Humvees and pallets of razor wire to build checkpoints.

U.S. president George Bush claimed that the troops will back up the Nigerian-led force of 3,200 troops from countries in the Economic Community of West African States “They are in the lead, and we are in support,” he said. Some 750 Nigerian troops, the vanguard of two West African battalions, have already been deployed. The Nigerian commander of the West African troops has asked U.S. military officials to double the number of U.S. Marines in action.

“This operation today is going to be an important one. You are going to see American boots on the ground,” said John Blaney, the U.S. ambassador to Liberia. Blaney has been centrally involved in the deployment of the West African troops and negotiations with the armed groups in opposition to now-departed president Charles Taylor.

The same day the U.S. diplomat shook hands with commanders of the main opposition force, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), to seal the group’s agreement to lift its siege of Monrovia. LURD representatives agreed to hand over control of the ports, where the city’s main food reserves are warehoused. Blaney met with Liberia’s new president, Moses Blah, August 13. Following the meeting, Blah announced U.S. fighter planes would begin patrolling Liberian skies.

Taylor departed the scene two days ear-

lier, taking refuge in Nigeria—a step that Washington had insisted on as a condition for the intervention of U.S. troops. In a parting speech Taylor accused Washington of backing the opposition. “They can call off their dogs now,” he said, referring to LURD.

Blah has agreed to hand power over to an interim government sometime in October. On August 14 he met with leaders of LURD and a second opposition group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) in Ghana, where negotiations have been going on for a few months. Blah has already offered the opposition the post of vice-president in an interim government. But negotiations floundered as representatives of both LURD and MODEL escalated their demands for high posts in the government.

Subscription renewal drive extended

BY SAM MANUEL

Partisans of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* took a major step toward increasing the long-term readership of the socialist periodicals. They sent in 140 sub renewals to both publications in the third week of the subscription renewal campaign, compared to 75 the second week and 21 the first.

A total of 57 subscription renewals to the *Militant* and 19 to *PM* came in last Sunday, August 17, alone. It is clear that momentum is building toward making, and perhaps surpassing, both goals of the campaign—con-

Up to 5,000 dead from heat wave in France



Workers prepare storage area in Paris August 15 for bodies of victims of European heat wave. Morgues and cemeteries have been overwhelmed by the French death toll, which may reach 5,000. Deflecting blame from France’s deteriorating health and emergency systems, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin blamed “society” in general for the abandonment of the elderly.

vincing 225 *Militant* and 80 *PM* readers to re-up their subscriptions.

For this reason the drive has been extended by one week, to Sunday, August 24. During this final, fourth week of the campaign, 30 *Militant* and 39 *PM* subscription renewals are needed to hit the targets.

The challenge is differential, however. We are within striking distance of the *Militant* goal, and the prize here is to go substantially over. But reaching the *Perspectiva Mundial* target will take diligence. After three weeks of work, partisans of the socialist monthly magazine, the *Militant*’s sister publication in Spanish, have reached just over 50 percent of the goal. The same ground needs to be covered in just one week, which means the pace has to be significantly accelerated.

In Orlando, Florida, Rudy Valentin, an organizer for the Carpenters Union, renewed his subscription to *PM* for a year.

Among those in Atlanta signing up to continue receiving the socialist publications is a young member of UNITE, the garment and textile workers union, involved in building the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride that will culminate in a rally for immigrant rights in New York City on October 4 (see ad below).

Frank Forrestal reported that supporters of the campaign in Los Angeles now have 15 renewals to the *Militant* and 7 to *PM*, surpassing both goals—including 4 and 2, respectively, which they got at an August 15 report-back meeting by participants in the Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. “This puts us in a position to get even more renewals over our goal to help with the international effort,” Forrestal said.

The pace of renewals among other

unionists has also quickened. Supporters of the drive who are members and builders of the United Food and Commercial Workers have sold 9 renewals to the *Militant* and 6 to *PM*, as they close in on their goals of 13 and 15 respectively.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, two meat packers renewed their subscriptions to the *Militant* and two others signed up to continue receiving *PM*. Among them was a supporter of Róger Calero’s fight against government efforts to deport him. A Teamsters member who was a leader of the 1997 strike at UPS also signed up to renew his subscription to the *Militant*.

The *Militant* will not publish next week due to staff vacations. The final results of the drive, however, will be published in the on-line edition of the paper by Thursday, August 28, when the staff returns to work. There is every reason for confidence that the goals can be met by the August 24 deadline.

Party-building fund quotas top \$80,000

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Pledges to the Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund now top the goal of \$80,000. Over the past week supporters of the fund effort in ten cities raised their goals, and three areas that had not appeared on last week’s chart adopted goals. The fund appeal runs until October 15.

Supporters in Houston lifted their goal to \$3,500—an increase of \$500. “We didn’t think the \$3,000 goal reflected the real possibilities we have to reach out to workers in the area,” said Jacquie Henderson. She noted that the Socialist Workers campaign of Anthony Dutrow for mayor of Houston has launched a petitioning effort to place Dutrow on the ballot.

Fund organizers in a number of cities are planning fund meetings for the weekends of September 6–7 and 13–14 at which leaders of the Socialist Workers Party will speak.

These events will be opportunities to engage in political discussion with workers and young people as well as to raise money.

Socialist workers in all cities should organize such meetings as early in the drive as possible. Having them sooner rather than later increases the possibilities of gaining pledges from a wider range of contributors. Brief reports and photos of meetings for publication in the *Militant* are welcome.

The immediate challenge before all supporters of the fund is to get on target. At week five in the drive only 8 percent of the goal has been collected. To be on schedule we should be at 38 percent. Discussing out a plan to collect the funds that have already been pledged, while at the same time doing the work necessary to get new contributions, is the key to making rapid progress.

Please mail contributions to the SWP at 152 W. 36th St., Room 401, New York, NY 10018. All checks should be made out to the SWP.

\$80,000 Party-Building Fund July 12–October 15: Week 5 of 13			
	Goal	Paid	%
Tampa*	1,800	550	31%
Boston*	2,800	575	21%
Utah	1,000	200	20%
Miami	1,800	350	19%
San Francisco*	7,100	1,000	14%
Des Moines*	1,450	150	10%
Newark	3,500	200	6%
New York	10,000	750	7%
Atlanta*	5,200	350	7%
Chicago*	4,200	300	7%
Houston*	3,500	250	7%
Birmingham	1,400	100	7%
Cleveland	1,000	55	6%
Washington, DC	2,700	110	4%
Detroit*	2,500	50	2%
Twin Cities*	4,300	25	1%
Western Colorado	2,700	35	1%
Los Angeles	7,500	0	0%
NE Pennsylvania	2,000	0	0%
Omaha*	1,300	0	0%
Philadelphia	3,200	0	0%
Pittsburgh*	3,600	0	0%
Seattle	6,000	0	0%
Other		1,111	
Total	80,550	6,286	8%
Goal/Should be	80,000	30,767	38%
*Raised goal			

— CALENDAR —

Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride.

Immigrant workers and their allies will set out from nine major U.S. cities and cross the country in buses in late September 2003. They will converge on Washington, D.C., then travel to Liberty State Park in New Jersey October 3, and then to Flushing Meadows Park, Queens, New York, for a mass rally on October 4. Sponsors include AFL-CIO, National Council of La Raza, UNITE, United Food and Commercial Workers. *For more information go to <http://www.iwfr.org>*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

National Civil Rights March: Defeat Ward Connerly; Defend Affirmative Action and Integration; Realize the Promise of Brown v. Board of Education. Sat., Aug. 23, 12 noon. *Assemble at Howard University, 2400 Georgia Ave., NW, march to Lincoln Memorial.*
Seventh National Conference of the New Civil Rights Movement. Sat.–Sun., Aug. 23–24, Howard University.
The march and conference will oppose campaign of anti-affirmative action ballot initiatives spearheaded by Ward Connerly.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

After the Vieques Victory: How does Puerto Rico fit into U.S. Strategies for Global Domination? Speakers: Jorge Farinacci, Socialist Front of Puerto Rico; Ismael Guadalupe, Committee for the Rescue & Development of Vieques. Sat., Sept. 20, 10:00 a.m. Donation: \$6/\$8/\$10. Auspices: Vieques Support Campaign. *Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th St., 10th floor. (718) 610-4751 or (212) 677-0619.*

LONDON

United Kingdom

Fight to Win/Sí Se Puede. Speaker: Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party, who recently defeated U.S. government attempt to deport him. Sun., Sept. 7, 1:00 p.m. Reception. 2:00 p.m. Meeting. Donation: £3. Sponsored by Róger Calero defence committee, London. *Pathfinder Bookshop, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LF. (020) 7461-2409.*

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Renewal Drive July26–August 24: Week 3 of 4					
Country	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
UNITED STATES					
Boston	4	8	200%	3	3
Houston	6	8	133%	1	0
Los Angeles	12	15	125%	5	7
Seattle	8	10	125%	1	1
Tampa	5	6	120%	1	0
Miami	7	8	114%	3	0
San Francisco	8	9	113%	4	0
Twin Cities	8	9	113%	6	4
Washington, DC	8	9	113%	4	1
Omaha	3	3	100%	5	3
Atlanta	8	8	100%	2	0
Des Moines	4	4	100%	2	1
Cleveland*	9	8	89%	1	0
New York	12	10	83%	6	4
Newark	6	5	83%	2	1
Birmingham	5	4	80%	2	1
Detroit	8	6	75%	2	1
Pittsburgh	8	6	75%	0	0
Western Colorado	8	4	50%	6	0
Utah	4	2	50%	5	4
NE Pennsylvania	7	3	43%	0	0
Chicago	15	6	40%	8	4
Philadelphia	5	2	40%	2	1
U.S. total	168	153	91%	71	36
SWEDEN					
Stockholm	4	4	100%	1	0
Gothenburg	4	3	75%	0	0
SWEDEN total	8	7	88%	1	0
CANADA					
Vancouver	6	6	100%	1	1
Toronto	6	5	83%	1	1
Montreal	4	2	50%	3	2
CANADA total	16	13	76%	5	4
ICELAND	8	6	75%		
NEW ZEALAND					
Christchurch	4	3	75%		
Auckland	4	2	50%		
N.Z. total	8	5	63%		
UNITED KINGDOM					
London	10	6	60%	2	1
Scotland	3	1	33%		
UK total	13	7	54%	2	1
AUSTRALIA	8	4	50%	1	0
International totals	229	195	87%	80	41
Goal/Should be	225	169	75%	80	60
IN THE UNIONS					
	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
UNITED STATES					
UMWA*	10	8	80%	4	1
UFCW	13	9	69%	15	6
UNITE	13	2	15%	2	2
Total	36	17	47%	21	8
*raised goal					

SWP candidate in California

Continued from front page
pay for the voters guide statement by Britton.

After voting on whether to recall Davis, California voters will be asked to pick a candidate to replace Davis if he should win less than a majority of the votes on the recall ballot. Actor Arnold Schwarzenegger is widely seen as the leading Republican candidate. Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamonte is the leading Democrat. The conservative

Republican congressman Darrell Issa, who bankrolled and organized the massive petitioning campaign to place the recall on the ballot, withdrew his candidacy in the days leading up to the filing deadline.

Britton was the featured speaker at a Militant Labor Forum here August 9 where the socialist campaign for governor was announced. Deborah Liatos and Ryan Scott, the Socialist Workers candidates for mayor and district attorney in San Fran-

cisco, respectively, joined Britton for the event, as did Nan Bailey, who was the SWP's candidate for governor last year. Scott is a member of the Young Socialists.

"This special election is not a circus," Britton told the meeting, referring to the capitalist media's hyping that the large number and wide variety of candidates running turned politics in California into a bizarre spectacle. "What we see here is the unfolding crisis of the capitalist parties in a time of economic crisis and political stress," Britton said. "It is providing an opportunity for our campaign to be on the ballot and to present the only example of independent working-class political action in the elections."

"Going into this, we don't find a level playing field. We are up against candidates with huge financial resources and the ruling class apparatus that organizes the elections to the benefit of the rich."

Britton said that following and building on an International Socialist Workers Conference in July, garment and textile workers, coal miners, and meat packers who are members of the SWP and Young Socialists met and hammered out a perspective that pro-

continued on page 10



Militant/Betsey Stone (bottom)

Above, Joel Britton (at window) filing as candidate for governor of California August 9 (photo appeared in August 11 *New York Times*). Below, Ryan Scott, candidate for district attorney in San Francisco, speaks at Militant Labor Forum in Los Angeles.

Statement by Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor of California, submitted for the state voters guide.

BY JOEL BRITTON

I am a longtime trade unionist (having been a slaughterhouse worker—member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union—and a refinery worker—member of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers union). I serve on the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, and I am its southern California organizer.

I have actively opposed U.S. military interventions against the peoples of Vietnam, Cuba, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and north Korea, joining millions around the world demanding, "U.S. Hands Off! Bring the GIs Home Now!"

I have backed efforts to unite working people to fight for "Jobs for all! Cut the workweek with no reduction in pay! Raise the minimum wage!"; "Stop INS raids and deportations—end 'no-match' firings!"; "Fight police brutality—abolish the death penalty!"; "Defend women's access to abortion!"; "Debt relief for working farmers! Stop foreclosures!"; "Defend affirmative action!"; "Stop Washington's economic war against Cuba! Normalize relations now!"

I have opposed Democratic and Republican moves to put the economic crisis of capitalism on the backs of working people. I'm for a workers and farmers government that will abolish capitalism in the U.S. and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism.

Socialist Workers candidates run in 9 U.S. states

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Joel Britton, candidate for governor of California (see front page), is one of the 15 candidates currently running for public office as part of Socialist Workers slates in 9 U.S. states.

Election officials have informed nine of these contenders that their names will appear on the ballot; three others have submitted applications for ballot status or are collecting thousands of signatures on nominating petitions, to comply with anti-democratic election laws aimed at keeping working-class candidates off the ballot; and three are running write-in campaigns.

In their campaign leaflets, statements, and in interviews with local newspapers the candidates have laid out a program of immediate, democratic, and transitional demands, which begin from today's conditions and today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and lead to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat and its allies on the land.

Supporters of Dave Ferguson, a garment worker who is on the ballot for the Seattle city council, took the campaign to clerks organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) who rallied July 23 to oppose contract proposals by the Bon Marche department store. The bosses' demands include a wage cut for some workers and a wage freeze for others, and an increase in workers' contributions to health insurance payments. The workers voted overwhelmingly to authorize the leaders of the three union locals involved to call strike action.

Supporters of Brian Taylor, 29, who is campaigning for mayor of Birmingham, Alabama, have talked about the campaign with workers involved in organizing drives by the Carpenters Union. Taylor himself was able to campaign among co-workers at the Oak Grove coal mine before he and others were laid off in mid-July. Under the headline, "Coal miner to run for mayor,"

the *Birmingham News* reported July 9 that Taylor "wants to change the workweek from 40 hours to 30 hours without cutting anyone's pay. That proposal would raise hourly wages and create more jobs. Taylor supports public works projects to create more jobs, and improve services such as hospitals and day cares."

Campaign supporters in Birmingham are not obliged to gather signatures to place Taylor on the ballot, said Susan LaMont, of his campaign committee.

This was not so for John Staggs and Hilda Cuzco, the candidates for mayor of Philadelphia and city council member at-large, respectively. They organized a range of supporters to collect 5,544 signatures—"more than double the required number for placement on the ballot," Cuzco told the *Militant*. Ballot status, she explained, "gives us openings to campaign more broadly."

A petitioning effort with a goal of 4,000 signatures is under way right now for Tony Dutrow, the Socialist Workers mayoral candidate in Houston. "We'll tell the truth, the unvarnished truth," he told the August 9 *Houston Chronicle*. The article said that in his campaign, Dutrow will push for "bringing home all troops stationed abroad and ending the American 'occupation' of Iraq, creating jobs for everybody, allowing immigrants to obtain drivers licenses, defending women's access to abortion, and re-establishing U.S. relations with Cuba."

The Hazleton, Pennsylvania, *Standard Speaker* showed Tim Mailhot, 50, the SWP mayoral candidate there, on its August 2 front page. "Worker unity at top of Mailhot's agenda" read the headline. "Tim Mailhot wants to make sure his stand on the issues is crystal clear," the article began. "So, a list of 10 demands he lists on a campaign flyer is punctuated with exclamation points—one after another. Among them:...

'Defend workers' rights! No secret detentions or trials!'

'Defend women's access to abortion.'

Boston's *Chelsea Record* reported on the campaign of William Leonard for city council at-large. The former candidate for governor of Massachusetts, it stated, "has been involved in trying to organize a union" at his workplace at Kayem Foods, a meatpacking plant. "My campaign is to unify the working people," Leonard

told the paper, "especially as we head toward a Depression and toward more wars."

The *Des Moines Register* in Iowa was struck by the internationalist stand of Mary Martin, who is running for mayor of Des Moines. Her campaign "focuses primarily on international issues," noted the June 23 issue: "an end to the U.S. embargo on Cuba and military action in Iraq, abolition of the death penalty, and the removal of U.S. troops in South Korea."

"We don't see our campaign as stopping at the borders of Des Moines," the 51-year

"humanitarianism," the deployment of U.S. troops there is aimed at strengthening the U.S. position against its "imperialist competitors in Africa and to reinforce the debt bondage of the continent's peoples—a key means for siphoning off the wealth produced by Africa's toilers and nature into the coffers of the imperialist ruling families."

Farley, who works at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul and is a UFCW Local 789 member, ended his statement with the demands, "All imperialist troops out of West Africa! Cancel the immoral and



Militant/Janet Post (left), Bob Stanton (right)

Socialist Workers candidates in Pennsylvania. Left, Tim Mailhot announces his candidacy for mayor of Hazleton at press conference August 2. Right, Hilda Cuzco, who is running for city council in Philadelphia, petitions to get on the ballot.

old sewing-machine worker told the daily newspaper. "Martin said.... 'What we call for is a movement to replace capitalism with a workers' and farmers' government.'"

Samuel Farley, who is running for City Council in Ward 4 of St. Paul, Minnesota, also took a stand in opposition to Washington's imperialist plunder abroad. In a statement titled "U.S. Hands off Africa" he called on working people to oppose U.S. intervention in Liberia. Under the cover of

unpayable Third World debt!"

Chris Remple, 54, a write-in candidate for the Allegheny County Executive in Pittsburgh, issued a July 22 statement in response to a recent incidence of police brutality. After welcoming the coroner's ruling of homicide in the case of Charles Dixon, who suffocated to death last December when "police swarmed over him, forcing him down and preventing him from breathing," Remple demanded that District Attorney Stephen Zappala "immediately charge and prosecute the cops responsible."

"A lesson of the fight for justice for Jonny Gammage," he said, "was that unless enormous pressure is mobilized, killer cops will not even be tried for their crimes." Gammage died in 1995 at the hands of five suburban cops, none of whom were convicted in the killing.

The struggle against police brutality is a campaign issue in New Jersey, too, Abby Tilsner told the *Militant*. Tilsner, 37, is on the ballot for State Senate, 29th District. Campaign supporters have joined with those protesting the recent killings of Jose Luis Ives, 17, in Union City, and Michael Newkirk, 20, in North Newark.



Militant/Nancy Rosenstock

New Jersey candidate Abby Tilsner speaks at July 29 Newark demonstration by Black Telephone Workers for Justice demanding that Verizon make Martin Luther King Day a paid holiday.

Socialist Workers candidates

Candidate	City/State	Office	Ballot status
Brian Taylor	Birmingham, AL	Mayor	Pending
Joel Britton	California	Governor	On ballot
Ryan Scott	San Francisco	Dist. Attorney	Write-in
Deborah Liatos	San Francisco	Mayor	Write-in
Mary Martin	Des Moines, IA	Mayor	Pending
Tim Mailhot	Hazleton, PA	Mayor	On ballot
Tony Dutrow	Houston	Mayor	Pending
Laura Garza	Boston	City Council	On ballot
William Leonard	Boston	City Council	On ballot
Abby Tilsner	New Jersey	State Senator	On ballot
John Staggs	Philadelphia	Mayor	On ballot
Hilda Cuzco	Philadelphia	City Council	On ballot
Chris Remple	Pittsburgh	County Exec.	Write-in
Dave Ferguson	Seattle	City Council	On ballot
Samuel Farley	St. Paul, MN	City Council	On ballot

Youth Exchange

Continued from front page

convictions. In Havana the U.S. delegation met with members of a municipal assembly of People's Power, Cuba's legislature; with leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC); and with young revolutionary social workers in a local community (see coverage in the last two issues). They visited the Latin American School of Medicine, the University of Havana, the Museum of the Revolution, and a number of scientific research centers.

They also visited two eastern cities, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo, where a U.S. naval base occupies Cuban territory against the will of the people of this Caribbean nation. In Santiago they joined a July 26 rally of 10,000 people, addressed by Cuban president Fidel Castro, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada barracks. The 1953 attack on the Moncada and the nearby Bayamo garrisons of the Batista dictatorship launched the mass revolutionary struggle—led by what became the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army headed by Castro—that overthrew the U.S.-backed regime in January 1959.

The revolutionary victory led to the replacement of the capitalist government with a new power—a workers and farmers government—that opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Four decades later, millions of Cubans throughout the island celebrated their success in standing up to Washington's unceasing economic war and continuing to set an example for workers, farmers, and the oppressed around the world.

The U.S. delegation was the largest of the three Youth Exchange trips organized so far; the last one, two years ago, numbered about 180. It included students from university campuses around the country, as well as some high school students, workers, artists, and others. The delegates came from 23 states, with the largest groups from Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, Miami and Tampa, Philadelphia, and New York. More than 80 came from the Los Angeles area alone, where the group was sponsored by the Los Angeles Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba. Many were Chicano or Mexican, and a substantial number were children of Latin American or Asian immigrants, Black, or Puerto Rican.

Many of the delegates, eager to learn about the Cuban Revolution, had spent weeks preparing for the trip, organizing events to raise funds for the travel costs as well as reading books and holding meetings to study and discuss more about revolutionary Cuba.

On the first full day of activities, the U.S. participants heard presentations by UJC first secretary Otto Rivero and FEU president Hassan Pérez. Rivero described what is known here as the "Battle of Ideas"—a political campaign that Cuba's revolutionary leadership has been waging since the year 2000 to deepen the involvement of working people and youth in Cuba's revolution. It aims to counter the imperialist ideological drive promoting capitalism and its cutthroat reality and morality of "looking out for number one."

Such values tend to be reinforced by Cuba's increased exposure to the world capitalist market since the early 1990s, when Cuba lost its favorable terms of trade with aid from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The resulting economic crisis is known here as the Special Period. To obtain the hard currency needed to import vital goods and to finance social priorities—such as education, health care, and food subsidies—Cuba took a number of steps such as decriminalizing the use of the U.S. dollar, developing tourism, encouraging family re-

mittances from abroad, establishing "dollar" stores where many goods can be purchased only with foreign currency, establishing joint ventures with foreign capitalist firms, and allowing self-employment in more than 100 occupations, like hairdressers, street vendors, and family-run restaurant operators. These measures have led to widening social inequalities between those who have even minimal dollar income and those who don't, and alienation among some layers. The mobilization of youth around the Battle of Ideas seeks to address these challenges.

'A revolution in education'

At the heart of the revolutionary political offensive being waged in Cuba today is an effort to expand access to culture and education for the entire population. "We are carrying out a revolution in education," Rivero said.

He outlined some of the 70 new educational campaigns, most of which are led by UJC and FEU cadres. These include, he said:

- Putting a television, VCR, and computer in every school, even in the most remote areas, using solar panels where necessary to provide electricity—including in some 400 rural schools that have fewer than five students each. This is complemented by a national network of local computer centers for youth and video clubs that host film showings and discussions.
- Accelerated training of new elementary school teachers to reduce the classroom size to 20 students per teacher and to give more individualized attention to the needs of each student.
- A crash program to build and repair schools throughout the island.
- Fifteen new schools—one in each province—to train 30,000 art instructors over a 10-year period, with the goal of establishing cultural centers in every community.
- The University for All, a national TV program offering courses for people of all ages and occupations, in everything from English and French to world geography and art criticism.
- A drive to expand book publishing. This includes a "family library" program to provide every Cuban family with the classics of Cuban and world literature, published in boxed 25-book sets of inexpensive newsprint editions, and the broadening of the annual Havana International Book Fair to more than 30 cities across the island.
- Four schools that are training thousands of teenagers as revolutionary social workers, who go to the economically hardest-hit neighborhoods to help address acute social problems and work with youth to get them involved in school or jobs. Through this program the young social workers, most of whom are themselves from such neighborhoods where they had dropped out of school and work, are able to gain admission to the university.

During the discussion period, in response to a question by a U.S. delegate about problems facing youth such as unemployment and crime, Hassan Pérez said, "Our approach is that all problems have solutions." The social workers "visit each youth in the neighborhoods one by one, to find out what problems they face and to integrate them into the work of the revolution. The response has been very good. It's hard work, and it's a bigger challenge here in the capital—because of the greater influence of the dollar—where sometimes we have to visit young people not once but 10 times, working patiently to achieve results."

Rivero described the Schools for the Comprehensive Upgrading of Skills for Youth, aimed at youth who, after graduating from ninth grade, as required in Cuba, neither get a job nor continue studies: from young women who face the unexpected burden of being single mothers, to youth who have family problems or get in trouble with the law. "Through this school young people receive a stipend—they get paid to go to school as an extra incentive. We have been very successful with this program,"



Militant photos by Martín Koppel

Above, officers of Cuba's Border Brigade talk with youth from the United States on Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange about U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, which can be seen in background, July 27. Left, U.S. youth on Youth Exchange take part in discussion with UJC leaders and other Cuban peers on Battle of Ideas. Session took place in Havana July 24.



he said.

"The problem with crime is not simply material, but also a matter of self-esteem," he added. "In countries like the United States, human beings are denigrated. Prisons do not 'reeducate.' What is needed is not reeducation but true *education*."

Pérez said, "An educated people can defend and argue for their views. As Fidel said, the revolution doesn't say 'Believe.' The revolution says, 'Read.' Our aim is for the Cuban people to be the bearer of universal culture. That requires an education that goes from cradle to grave.

"We seek to involve all youth in the educational programs—including those in prison, so that even they will be able to graduate from the university," he stated. "Our goal is to build a socialist society, one where there is no unemployment, no prisons. This is a goal that is impossible in capitalist countries."

Later that day, the youth from the United States visited the Latin American School of Medicine, where 7,200 students from 24 countries are currently enrolled—most from Latin America but a number from African nations and 52 from the United States. Juan Carrizo, the school's director, explained that the students there, most of them from working-class and farm families, study for free.

"This school is part of the solidarity of our revolution," Carrizo said. He noted that Cuba's internationalist solidarity is also seen in the 5,300 Cuban doctors and other health-care volunteers who are currently serving in 93 countries around the world, mostly in Africa. "Our greatest capital is our human capital," he said.

U.S. base at Guantánamo

One of the high points of the Youth Exchange was the visit to Guantánamo, where the participants met members of Cuba's Border Brigade and were able to view from a lookout point the U.S. military base. Lieutenant Colonel Prieto and Major Santiesteban briefed them about the history of the U.S. base, imposed on Cuba in 1903 when the country was a virtual U.S. colony. Prieto noted that since the revolutionary victory in 1959, U.S. troops on the base have carried out more than 13,000 provocations against Cuba, including incidents in which eight Cubans—two of them border guards on duty—have been killed. From the beginning, he said, the revolutionary government "has maintained our inalienable and sovereign right to have this territory returned."

In a gesture of solidarity, Camilo Matos, a student from New York, gave the guards a flag of Vieques, a Puerto Rican island where three months earlier a victory had been won in the battle to get the U.S. Navy out. "Just as you are fighting to get the U.S. military out of your land—a struggle that we support—the Puerto Rican people are fighting to get the U.S. military out of our country," he said. Throughout the trip, a number of Puerto Rican delegates highlighted the common struggle against U.S. imperialism by the peoples of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and

Cuba's unflagging solidarity with the Puerto Rican independence struggle.

From the lookout post the visitors were able to see details of the base, including Camp Delta, where Washington continues to hold more than 600 men indefinitely, with no charges or legal protections, under the label "enemy combatants."

Many of the youth from the United States reacted strongly to this sight. As several of them put it, the experience reinforced their conviction to return home and tell the truth about why "we stand in solidarity with our Muslim brothers who are being held in the occupied territory of Guantánamo."

Cuba's resistance to Washington's 44-year-long economic war and attacks against the revolution was the theme of a conference session following the group's return to Havana, where they heard a presentation by Rafael Dausá, head of the North American desk of Cuba's foreign ministry.

Dausá outlined recent events in the U.S. policy of aggression against Cuba, including Washington's refusal—until recently—to prosecute or return to Cuba those individuals who hijack planes or boats to the United States, a policy that has led to a wave of armed hijackings over the last year.

"Cuba has stood up to the U.S. empire just 90 miles off its shores," said a student from Los Angeles during the discussion period. "While we as Chicanos are second-class citizens in the United States and are denied our sovereignty, Cuba has defended its sovereignty," he said, pointing to why support can be won for the fight against the U.S. embargo.

Another delegate asked about changing attitudes among Cuban-Americans. "Cubans in the United States are not monolithic," Dausá pointed out, noting that many among the younger generation especially oppose U.S. sanctions against Cuba.

Nicole Sarmiento, a University of Miami student, described several recent actions organized in Miami against Washington's policies toward Cuba that involved significant numbers of Cuban-Americans. "There is more political space in Miami today to organize actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution than in the past," she said.

The last two discussion sessions of the Youth Exchange included presentations by Randy Alonso on U.S. foreign policy and a panel of speakers on culture in revolutionary Cuba.

Alonso is the moderator of the nationally televised Roundtable program, a popular show held several nights a week that takes up a wide range of topics on national and international politics.

The evening before, Alonso had invited seven of the Youth Exchange participants to speak on the Roundtable program about what they had learned in Cuba and their political work in the United States. The seven were Graciano Matos from New York; Eddie Torres, one of the coordinators of the group from Los Angeles; Jessica Marshall from Chicago, a leader of the Young Communist League; Alex Alvarado from Miami; Olympia Newton from Los

Continued on Page 11

Contribute to 'Militant' Travel Fund

Two *Militant* reporters traveled to Cuba to provide first-hand coverage of Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. Please contribute to help cover expenses of close to \$4,000 (see address on page 2). Since this appeal was first published, \$170 has been donated to travel fund.

Cuba and the rise of imperialism

The following is an excerpt from *The Second Declaration of Havana*. The Spanish-language edition of this pamphlet is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. The Second Declaration was approved by acclamation after it was read by Cuban president Fidel Castro to a rally of one million people in Havana in February 1962. This historic document was a call for an uncompromising continent-wide revolutionary struggle against

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

U.S. imperialism. It came in response to a sharp escalation of attacks by Washington against the Cuban Revolution. The pamphlet also includes the First Declaration of Havana, issued Sept. 2, 1960. The selection printed below deals with the rise of imperialism in the Americas. It begins where an excerpt printed in the April 28 issue of the *Militant* ended. Copyright © 1994 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



With the feudal bonds broken, the productive forces developed extraordinarily. Great factories arose in which greater and greater numbers of workers assembled.

The most modern and technically efficient factories continually displaced from the market the less efficient competitors. The cost of industrial equipment continually rose. It became necessary to accumulate more and more capital. A greater portion of production passed into a smaller number of hands.

Thus arose the great capitalist enterprises and later, according to the degree and character of the association, the great industrial combines through cartels, syndicates, trusts, and corporations, controlled by the owners of the major portion of the stock, that is to say, by the most powerful heads of industry. Free play, characteristic of capitalism in its first phase, gave way to monopolies, which entered into agreements among themselves and controlled the markets.

Where did the colossal quantity of resources come from that permitted a handful of monopolists to accumulate billions of dollars? Simply from the exploitation of human labor. Millions of men, forced to work for a wage of bare subsistence, produced with their strength the gigantic capital of the monopolies. The workers amassed the fortunes of the privileged classes, ever richer, ever more powerful. Through the banking institutions these classes were able to make use not only of their own money but that of all society. Thus came about the fusion of the banks with great industry, and finance capital was born. What should they do with the great surplus of capital that was accumulating in ever greater quantities? Invade the world with it.... Thus began the territorial and economic division of the world. By 1914, eight or ten imperialist countries had subjugated territories beyond their own borders covering more than 83.7 million square kilometers, with a population of 970 million inhabitants. They had simply divided up the world.

But as the world, limited in size, was divided to the last corner of the earth, a clash ensued among the different monopolist nations. Struggles arose for new divisions, originating in the disproportionate distribution of industrial and economic power that the various monopolistic nations had attained in their uneven development. Imperialist wars broke out that would cost humanity 50 million dead, tens of millions wounded, and the destruction of incalculable material and cultural wealth. Even before this had happened, Karl Marx wrote that "capital comes into the world dripping from head to foot from every pore with blood and mire."

The capitalist system of production, once it had given all it was capable of, became an abysmal obstacle to the progress of humanity. But the bourgeoisie from its origins carried within itself its antithesis. In its



Bohemia

Santiago de Cuba airport bombed by U.S. planes April 15, 1961, in preparation for Bay of Pigs invasion. "Why do the Yankee imperialists hate Cuba?" the Second Declaration asks. It answers: Cuba showed that "revolution is possible."

womb gigantic productive instruments were developed, but with time a new and vigorous social force developed: the proletariat, destined to change the old and worn-out social system of capitalism to a higher socioeconomic form in accordance with the historic possibilities of human society, converting into social property those gigantic means of production which the people—and no one else but the people—by their work had created and amassed. At such a stage of development of the productive forces, it became completely anachronistic and outmoded to have a regime that stood for private ownership and with it the economic subordination of millions and millions of human beings to the dictates of a small social minority.

The interests of humanity cried out for a halt to the anarchy of production, the waste, economic crises, and the rapacious wars that are part of the capitalist system. The growing necessities of the human race and the possibility of satisfying them, demanded the planned development of the economy and the rational utilization of its means of production and natural resources.

It was inevitable that imperialism and colonialism would fall into a profound and insoluble crisis. The general crisis began with the outbreak of World War I, with the revolution of the workers and peasants that overthrew the tsarist empire of Russia and founded, amidst the most dif-

ficult conditions of capitalist encirclement and aggression, the world's first socialist state, opening a new era in the history of humanity. From that time until today, the crisis and decomposition of the imperialist system has steadily worsened.

World War II, unleashed by the imperialist powers—into which were dragged the Soviet Union and other criminally invaded peoples of Asia and Europe, who engaged in a bloody struggle of liberation—culminated in the defeat of fascism, formation of the world camp of socialism, and the struggle of the colonial and dependent peoples for their sovereignty. Between 1945 and 1957 more than 1.2 billion human beings conquered their independence in Asia and Africa. The blood shed by the people was not in vain.

The movement of the dependent and colonial peoples is a phenomenon of universal character that agitates the world and marks the final crisis of imperialism.

Cuba and Latin America are part of the world. Our problems form part of the problems engendered by the general crisis of imperialism and the struggle of the subjugated peoples, the clash between the world that is being born and the world that is dying. The odious and brutal campaign unleashed against our nation expresses the desperate as well as futile effort that the imperialists are making to prevent the liberation of the peoples.

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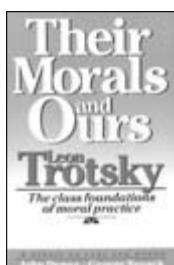
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Despite capitalist training
—“U.S. soldiers visiting South



**Harry
Ring**

Korean brothels may have encouraged sex slavery because of a lack of understanding about human trafficking, the Defense Department’s inspector general reported. Military patrols were sometimes too friendly with the

owners and often didn’t report sex slavery because of a misperception that they needed solid evidence, the report said.”—News item.

Call 911!—Rudolph Giuliani, ex-mayor of New York, became a media personality when the Twin Towers got hit. He now heads a “consulting” company and recently dished up advice to the Mexican government on reducing crime: Give the cops more money and require them to submit to drug and lie detector tests. His tab was \$4.3 million. No, he was not arrested.

Maybe lawyers will pay fine—Joseph Gannon, recent mayor of Bridgeport, Connecticut, is facing

nine years in the slammer plus a \$150,000 fine for corruption. His lawyers asked the judge to scratch the fine because he had to borrow \$2 million from his parents to pay his lawyers.

Eh, a double standard?—In the working-class town of Lawrence, Massachusetts, 24 teachers are on no-pay administrative leave for flunking an English proficiency test. Now it’s revealed that Wilfredo Laboy, superintendent of schools, flunked a similar test three times. He leaked the fact of his difficulty with English as a second language. He didn’t say how many teachers—and children—have the same problem.

A few bad schools?—“DAL-LAS—Texas schools that serve large numbers of poor and minority students are the least likely to have highly qualified, experienced teachers, a statewide analysis by *The Dallas Morning News* shows. The analysis also found that those schools also have fewer teachers certified in the subjects they teach.”—News item.

That’s for openers—“U.S.-style pledge of allegiance awaits new British citizens” —Headline, *The Times*, London.

The global civilizer—“TALLA-HASSEE, Florida—An autopsy report said that Ruth Hubbs, who died

May 16 at the Leon County Jail, was killed by an overdose of prescription drugs likely administered by the jail’s infirmary. She’s one of three people to die in the Leon County Jail since March. Prison Health Services, which has been under scrutiny since the deaths, has more than 1,000 lawsuits pending against it.” —News item.

Sniff, sniff?—Recently, the Ohio supreme court scrapped a law which held that workers injured on the job were to be presumed drunk or spaced out if they refused to take a drug or alcohol test. Now the business lobby is pushing that such tests are mandatory if requested by an employer, doctor, or cop.

Cuban magazine discusses racism, the diaspora

BY MIKE TABER

The May-June 2003 issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, which is just now being delivered to subscribers in the United States, contains several interviews and articles that address important questions under discussion in Cuba today. Among these are the place of Cubans living outside the country and the legacy of racism in Cuba. *La Gaceta* is the Spanish-language bimonthly cultural and literary journal published by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC).

The central theme of this issue is the cultural impact of the “Cuban diaspora” on Cuban society. This is a reference to the Cuban community abroad, primarily in the United States.

One artist who is part of this “diaspora” is writer Edmundo Desnoes, who left Cuba in 1979 and currently lives in New York, where, among other things, he is a university professor. Desnoes is the author of *Memoirs of Underdevelopment*, a novel written in the mid-1960s that was later made into an award-winning film directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea.

In January, Desnoes returned to Cuba for the first time in 23 years to sit on the jury that issued the annual Casa de las Américas literary awards. He had been invited to participate as Cuba’s representative on the jury.

In an interview, *La Gaceta* asked Desnoes: “You left Cuba in 1979, when the so-called Gray Half-Decade was already behind us, and things were beginning to get better for many writers and artists.” The “Gray Half-Decade” or “gray period” is a term commonly used in Cuba to describe a period at the beginning of the 1970s when an anti-working-class trajectory on questions of culture and the arts, influenced by the Stalinist bureaucratic policies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, had its strongest influence in Cuba.

A number of those who are today among Cuba’s most prominent writers and artists, such as musician Silvio Rodríguez and essayist Antón Arrufat, who was awarded the national prize for literature in 2001, found that they were unable to publish or perform. Music like the Beatles was labeled decadent and banned from Cuban airwaves.

“After the Padilla case,” Desnoes replies, “Cuban writers were left very isolated.” Herberto Padilla was a Cuban novelist and poet who had been awarded the national poetry prize in Cuba in 1968. In 1971 he was arrested for “engaging in possibly counterrevo-

lutionary activities” because of the content of his work. While in prison, he wrote a letter of “self-criticism” directed at the government. Today in Cuba, Padilla’s imprisonment is often held up as one of the most notorious examples of the policies implemented during the “Gray Half-Decade.”

“For me, the writer is society’s critical conscience. I’m convinced of that. And I was stupefied to see that at a given moment the party began directing culture and charting the path to be followed...”

“When, as you say, things began to get better, they told me I had to begin again, little by little, from below, humbly, so that I would be recognized again. Out of pride and arrogance I didn’t agree, and decided to leave Cuba.”

Once in the United States, Desnoes refused to join Washington’s counterrevolutionary propaganda campaign against Cuba. This earned him the enmity of forces in the U.S. determined to try to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

“In the United States I could have devoted myself to the lucrative profession of being Cuban, but I could not turn my back on what I had been,” Desnoes states.

Another Cuban exile writer, Reinaldo Arenas, did become a vociferous voice in the counterrevolutionary campaign. Arenas “attended one of my lectures and got into a fight with my students, to the point of attacking them,” Desnoes says. “He then turned to the Pentagon and accused me of being a Castroist agent, saying that my mission was to win U.S. intellectuals over to Cuba’s cause. This was an accusation that did not fall into a vacuum, since I got a visit from FBI agents, who pestered me about it.”

Speaking about the reception he received in Cuba after almost two and a half decades, Desnoes states, “I was moved by the applause I received—why deny it? I didn’t expect that. Neither did I expect the generosity with which I was received by friends, young people, and even some political leaders.”

Combating legacy of racism

Another interview in this issue of *La Gaceta* is with painter Roberto Diago, a Cuban who is Black, much of whose work centers on Afro-Cuban themes.

What Diago seeks to do with his work is “to emphasize allegorically the precarious world that Blacks have been compelled to live in, the legacy of slavery we’ve inherited, how we live, what our aspirations are,” the article says. This is a “part of Cuban life that some people at times don’t want to show.”

The interviewer points out that Diago is “part of a group of Cuban intellectuals who for a number of years have been alluding to the problems of racism that still persist in Cuban society.” He asks about Diago’s specific aims in this regard.

“If I’d been a slave,” Diago answers, “I would have become a *cimarrón* [runaway slave]. In truth, what many of us do through art is cultural cimarronism....

“What I have been creating is painting à la rap,” he says. In doing so, “I try to express through my work what still rankles, what still hurts, everyday racism, scornful looks, humiliations, and statements made about culture in relation to this topic.”

The interviewer asks whether it’s a contradiction for Diago to wage a battle against racial discrimination while he himself, as a successful artist, enjoys certain privileges that many Cubans do not have.

“The question you’ve asked me now indirectly, and which almost everyone also says

to me, implicitly contains a certain racist posture,” Diago replies. “Is it that a Black person cannot have a car or have the right to travel....

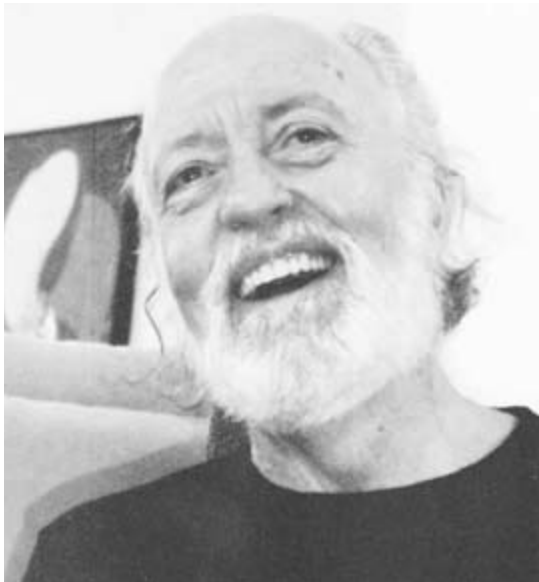
“Unfortunately there are very few Blacks in Cuba who enjoy these so-called privileges. You just have to go to the parking lot of any enterprise, store, restaurant, bank, and you’ll see many people with automobiles, cell phones, and among them, the percentage of Black persons is insignificant.”

Diago explains that notwithstanding his success as an artist, he continues living in the La Lisa neighborhood of Havana, one of the city’s poorest, to keep his ties to his roots. One of the projects he initiated and leads is a creativity workshop for children in the neighborhood.

“Working with children brings me closer and closer to reality and purity,” he says. “This link also brings me back to my own past, when as a child I participated in courses at the Museum of Fine Arts. By coincidence, when my old teacher Morriña saw me at the UNEAC office with children from my workshop, participating in the campaign for peace and against the war in Iraq, he told me how moved and satisfied he felt to think of how those classes with the child Diago had borne fruit. For me, hearing that statement was as if they’d given me a prize.”

Publication of the interview with Diago is characteristic of a broader and more open discussion in Cuba over the last half-decade on the questions of racism and racist prejudices, on which the UNEAC leadership has often taken the lead. In its Dec. 7, 1998, issue, for example, the *Militant* published an interview with Graziella Pogolotti, a member of UNEAC’s national secretariat, conducted by Martín Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters.

“The Cuban Revolution eradicated the economic basis of racism, and perhaps it was



Juvenal

Edmundo Desnoes, Cuban novelist interviewed in July-August issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba*.

naively believed that this problem would be solved much more rapidly,” Pogolotti said. “Of course, there has been significant change between the situation before the revolution and today. Even so, prejudices continue among certain parts of Cuban society.... This problem cannot be left to be gradually, automatically eliminated by society. Instead, we must influence society to make it aware of this problem and begin to overcome it.”

The latest issue of *La Gaceta* includes additional articles on the theme of the Cuban diaspora, as well as poetry, short stories, reviews, and interviews with singer and songwriter Liuba María Hevia and poet Domingo Alfonso. Subscriptions to *La Gaceta de Cuba* can be purchased from Pathfinder (see ad below). To subscribe, contact pathfinderpress@compuserve.com. Subscriptions will also soon be available for sale on www.pathfinderpress.com.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



September 1, 1978

PHILADELPHIA—“We’re fired up, we can’t take no more,” was the chant of nearly 3,000 marchers who jammed the courtyard of City Hall plaza August 17. The mostly young, Black demonstrators were fired up over the savage police assault August 8 on MOVE, a Black collective. The cops totally wiped out MOVE’s collective home.

In May, after surviving a police blockade designed to starve them out, MOVE agreed, under duress, to vacate by August 1.

A week after that deadline, several hours before sunrise, the police moved in for the kill. Tear gas guns were made ready. More than 300 cops, backed by snipers and mounted police, were poised for action.

At a signal, they began battering the house down. A crane smashed out windows.

Twelve MOVE adults and eleven children, including infants, were barricaded in the basement. High-powered hoses flooded the basement to flush them out like animals. Suddenly, the cops opened fire.

They claimed a shot had been fired from the house. But some eyewitnesses insisted the first shot had come from a different

direction. When the smoke cleared, shortly after 8 a.m., one policeman was dead and seven cops and six firemen injured. Two MOVE members and three of their sympathizers were also injured.



August 31, 1953

The mighty wave of strikes which rolled over France for three weeks brought production, transport and the state administration to a standstill, and shook the capitalist regime to its foundations, has temporarily subsided. Last Friday, Aug. 21, after an agreement with the Laniel government, the Socialist and Catholic-led unions called their members back to work. This disrupted the unity of action which had been achieved from below by the ranks in the various unions, localities, and workplaces. The Stalinist-controlled General Confederation of Labor tried to keep the strike going. However, its call did not meet with general response and it had to issue a back-to-work order.

Thus the most potent and promising strike movement of the French working class since 1936 was brought to an inconclusive end.

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Nationalize the energy companies

In response to the blackout in the northeastern United States and parts of Canada, the labor movement should demand the federal government expropriate the power and energy companies.

This demand should be coupled with a call for a massive public works program to rebuild the deteriorating power grid and related infrastructure—the result of the profit drive by the utilities—and to create thousands of sorely needed jobs.

The power monopolies control a resource vital to society. But they are in the business of making money, not of providing energy. Keeping rates high to maximize profits is done partly by ensuring that the supply remains below the growing demand for energy. That’s why construction of power plants has slowed down, not because “people don’t want them in their backyards.”

Monopolies such as New York’s Con Edison or Ohio-based FirstEnergy, which own large parts of the power grid, do not find it “cost-effective” to invest in regular maintenance of transmission lines or ensuring the proper functioning of alarm systems that alert controllers of line failures. Such profit-motivated decisions guarantee there will be more breakdowns and blackouts.

Through their profit drive, these companies have created a situation that increasingly endangers the lives and livelihoods of millions of workers and farmers, as well as small businesspeople. They must be taken out of private hands and nationalized—run as public utilities for the benefit of the majority rather than the interests of a handful of super-wealthy capitalists, and with their books open for public scrutiny.

The source of this crisis is not “deregulation,” as liberal politicians and pundits argue. All moves to “regulate” the industry have been done within the framework of accepting the bosses’ profit prerogatives, and thus serve only to cover up the real problem—the continuing private ownership of a resource as indispensable to humanity as energy.

General strike shuts much of Chile

Continued from front page

Eduardo Alarcón, a student, told the London *Guardian*.

“We had lots of hope for this socialist government,” Maria Guzmán added, “but they have only worked with the right and the businessmen and not with us, the poor.”

The Chilean daily *La Nación* said the government plans to prosecute all those who committed “illegal acts” in violation of the country’s “antiterrorism” law. According to the Chilean press, among the 15 injured in clashes between cops and demonstrators, the big majority are police officers. Minister of the Interior José Miguel Insulza said the government plans to take action to prevent similar incidents on September 11, the date of the 30th anniversary of the 1973 coup when Pinochet led the military to overthrow the elected government of Salvador Allende.

Allende, a Socialist Party left-winger and longtime supporter of the Cuban Revolution, had been elected president of Chile in 1970. He was the candidate of Popular Unity (UP), a coalition dominated by the SP and the Communist Party. UP also included the bourgeois Radical Party, the United People’s Action Movement (MAPU), a left split from the Christian Democrats, and two smaller parties.

Allende’s victory reflected a broad radicalization of the Chilean masses. When the capitalists began to sabotage production soon after the UP victory, workers occupied the plants and continued to produce without the bosses. Working people also began taking over distribution of goods. In many workers’ districts, organizations known as *cordones industriales* (industrial councils) began coordinating the struggle. Every time there was an opportunity, workers came out en masse against the right wing.

Under such popular pressure, the UP government implemented some far-reaching reforms during its first year in office. These included nationalization of many banks and textile mills as well as foreign holdings in copper, nitrate, iron, and coal. A land reform was begun and many peasants began seizing land. And the government opened diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba and opposed the U.S.-led war against Vietnam.

Despite Allende’s radical rhetoric and some important anti-imperialist actions, UP was a class-collaborationist coalition, a popular front. It subordinated the struggles of the workers and peasants to subservience to capitalist parties and forces. At critical points it brought top members of the officer corps into the government as a guarantee to the Chilean rulers. It tried to justify its actions on the basis of bourgeois legality.

Union organizing in Georgia

Continued from front page

saw the union lose by a whisker—only 16 votes, said Pace.

“I am not fighting for myself, and we don’t plan on waiting,” Pace said. “In fact, the union met the day after the last election to keep the pressure on and get ready for a new contest.”

Pace and other union fighters recently won a round against the company. When he reported for work at the conclusion of a three-day suspension, the bosses said that their investigation was not complete. “I knew I wasn’t guilty of anything—they were trying to get me out of the plant,” Pace said. “But with the union, I fought to get my job and after seven days I won.”

The quality assurance workers’ request for unionization was challenged by the company, which claimed that their jobs made them not workers, but “management support,” said Pace. He testified in the case of the 21 workers before the National Labor Relations Board last year. Workers here are fighting for a union in response to indiscriminate firings, increased line speed, timing of bathroom breaks, long hours, seven-day workweeks, a draconian attendance policy,

To approach this question from the standpoint of the interests of working people, we must start with the world, not the narrow framework of the USA. For example, the labor movement must reject the imperial, chauvinist arrogance of big-business politicians and media who complain that the United States and Canada have a “Third World power grid” that must be fixed. Their view is that “we” should be concerned about blackouts when they affect “civilized countries” but not when they are a reality for countries in the “Third World.” But *our* interests as workers and farmers are completely tied to those of fellow working people worldwide, and are counterposed to *their* interests—those of the imperialist exploiters in Washington and Ottawa.

Blackouts, lack of energy and drinking water, acute transportation problems—which New Yorkers and other residents of the citadel of imperialism got a taste of in mid-August—are commonplace in most of the world. Roughly 2 billion people, one-third of humanity, have no access to modern energy sources for lighting, heating, or cooking. Altogether, the imperialist countries of North America, Europe, and the Pacific, with 14 percent of the world’s population, consume 57 percent of the electricity. This glaring global inequality, perpetuated by the workings of the world capitalist system, must be addressed.

Electrification and modernization of power grids is a more pressing need for the semicolonial world than for the United States or Canada.

To address this situation, labor should join in the fight to demand the cancellation of the foreign debt of the semicolonial countries. It needs to promote affirmative action measures to redress the effects of many decades of plunder of the natural resources and labor of the majority of humanity by a small number of super-rich ruling classes that have divided the world among themselves and want to keep it that way.

U.S. imperialism and the local ruling class, however, didn’t waste much time with bourgeois legality. Washington played a direct role in a destabilization campaign aimed at toppling the UP regime. Following Allende’s election, all U.S. aid to Chile was cut with the exception of military aid and training for the Chilean armed forces and for bankrolling counterrevolutionary strikes and boycotts, such as the bosses’ “strikes” headed by truck owners that paralyzed the economy. The ensuing class battles ended three years after Allende’s election in a bloody coup. Thousands of workers, political activists, and revolutionaries from other countries who had been granted asylum by the UP regime were murdered. Allende himself was killed as he fought to defend the national palace against the coup plotters. It was a terrible setback for working people.

Midway through the Pinochet dictatorship, the Chilean rulers began a wide-ranging series of economic “reforms.” Among these were privatization of pensions and the entire social security system, and telecommunications. A series of steps were also taken to eliminate barriers to foreign investment and trade, making Chile’s economy one of the most open to imperialist penetration in the world.

By 2001 nearly all of Chile’s telecommunications market was supplied by imports, largely from the United States.

The energy industry, especially electricity, was also privatized beginning in the 1980s. The country now imports nearly 95 percent of its oil. In February 2000 workers who drive trucks, buses, and taxis threatened job actions to protest the government’s decision to pass on to them rising prices of fuel imports.

The main beneficiaries of the new pension plan, according to the April 17 *St. Petersburg Times*, “are the mutual fund managers.” By 2010 as many as 60 percent of retirees will qualify for no more than the minimum pension of \$110 per month. Some 42 percent of workers aren’t covered by any pension plan.

The Social Security System was privatized in 1981, and unemployment insurance in October 2002. Recently, while unemployment has increased the average hourly and minimum wage has declined and the number of part-time workers has grown.

The current government headed by SP leader Lagos has been touted as heading one of the most stable economies in Latin America, which is recovering from a downturn in 1999. Chile has been lauded by imperialist financial institutions as a model of capitalism’s success for Latin America over the last decade. Recent events put this claim into question.

and other abuses. “The company said that when the union lost, we would get a raise,” said a union activist who requested that her name not be used. “Now they are giving us 15 cents more an hour. If you are late, if you miss work, if you don’t scan in and out, you lose the bonus.”

The union effort is picking up support. Willie Head, a vegetable and tobacco farmer in a nearby town, is backing the workers’ struggle. “I worked at the same facility on the kill floor, when it was a Swift plant and when it was union in the late 1970s,” he told the *Militant*. “I know from personal experience that the question of the union is urgent—whether your fight is to build a union or maintain one,” Head stated. He is the vice president of the People’s Tribunal, which fights against police brutality and around other social questions. “Every day the bosses push against the union, seeking to make it weak,” he said. “Every day the workers must push back. Educating people—not talking at them—but educating makes a difference in the strength of the union which affects the quality of our lives.... After meeting some of the workers at National Beef, I know they can do it”.

Joel Britton

Continued from page 6

vides a framework for the campaign.

“In light of the resistance of groups of vanguard workers that we see in the plants and mines, and in light of the economic crisis, which is impacting workers in all the capitalist countries,” Britton said, “there are continuing opportunities to work with other workers to strengthen the unions.”

Britton stressed that the Socialist Workers candidates are the only ones raising in an effective manner the possibility of a united fight by working people. “Unity not just to get along, but a unity to fight,” he said, “to defend our unions as our most basic defense organizations, to defend workers’ rights, to oppose cop brutality and the death penalty, to oppose imperialist war by the U.S. government.” Britton read his short statement for the voters guide, which sketches some of the key demands of the campaign (see page 6).

Liatos, a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) reported that seven workers in the plant she works were dismissed after employers received “no match” letters saying their Social Security numbers did not match those in the government records. Workers were outraged by the firings. Some are discussing how the union can fight back.

“We are raising in this campaign that without justice and rights for immigrants we cannot unite all workers,” Liatos said, urging support for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, which the UFCW and other unions back.

In the discussion after the candidates’ presentations, Britton was asked what his campaign will do about the high rents in Los Angeles and how he will help garment workers fight the oppressive conditions they face.

“I’m not making promises that I will solve these things,” Britton said. “But in this campaign we can help fellow workers figure out how to fight together, to cut across divisions among workers. We point to the example of the struggle of garment workers in Florida, of meatpackers fighting for a union in Georgia, in conditions where there have been lynch-style killings of immigrant workers. We stress that even if a small number of workers begin to get together, begin to fight, they can set an example and inspire other struggles.” One such example, he said, is the campaign by supporters of Róger Calero that defeated attempts by the immigration police to deport him (see page 4). “We say that if you pick your fights intelligently, if you wage the fights well, you can win,” he stated.

Referring to the outrageous rents being extracted from working people in California, Britton pointed to the example of Cuba where rents were drastically reduced when the revolution triumphed in 1959.

Olympia Newton, a leader of the Young Socialists and initiator of the Young Socialists for Britton, chaired the forum. She spoke about her participation along with nearly 300 other youth in the Cuba–U.S. Youth Exchange in July. The youth attended the July 26 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks, which opened the revolutionary struggle that a half a decade later brought down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, opening the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

“The attack on Moncada was the opening of a revolution that organized workers and peasants to take power in their country,” Newton said. “This course of mobilizing working people has not wavered from that time to today. The Youth Exchange was about Cuba, but it was also very much about the United States. It brought to the fore that our task is to emulate the Cuban Revolution in the U.S.”

Scott emphasized the impact that visiting with members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and other mass organizations had on U.S. youth on the trip.

“In this campaign we’ll raise what we’ve begun to develop here,” Britton pointed out. “We’ll raise the Moncada Road, the revolutionary road that led to the working people in Cuba taking over their country and achieving sovereignty, to ending racist practices, to the incorporation of women into the workforce and all the other gains.”

Britton pointed out that what the young people learned in Cuba was not just a “history lesson.” What they saw was the “embodiment of a proletarian course of action, of working people remaining intransigent in the face of unremitting hostility from Washington, a people with a spirit of solidarity, a spirit where they are ready to go to any part of the world to support freedom struggles. We are working here in the U.S., through our participation in unions, work in defense of the Cuban Revolution and other mass work, and this election campaign, to develop the kind of leadership that can help transform our unions into fighting organizations and lead to working people taking power as they did in Cuba.”

SWP supporters contribute \$300,000 to party over one year

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE—"We have met, and surpassed, our goal to raise \$300,000 between August 2002 and July 2003," announced Sara Gates, the organizer of the Seattle-based national steering committee that organizes monthly contributions to the Socialist Workers Party from its supporters. The victory of the yearlong campaign was the result of a systematic effort by SWP supporters to contribute an average of \$25,000 per month to help sustain the party's efforts.

The financial steering committee received \$28,817 in July—the second-highest monthly collection yet—to bring the year's total to \$303,840. Supporters' groups in 20 cities systematically organized to collect pledges from more than 330 individuals each month. The party confidently relies on these regular contributions as part of its annual operating budget.

This campaign has been a challenge for the local supporters' groups, who back the party financially and through volunteer work as part of the Pathfinder Print Project, the effort which makes it possible to keep in print and circulate Pathfinder's books (see August 11 *Militant*).

The \$300,000 fund-raising campaign required a great deal of political attention and organization by supporters in local areas. Over the course of the last year, a range of supporters increased their individual monthly pledges. Local groups reached out broadly to individuals who are not organized supporters but identify with the SWP politically, and expanded the number of contributors, while maintaining the steady, monthly collection of all pledges.

Each local supporters group assigned a financial director. Some designated financial committees to keep in touch with contributors and collect pledges. The steering committee met regularly to assess its progress and to guide the effort.

Communication organized through these structures was a key ingredient in the effort's success. The steering committee sent out monthly letters outlining the progress and challenges of each stage of the campaign. In many places, local letters were also sent out to contributors to keep them up to date with the effort.

When it became clear in April that collection of the pledges was falling behind and a back debt began accumulating, the financial steering committee initiated a back-debt collection campaign. Supporters responded quickly and with enthusiasm. In just two

months the debt was significantly reduced. Supporters groups paid serious attention to the task at hand, including organizing regular communication with contributors and maintaining accurate records.

In July, with just eight days left before the end of the one-year campaign, \$18,832 had been received in Seattle or posted on the nationwide database as collected by local financial directors. More than \$6,000 was needed to make the goal. The steering committee sent out a letter alerting everyone "of what is necessary to bring home the \$300,000 in the last eight days of this campaign." The response was immediate and, in many cases, already underway. The steering committee, which takes responsibility for receipting and depositing the contributions, issued daily notices to mark the progress toward the goal as the checks continued to flow into Seattle. On August 2 the campaign came to a victorious conclusion, three days before the deadline.

After reaching this milestone, efforts are



Militant/Bob Bruneau

SWP supporters' financial steering committee members prepare deposit in Seattle in July. From left, Pat O'Reilly, Ken Kawakubo, and Sara Gates. Fourth committee member, Scott Breen, is not pictured. Supporters surpassed goal of \$300,000 over past year to finance the work of the party, and set a new annual target of \$315,000.

now focused on maintaining and expanding this financial base. The next goal is to win 20 new contributors and raise the monthly amount pledged by an additional \$1,250 by January 1. This translates into an annual total of \$315,000 that the SWP can count on from its supporters' monthly donations. It will be put to good use in

taking advantage of openings to advance the party's work in the labor movement, in defense of the Cuban Revolution, and other arenas of mass work.

If you'd like to make a regular financial contribution to the Socialist Workers Party, e-mail Sara Gates at sjgates@comcast.net

Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange concludes

Continued from page 7

Angeles, a leader of the Young Socialists; and Abdul Hassan and Celia González of the Youth United delegation from New York and Chicago, respectively.

Culture and the Cuban Revolution

The panel on culture included Abel Prieto, Cuba's minister of culture; Iroel Sánchez, president of the Cuban Book Institute; and Omar González, president of the Cuban film institute ICAIC.

Prieto explained that the policy of Cuba's revolutionary government is "to defend our national culture and to promote the people's right to universal culture." He added that the Cuban Revolution has been marked by the expansion of access to culture and education for the entire population, from the literacy campaign at the beginning of the revolution to today.

Defense of Cuba's national culture today includes "fighting to prevent the laws of the market from distorting culture, because the market reproduces degrading stereotypes promoted by imperialism."

Asked by a U.S. delegate about his view of "socialist realism," Prieto said that was the policy of the former Soviet government "that dictated an official style on culture, a dogma that did serious damage to cultural expression and wiped out

the legacy of avant-garde culture that had prevailed in the early years of the Soviet Union. There were advocates of socialist realism in Cuba," he added, particularly in the 1970s, but "in Cuba there is no official style of culture. Our view is that we need cultural creativity."

Prieto pointed to the popular Cuban film *Strawberry and Chocolate*, based on a short story by Senel Paz, which uses humor to criticize antigay prejudice and bureaucratic intolerance in general. That film "had a huge impact in this country," he said.

Several students in the audience, noting the racist character of U.S. society, asked how Cuba is confronting the legacy of racism today. "Fighting discrimination and marginalization is at the heart of many of the educational campaigns in Cuba, like the training of social workers," the Cuban minister said.

He noted that a growing discussion is taking place in Cuba about Black organizations in the years prior to the revolution and the history of the struggle against racist oppression.

For example, "a massacre of Blacks who had revolted in 1912 was covered up for many years before the revolution, and for many years after the triumph of the revolution it was not discussed much, but

some books have recently been published that talk about that history." The uprising was led by a Black party called the Independents of Color.

Pointing to another example, Prieto said, "In their music, Black rap musicians react to the continuing manifestations of racial prejudice in Cuba."

Another highlight of the Youth Exchange was a meeting with Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, and with relatives of the five Cuban revolutionaries serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges of conspiracy to commit espionage (an article on that event will appear in a coming issue).

At the concluding session, a statement was read that highlighted what those taking part in the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange would be doing on their return home. The statement projected organizing public meetings and other activities to tell the truth about Cuba. It called for opposing the U.S. economic war on Cuba and joining the campaign to demand that Washington free the five jailed Cuban militants.

"We need to educate other people in the United States," said Leah Smith from Atlanta during one of the final discussions. Her comment echoed the sentiment of many participants about what they were now committed to do in their respective cities.

— LETTERS —

Lenin's 'Imperialism'

I wish to extend my subscription to the *Militant* for two years. The *Militant* is an indispensable source of reliable information.

I have just read the most recent issue of the *Monthly Review*, which is devoted exclusively to a discussion of "Imperialism." In the course of more than 130 pages, the authors condescend to mention the name of Lenin exactly twice. I am inspired to revisit Lenin's pamphlet entitled *Imperialism—the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Will you please mail me a copy?

Please accept the balance of the enclosed check as a contribution to help fund the reporters in Cuba.

Stephen Barry
Flushing, New York

IG Metall strike

The article in the August 18 issue "Union tops misled East German strike" rightly points out that the recent defeat of the IG Metall strike for shorter working hours in eastern Germany is a serious blow to the labor movement. But the article's assessment that this "debacle was due to the top

officialdom's course of disregarding the terrible economic situation in the east, where unemployment is 18 percent" is confusing to me.

"Hard times" can't mean that any given strike is doomed to defeat or is unwise. The fledgling Teamsters union in 1934 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, struck very effectively during much worse "hard times." The difference, of course, is in the fighting leadership the Teamsters had.

To understand WHY did the IG Metall strike fail, it's not enough to simply state that large numbers of workers were crossing the picket lines. WHY were they giving up on the strike? Isn't a real campaign for shorter working hours with no cut in pay precisely what is needed? Couldn't a strike with this goal have found powerful support among the whole working class?

Floyd Fowler
Hapeville, Georgia

Nicaraguan anniversary

One of the honored guests at the official July 19 event celebrating the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979, in Managua, the country's capital,

was Jorge Mas Santos. Mas Santos is the head of the Cuban American National Foundation, one of the right-wing Cuban exile groups in the United States actively seeking to overthrow the Cuban revolution. Mas Santos told reporters he supported Daniel Ortega, the presidential candidate of the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] in the last election and will do so again if Ortega runs in 2006, which is highly likely.

While the leadership of the FSLN has turned its back on its revolutionary roots, some 250,000 people were at the event. Many of these people are workers, peasants, and small businesspeople, suffering from the deep social and economic crisis that Nicaragua is going through, and look to the FSLN to find a way out for them.

There continues to be considerable interest in Nicaragua in the FSLN-led revolution and its history, particularly on the Atlantic Coast, where the population is largely Indian and "Creole." The *costeños*, as they are called, have fought for years for basic national rights such as the right to school-

ing in their native languages and consider that the winning of these rights, known as the "autonomy process," began during the years of the revolution.

Matilde Zimmermann, author of a biography of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca, spoke during July in four cities celebrating the publication of the Spanish translation of the book by the University of the Atlantic Coast (URACCAN). At each of the two meetings on the Atlantic Coast, in Bilwi (formerly Puerto Cabezas) and Bluefields, members of the audiences of nearly 100 people discussed at some length the relationship of Fonseca's revolutionary program and leadership to the fight for national rights, as it began and as it continues today. Zimmermann also spoke to a crowd of 160 in Managua and 130 in Matagalpa, where Fonseca was born.

Arnold Weissberg
New York, New York

Venezuela today

Could the *Militant* please do an article on the situation in Venezuela?

Just a few things that I'm aware of: 1) Land Reform: from information I'm aware of, the government is proposing to settle some 100,000 people on the land. 2) Literacy: a new program seeks to vastly increase literacy, with significant help from Cuba. The big-business press is truly alarmed! 3) Health care: again, an "Into The Neighborhood" program seeks to address lack of quality health care and education. Cuba's generosity again shines. 4) Unions: not so sure on this, but it would certainly appear that many unionists have moved towards positions that support the government. Then there's the 2-million-strong "Bolivarian Circles."

Mark Heinecamp
Auburn, Washington

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.

Australian troops land in Solomons

BY ROB GARDNER

SYDNEY, Australia—Soldiers, police, and government officials from Australia and New Zealand began arriving in the small South Pacific country of the Solomon Islands July 24. The Australian-led forces, soon to number around 2,500, are expected to remain in the former British colony for years. About 800 personnel arrived the first day, beginning patrols in the capital, Honiara, that same evening.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) flew 13 flights of Hercules transport planes to Honiara's airport to get the imperialist troops there. The troopship and helicopter-carrier HMAS *Manoora* also arrived the same day, establishing an army base at Red Beach some 20 kilometers out of town.

A few days later the *Manoora* moved to Honiara harbor in a further show of force. Troops and cops from Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji were part of the initial deployment. Small units from Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Samoa are also slated to join the intervention, which has been dubbed "Operation Helpem Fren" (Operation Help a Friend in Pidjin, the common language in the Solomons).

"This is our patch [turf]," Australian prime minister John Howard declared July 23. "We do have a special responsibility here, and we're doing it in a very careful, deliberate, cooperative fashion."

Asserting that the Solomon Islands were sliding into "anarchy" and becoming a "haven for evildoers," he stated that "a failure to do something ... would send the wrong signal to those people who are endeavoring to maintain a stable situation in other parts of the Pacific, including PNG," that is, Papua New Guinea.

The stated goal of the intervention is to re-establish "law and order" and rebuild the government apparatus. Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer has announced A\$25 million (US\$1 = A\$1.5) in "aid" to build a new prison.

"Should criminals seek to sabotage our assistance efforts, endanger public safety, or prevent the police from doing their duty, the military will not hesitate to act," warned Nicholas Warner, the Australian diplomat heading the intervention force, upon his arrival there July 24.

The governments of Australia and New Zealand, the two imperialist powers in the region, dominate the South Pacific Forum, a grouping that includes the Solomon Islands and 13 other semicolonial countries.

Two-year civil war

Between 1998 and 2000 a civil war between rival militias from the islands of Guadalcanal and Malaita broke out in the Solomons, the product of two decades of depression conditions. Some 20,000 Malaitan living on Guadalcanal were forced to flee their settlements, while the Malaitan militias, with close connections in the civil service and police, staged a coup, seizing control of the government in Honiara. Many from the Malaitan militias were later drafted as "special constables."

The Australian and New Zealand governments intervened with gunboat diplomacy in mid-2000 to broker a peace settlement that froze this situation in place. Substantial funds were doled out, through the Solomon Islands government, as "compensation" for lost property and turned-in weapons. As trade and investment continued to spiral downwards, the Australian and New Zealand governments decided to intervene more directly to shore up their interests.

With Australia providing the bulk of the forces, the New Zealand government is sending 4 helicopters, 35 cops, and 105 military personnel, with another 125 infantry being kept in reserve for possible deployment. The New Zealand government is to appoint the deputy head of the intervention force, and has assigned a senior officer, Wing Commander Shaun Clarke, with "red card" powers to refuse the participation of New Zealand forces in particular tasks.

Following a meeting of the South Pa-

cific Forum, which endorsed the Australia-led intervention in Sydney, June 30, Vanuatu's foreign minister Serge Vohor objected to Australia's regional ambitions.

He declared, "We don't want to be re-colonized." We have been "fighting for our independence, [to be] free from colonization... and we like to be free. We don't want to have someone who [will] exploit us again." Vanuatu, a South Pacific nation, was a joint colony of France and Britain until winning independence in 1980.

In the first days of the intervention Warner and other officials moved to establish contact with several rival militias to negotiate "weapons surrender." The top Australian cop in the intervention force, Benjamin McDevitt, was sworn in as a deputy commissioner of the Solomon Islands police force July 28. A 21-day gun amnesty was declared July 31. "Illegal weapons" held by sections of the Solomon Islands police are also being targeted in the attempted disarmament of the population.

Warner and McDevitt met with Harold Keke August 8, who, according to reports, agreed to allow the establishment of an outpost of the intervention force in the region of southern Guadalcanal where his group operates, and to hand over his weapons. Two rival militia groups had earlier agreed to similar proposals. Keke's group, which refused to be part of the peace settlement brokered in 2000, has been billed as a central target of the intervention.

"The government blames me for everything but I am only defending my people's land," Keke declared as the intervention began. "We are not raskols [gangsters], we



Australian soldier on patrol in Solomon Islands, July 24, the day the Australia-led military intervention began in the South Pacific nation.

are fighting for independence. I am not the main problem for the Solomon Islands; it is corrupt politicians and a police force that is beyond the law."

Intervention in the region

Royal Australian Navy warships are to patrol the sea border between the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, off Bougainville, to block "weapons smuggling." Bougainvilleans, who have close clan relationships with many in the Solomon Islands, fought a 10-year war for independence from Papua New Guinea 1988-97. The war, which cost some 5,000 dead, closed down production at the giant Australian-owned Panguna copper mine on Bougainville. Despite the backing of the Australian government, it ended in a military defeat for the Papua New Guinea army.

A New Zealand government-brokered truce in 1997 saw the arrival of "peace monitors" from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Vanuatu, who oversaw "peace ceremonies" and worked to disarm the local population over the following years. The political settlement brokered called for greater autonomy

for Bougainville within Papua New Guinea, with a vote on independence in the future. The last of the "peace monitors" were withdrawn from Bougainville June 30, with civilian advisors due to arrive from Australia and New Zealand to "assist" in setting up the provincial government. Some 2,000 Australian troops and 300 civilians did a stint as "unarmed peace monitors" in Bougainville over the last five years. Warner played a central role in re-establishing "stability" in Bougainville as the Australian High Commissioner in Papua New Guinea during much of this period.

Despite the closure of Panguna, mining remains central to Australian imperialist interests in Papua New Guinea, its former colony, with gold, silver, and copper mines, and undeveloped deposits, alongside newly developed oil and gas fields.

The Australian government is also expanding its intervention elsewhere in the region, which it describes as an "arc of instability"—from Indonesia, through East Timor, Papua New Guinea, and into the South Pacific. It is supporting the Indonesian government's wars against the independence movements in Aceh, northern Sumatra, and West Papua. Since the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in central Jakarta August 5, the Australian government has bolstered its intervention in Indonesian affairs, sending more cops in addition to those it dispatched following the Oct. 12, 2002, bombing in Bali's tourist district.

Australian prime minister Howard declared June 19 that Australian troops would remain in East Timor "for years." The Australian newsweekly *The Bulletin* reported that the Australian government "has placed half a dozen advisers in Fiji's volatile military, is set to place a further half dozen in the crumbling criminal justice system and will provide Fiji with a new police commissioner." Australia "is now indisputably the No.1 foreign power in Fiji," the newsweekly bragged.

UK health-care workers make gains in strike

BY ROSE KNIGHT

LONDON—Cleaners, porters, and catering staff who work for the private contractor ISS Mediclean at Whipps Cross Hospital here won their demand for a pay increase and the ending of the two-tier wage scale by April 2006.

UNISON, the workers' union, had submitted a pay parity claim in July 2002, demanding that workers employed by the private contractor be paid the same as those who are employed to do the same work by the health department. When ISS did not respond, the union called a large meeting at a lecture hall in the hospital—the only place big enough for all 360 workers. There was enthusiastic support for action. After a ballot, 96 percent voted to strike. ISS is a giant company that employs more than 265,000 people in 38 countries.

Workers went on strike for two consecutive days in May and three days in June. Another two-day walkout had been planned for July. At these actions, UNISON members set up large, lively picket lines outside the hospital's entrance. Buses and cars driving past honked in solidarity. Nurses and other National Health Service (NHS) workers and their families backed the unionists.

Diane Swingler, chair of UNISON's Homerton branch, told the UNISON newsletter that the fight at Whipps Cross is "part of the fight against low pay across the country."

The strike got local support from the East London Mosque and The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO),

which has 40 affiliates and has been supporting the campaign for a wage increase for low-paid hospital workers in the east London area.

ISS contract workers got paid less than workers directly employed by the National Health Service. Bob, Jeff, and Mike, three porters at Whipps Cross quoted in the UNISON newsletter, explained that the difference could be as much as £60 (\$90) a week. ISS porters working under NHS terms and conditions also joined the strike even though they stood to gain no pay increase.

A year ago, only 60 of the contract workers were members of the union. Today that membership figure is at 280. UNISON officials said that the new pay deal was a solid victory, and that money was still coming into the union's hardship fund and would be divided up amongst the workers.

Cleaners, porters and catering staff who were paid £4.60, £4.73, and £4.95 an hour prior to the struggle now are paid a minimum rate of £5.17 an hour, with an additional £0.17 per hour paid as a lump sum. Under the new contract, the minimum rate increases to £5.34 per hour in April 2004. Improved shift payments from £5.36 to £5.54 for porters who work split shifts were also won. Annual leave after three years work will increase to 22 days plus 8 public holidays, and workers are now entitled to three days paid leave for family emergencies. The contract workers are also now entitled to sick pay. The deal did not include a pension increase, which the workers were also seeking.

Workers were largely pleased with the results of the strike. Some, however, had mixed feelings. "Justice has been done," said Don Laidly, a porter, explaining he was very happy with the new pay rates and conditions.

"They gave us a little bit, but people wanted to stop because we didn't get paid," said Perry, a cleaner. "Some people went back to work while some of us were still on the picket line."

Many workers wanted more. John Holmes, a porter on split shifts, said that the porters solidly backed the strike, but "personally I think that we should be on £8 an hour. ISS say they don't have the money but they make so much profit." He felt concerned about the pensions question being excluded from the offer, he said. "The government is getting rid of pensions, so what am I going to have when I'm older? I'll only have my savings, I can't afford to pay into a private pension scheme. Private pensions aren't working."

Catering workers Caroline Pugh and Lynne Lawrence said, "You have to be high up to get into a pension scheme. Managers have something." Both workers have been in the union since starting the job.

Workers at hospitals in Scunthorpe, Goole, Grimsby, Bolton, Homerton, and Tower Hamlets in east London have also taken action. ISS Mediclean workers at Royal Bolton Hospital won £5 "across the board" after 12 days of industrial action.

Aurora Shannon contributed to this article.