

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## White House official faces 30 years in jail for perjury

Case shows growing factionalism among rulers

BY PAUL PEDERSON AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Following a two-year investigation, a federal grand jury indicted Lewis “Scooter” Libby, chief of staff to U.S. vice president Richard Cheney, charging him October 28 on five counts including “obstruction of justice,” making false statements to agents of the FBI, and perjury while testifying before a grand jury. The charges combined carry a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1.25 million fine.

**The pornographication of bourgeois politics**  
—editorial, p. 11

The indictment and the tone of the debate it has generated among Democratic and Republican politicians and in the big-business media are another expression of the increasingly factional character and coarsening of bourgeois politics in the United States.

The stated purpose of the investigation was to determine if White House officials had violated the Intelligence Identities Protection Act when they revealed to several reporters that Valerie Plame, the wife of a diplomat who was critical of the Bush administration's Iraq policy, was a CIA agent. That 1982 law made it a crime, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, for anyone with access to classified information to intentionally reveal the identity of a

covert U.S. government spy.

In February 2002 Plame's husband, Joseph Wilson, a former U.S. ambassador in Central Africa, was sent by the CIA to the West African nation of Niger. On July 6, 2003, Wilson wrote an opinion piece in the *New York Times* stating that during his trip he found no evidence of the Saddam Hussein regime's pursuit of material for building nuclear weapons as alleged by the Bush administration. Wilson himself admitted that his conclusion was based on “eight days drinking sweet mint tea” with dignitaries.

Eight days later, syndicated columnist Robert Novak wrote an article on Wilson's trip. He identified Plame—apparently based on conversations between reporters and White House officials—as a CIA agent, specializing in “weapons of mass destruction,” who had proposed her husband for the trip.

Democratic critics of the Bush administration immediately alleged that the name of a covert CIA agent had been revealed, and demanded action. Instead of the case being handled by federal prosecutors, the Justice Department appointed a “special counsel,” Patrick Fitzgerald.

**Polarization sharpens in ruling class**

Democrats have used the “Plame affair” in their increasingly factional disputes with the Republican administration. They have seized on the fact that no “weapons of mass destruction” were found in Iraq to assert that they would have conducted the U.S.-led invasion

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## Poultry workers walk out in Livingston, California

Demand union recognition, better conditions

BY LEA SHERMAN

LIVINGSTON, California—Some 1,500 poultry workers and their friends, family, and supporters rallied outside the Foster Farms poultry processing plant here October 29. The action capped a five-day walkout, with mass 24-hour picketing of the plant, to demand union recognition, improved conditions, and a decent contract.

Workers returned to the job October 31, determined to renew the walkout if progress is not made in negotiations with the company.

The plant of 2,000 workers, one of the largest poultry plants in the country, processes a half a million chickens a day.

The unity forged between the many workers from Mexico and Punjab, India, was evident at the rally. Ralph Meraz, president of the union of protesting

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Militant/Frank Forrestal

October 29 rally by 1,500 poultry workers and supporters outside the Foster Farms plant in Livingston, California. The action capped a five-day walkout by the League of Independent Workers of the San Joaquin Valley—the union organizing the 2,000 workers in one of the largest chicken processing plants in the country.

## UN Security Council resolution aids imperialist campaign against Syria

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a resolution October 31 demanding Syria cooperate with a UN

probe into the assassination of former Lebanese premier Rafik Hariri or face possible “further action.”

Sponsored by Washington, Paris, and London, the resolution also orders Damascus to arrest and make available to UN investigators those suspected of involvement in the killing. These individuals include Gen. Assef Shawkat, the head of Syrian military intelligence and a brother-in-law of Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad.

The resolution comes in the wake of increasing clashes between U.S. and Syrian troops along Syria's border with Iraq. Washington accuses Damascus

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## L.A. socialist candidate: ‘Vote SWP Nov. 8!’

The interview below with Diana Newberry, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council District 14 in Los Angeles, appeared under the title “For the Socialist Cause” in the October 28 Hoy, a Spanish-language daily published in that city. Reprinted by permission. Translation is by the Militant.

BY ANDREA ALEGRÍA

LOS ANGELES, October 28—“I'm convinced the working class is completely capable of transforming the world,” says Diana Newberry, sitting in front of an extensive library with books on Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Nelson Mandela, Lenin, and Marx at the headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party.

The site, at Central Avenue and 42nd Street, is her campaign headquarters in her fight for the District 14 City Council seat.

“The capitalist system is the root of all the problems that we're facing,” asserted this 32-year-old activist, whose

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## Independent truckers strike in Houston, demand relief from rising fuel costs



Militant/Amanda Ulman

BY ANTHONY DUTROW

HOUSTON—Some 100 independent truckers who work for Bridge Terminal Services and Transport (BTT) here walked out October 24 to demand higher rates for their runs and compensation for rising fuel costs.

“The company called the cops and tried to move us from here, saying we weren't a real strike as we didn't have picket signs,” one of the drivers, David Santos (kneeling third from left), told the *Militant*. “So we made these signs. We submitted our proposal to raise the rate to \$1.20 a mile today. The boss came out and offered us an insulting 10-cent increase.” Santos said that last

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# Argentina: 30,000 at women's conference press fight to legalize abortion

BY ROMINA GREEN

SAN FRANCISCO—More than 30,000 women gathered in the coastal city of Mar del Plata, Argentina, October 8–10 for the 20th National Women's Conference, reported the Argentine daily *Clarín*. At the center of the conference was the fight to legalize abortion in Argentina. Last year's conference in Mendoza drew 20,000, and the year before about 10,000.

Legal access to abortion remains severely restricted throughout most of Latin America and the Caribbean. Only in Cuba, Guyana, and Puerto Rico is abortion decriminalized. In Argentina, abortion is legal only in the case of rape—and then only if the woman is deemed to be mentally disabled—or if a woman's life is in danger.

Nonetheless, an estimated 4 million women have abortions in Latin America annually—most performed under clandestine and often dangerous conditions. Some 800,000 of these result in complications that require medical treatment.

In Argentina about four out of 10 pregnancies are terminated by abortion. Ten years ago, Argentina was the only country in the region that still provided no public support for access to contraception. This has only just begun to change.

About 500 women die from botched abortions every year in Argentina, the largest single cause of maternal deaths in the country.

Among the 46 workshops held during the conference were ones on “Women and Work,” “Women and the Family,” “Women and Farmwork,” “Women and the Unions,” “Women and Art,” and “Strategy in the fight for free, safe and legal abortion.”

Rightists reportedly tried to disrupt the latter meeting. Women faced similar confrontations in the last conference in Mendoza.

Among those in attendance was a delegation of members of the State Employees Union, which organizes nurses and other staff at the Garrahan Hospital in Buenos Aires. They have been holding one- and two-day strikes since August demanding a wage increase.

On October 10, the last day of the conference, thousands of women marched through the streets of Mar del Plata with the lead banner reading, “Not one more



Thousands marched for decriminalizing abortion October 10 at conclusion of 20th National Women's Conference in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

death due to illegal abortion.”

Conference delegates resolved to continue the national campaign under the slogan, “Sexual education so we can make a choice. Birth control so we don't have to abort. Abortion legalized so we won't die.” The campaign began May 28 with participants gathering signatures across the country in favor of decriminalizing abortion. Over 70

organizations, including women's groups and some unions have joined in the effort, reported *Página/12*.

The conference resolved to set November 25 as a day of mobilization to demand a woman's right to choose abortion. A march to the Argentine National Congress in Buenos Aires will be held to present the petitions with this demand.

## New Zealand: Labour gov't names rightist foreign minister

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Prime Minister Helen Clark announced October 18 that rightist New Zealand First party leader Winston Peters will be foreign minister in her newly formed coalition government. This move, in return for New Zealand First's support in parliament, registers the government's shift to the right as Clark's Labour Party enters its third term in office.

Peters is expected to make new overtures to Washington to bolster ties between the two imperialist govern-

ments. “Unlike Mr. Goff,” noted Fran O'Sullivan in a column in the October 18 *New Zealand Herald*, “the new Foreign Minister has not stamped on Uncle Sam's toes.” Philip Goff was the previous foreign minister. At the same time, reported a BBC news release, “New Zealand was sending a negative message to its Asian neighbours.”

Peters has made a name for his anti-immigrant campaigns, virulent nationalism, and demagogic style. A member of parliament for some 25 years, he formed New Zealand First after breaking with the conservative National Party in 1993. In the late 1990s, he was treasurer and deputy prime minister in a National-New Zealand First coalition government.

The September 17 vote did not deliver an outright majority for the Labour Party in the 121-member parliament. Rather than be reliant on the Green Party or the Maori Party to gain a majority, Clark pursued agreements on votes on confidence and funding from the right-wing United Future Party

and New Zealand First. United Future leader Peter Dunne was appointed minister of revenue. Like Peters, he is not in the cabinet.

The Maori Party, formed following a 20,000-strong protest at parliament last year, won four of seven seats in the electorates reserved for Maori voters.

Clark has defended her decision to appoint Peters. “His views on foreign policy are very similar to those of Labour,” she said. Both agree on opposition to the invasion of Iraq, the commitment of New Zealand troops to Afghanistan, and on maintaining legislation banning visits to the country by nuclear-powered or -armed warships.

The elections took place amid an uptick in union actions for improved wages and conditions. Signaling her government's course, Clark told delegates to the Council of Trade Unions national conference October 18 that Labour's priorities would shift from “social policy initiatives” to “boosting economic growth and productivity,” noted the *Herald*.

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New York nurses picket October 21 against short-staffing at Nyack Hospital.

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# U.S. gov't, imperialist allies press to isolate Tehran

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington and its imperialist allies are using recent remarks against Israel by the president of Iran to ratchet up their efforts to isolate Tehran.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made these comments at an October 26 Islamic Student Association conference in Tehran on "The World Without Zionism," which was reportedly attended by 4,000 students. He reiterated the position put forward by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who came to power in Iran in 1979 on the crest of a popular revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah.

Referring to the Israeli regime, Ahmadinejad said, "Our dear Imam [Khomeini] said that the occupying regime must be wiped off the map and this was a very wise statement." He added, "The issue of Palestine is not over at all. It will be over the day a Palestinian government, which belongs to the Palestinian people, comes to power; the day that all refugees return to their homes; a democratic government elected by the people comes to power. Of course those who have come from far away to plunder this land have no right to choose for this nation."

The student meeting was part of preparations for annual demonstrations in Iran against Tel Aviv. Tens of thousands participated in these actions two days later, on the last Friday of Ramadan.

Former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami criticized Ahmadinejad's remarks. "Those words have created hundreds of political and economic problems for us in the world," he said.

Leaders of imperialist governments—including Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, London, and Washington—moved swiftly to condemn the Iranian president. The 25-member European Union, meeting October 27, and the United Nations Security Council in a session the follow-

ing day, passed motions strongly opposing Ahmadinejad's comments. The U.S. House of Representatives on October 28 passed a resolution 383-0 condemning the Iranian president's speech as "outrageous" and "despicable."

At a news conference with Japanese leaders at the Pentagon, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice chimed in, terming Iran "probably the world's most important state sponsor of terrorism." His statement, Rice said, "demonstrates why we are working so hard to keep Iran from getting technologies that lead to a nuclear weapon under cover of civilian nuclear power."

In the United States, attacks on Iran came not only from the White House but from Democratic Party politicians and the liberal press. The leading Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, Rep. Thomas Lantos from California, termed Ahmadinejad's remarks "the most repugnant the world has heard since Adolf Hitler."

The *New York Times*, in an October 29 editorial entitled "A Demagogue in Iran," termed the Iranian president's

## UN Security Council passes anti-Syria resolution

Continued from front page

of doing too little to prevent armed groups linked with the former Baath Party regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq from using Syrian territory to enter Iraq and attack U.S. and Iraqi government forces.

Moscow, Beijing, and Algiers had objected to any direct threat of sanctions against Syria and threatened to abstain if they were included in the draft. The document was approved by a 15-0 vote after Washington and Paris agreed to drop specific references to economic sanctions. The resolution instead threatens unspeci-

Union actions against company attempts to end the linking of pension levels to a worker's salary at the time of retirement have made some progress recently. A one-day strike on September 23 at Grampian Country Foods Haverhill plant, for example, around this issue led to renewed talks between the unions and company. Whilst still ending the final salary scheme, the company, one of the largest meat producers in the United Kingdom, has conceded increasing its contributions to a new pension scheme. "It's not all we wanted but still a significant move and a product of the action taken," said Scott Walker, Transport and General Workers' Union shop steward at Grampian's plant at Cambuslang, Glasgow. A further part of Grampian's agreement with the unions was to concede it will negotiate an early retirement programme.

Meanwhile, government minister David Blunkett on October 10 described the current disability benefits system as "crackers." Some 2.7 million people currently claim benefits under this program. The government is seeking to reduce this by 1 million. Alleging that many disability claims are fraudulent, Blunkett said, "If people re-associate with the world of work, suddenly they come alive again. That will overcome depression and stress."

## Thousands in Paris protest electrocutions of two African youth being chased by cops



AP/Christophe Ena

Thousands joined October 29 action in Paris to protest the deaths two days earlier of two African youth who were electrocuted while being chased by cops. Some demonstrators wore T-shirts reading "Dead for no reason" in French. Protests by African immigrants in six working-class suburbs have mounted for days. "Young people don't just throw themselves into an electrical current," Adel Benna, whose brother Ziad had been killed, told reporters, "I hate the police. They are responsible for my brother's death." The cops inflamed anger when they threw tear gas canisters into a local mosque during the clashes they had provoked.

remarks "vicious blather against Israel" that is "dangerous, stupid and despicable." The *Times* editors said: "Perhaps no one can now pretend that Iran has no hostile motives for its nuclear program," failing to explain how Ahmadinejad's statement is evidence that Tehran

is secretly developing nuclear arms. "Britain, France, and Germany were right to recall their ambassadors from Tehran. Tough diplomacy must continue to curb Iran's nuclear aspirations, but there must be no illusions about the ideologue presiding in Iran."

## UK gov't retreats from raising retirement age

BY PETER CLIFFORD

EDINBURGH, United Kingdom—Trade unions and the government here agreed to a deal October 18 that for now drops government moves to extend the retirement age from 60 to 65 for 3 million health, education, and civil service workers.

The agreement was widely reported as a retreat by the administration. "The government has capitulated to the threat of public sector strikes," said Digby Jones, director general of the Confederation of British Industry, the main employers' organization, in reference to threats by the Trades Union Congress at its September conference to organize widespread union action this winter.

The government had been seeking to introduce a higher retirement age beginning in 2013. Instead, they plan for new workers to pay extra in order to retire at 60. The General, Municipal and Boilermakers (GMB) union has said it will campaign against this two-tier move.

Employers expressed dissatisfaction. "On the one hand we have the private sector workforce being told it must work longer and put more money into their own pension pot, but here we have the public sector workforce who can still retire at 60," said David Frost, director of the British Chamber of Commerce.

fied further action if Damascus fails to comply.

Those sought by UN investigators as suspects in Hariri's killing include the president's brother, Maher al-Assad.

Hariri was killed along with 21 other people in a huge car bomb explosion on February 14. The murder sparked massive demonstrations in Lebanon against Syrian presence in the country, forcing Damascus to withdraw its troops, which were stationed in Lebanon for nearly three decades.

Just two days before approval of the Security Council resolution a Syrian general accused the U.S. military of conducting lethal military raids into Syrian territory. Maj. Gen. Amid Suleiman said cross-border attacks by U.S. troops in Iraq had killed at least two Syrian border guards and wounded several others.

The most serious clash occurred last summer when U.S. Army Rang-

ers fought with Syrian troops along the border. In May, a U.S. helicopter, involved in operations against Baathists in Iraq, fired across the border, killing a border guard on the Syrian side of Baghouz. This village is split by a fence separating the two countries. The guard was one of at least four Syrians—two soldiers and two civilians—killed by U.S. troops this year. Syrian security services said six others have been wounded, according to the Canadian daily *Globe and Mail*.

Suleiman toured reporters in the border area to refute Washington's claim that Damascus was not doing enough to secure the border. Suleiman said the Syrian military had increased the number of border posts from 547 to 557 since June and had arrested 1,400 individuals attempting to enter Iraq. Syrian officials also pointed to new barbed wire and reinforced sand barriers along the 400-mile border.

## Approval of new constitution in Iraq aids consolidation of U.S.-backed regime

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—A new Iraqi constitution was approved with 78 percent of the vote in an October 15 referendum, organized under the auspices of the U.S. imperialist forces. Its adoption is another step toward consolidating a U.S.-backed regime in Iraq.

Election officials in Baghdad said 63 percent, or 9.8 million of Iraq's 15.5 million registered voters, cast ballots. The highest turnout, 90 percent, was in the northern Kurdish province of Irbil. The lowest was in Anbar province, a center of U.S. military operations against forces loyal to the former Baath Party regime of Saddam Hussein, whose trial opened recently.

In praising the result, U.S. ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad, noted that Sunnis participated in substantially larger numbers in the constitutional vote as compared to the National Assembly election in January. Most Sunni politicians boycotted that vote. Many among

them now consider that boycott a disastrous error. The largely Sunni-populated province of Salahuddin, which includes Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, had reportedly the second highest turnout for the referendum—88 percent.

Instead of a boycott, wealthy Sunni politicians, many of whom made up the backbone of support for the Hussein regime and have financed armed attacks against U.S. and Iraqi troops, campaigned to defeat the referendum. The constitution would have failed if people in three provinces voted against it by a two-thirds majority. That happened in only two provinces—Salahuddin with 82 percent voting no and Anbar with 97 percent voting against.

The day after government officials announced the constitution had been approved, three parties with support among Sunnis announced they will field electoral blocs in elections for a full-term National Assembly scheduled for December 15.

# Cuba's eye surgery program popular in the Caribbean

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

The Cuban government has expanded its medical program *Misión Milagro* (Mission Miracle) to residents of Latin America and the Caribbean, providing operations in Cuba free of charge for people with cataracts and other treatable eye conditions.

The program grew out of Cuba's internationalist collaboration in Venezuela, where nearly 20,000 Cuban doctors are providing health care in rural and working-class communities. So far, tens of thousands of Venezuelans have received eye operations in Cuba.

Since the program was expanded in July, more than 5,000 people from 10 Caribbean countries have had operations in Cuba to restore their sight, the Cuban embassy in Guyana has reported. The joint Cuban-Venezuelan plan, covering people from all Latin America and the Caribbean, offers to treat 600,000 people a year over the next 10 years.

Cuban doctors are performing some 1,500 eye operations a day. Free transportation to Cuba is provided along with food and lodging for the patients. The simple operation takes about 10 minutes.

More than 2,000 Guyanese so far have received eye treatment in Cuba. "If people had to go to a private doctor for the same treatment, it could cost up to US\$2,000 each," the Guyanese health minister told the *Jamaican Observer*.

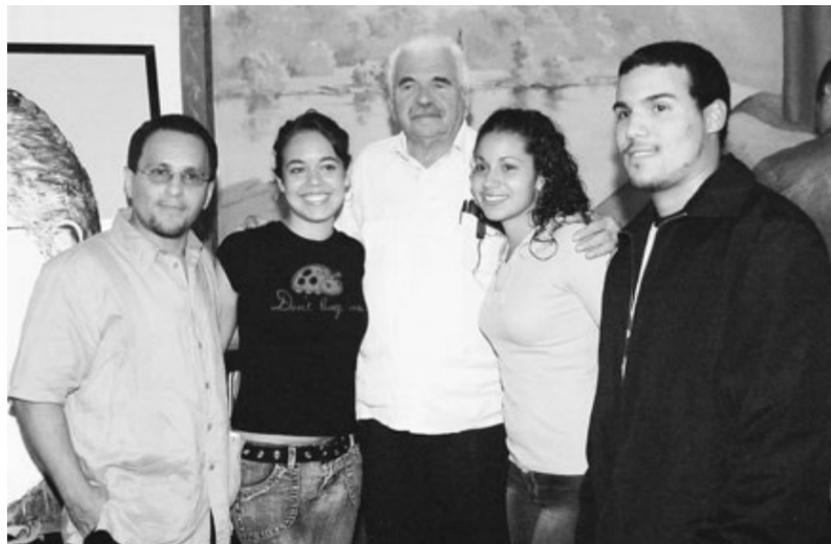
More than 3,000 patients from Belize have received eye surgery. "Because of financial constraints or the inaccessibility to the services, many individuals suffer from conditions that are very easy to treat," said Eugenio Martínez, Cuba's ambassador to Belize, in an interview in the September 15 issue of the Belizean newspaper *San Pedro Sun*.

David Scott, a 75-year-old Jamaican farmer, had been blind from cataracts for two years before his sight was restored in Cuba in September. Surgery at a local hospital had repeatedly been postponed. "When you can't see it makes you miserable and it is like you're sick and a part off your life is gone," Scott told the *Jamaica Observer*. "When they take off the bandage off me eye me see the wall and the doctors. Oh man, you can't imagine how it feel."

Diann Edwards, a farm worker in Jamaica who was forced to quit a job because of a cataract, said she could not have afforded the surgery. One of the first 50 Jamaicans to receive the operation in Cuba, she said, "We were feted and given world class medical care."

This initiative by the Cuban government takes place as many medical technicians are leaving semicolonial countries for the imperialist centers. A regional health official noted that the Caribbean loses some 300 nurses annually to the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada. Jamaica has lost 41

## Philadelphia event condemns FBI killing of Puerto Rican fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

From left: Luis Rosa, Justine Zepernick, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Jessica Cardona and Jorge Arcay. Zepernick, Cardona, and Arcay are Kutztown University students.

PHILADELPHIA—Rafael Cancel Miranda, a Puerto Rican independence fighter who spent 27 years in U.S. prisons, was the featured speaker at an October 29 meeting here attended by about 80 people. The gathering was dedicated to the memory of Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, a leader of the Macheteros group who was killed by FBI agents September 23 in Puerto Rico. Luis Rosa, a former political prisoner, and Pam Afrika, representing the MOVE organization, also spoke.

—ELLEN BERMAN

A similar meeting featuring Cancel Miranda will be held November 18 in New York: 7 pm at Local 1199 Martin Luther King Labor Center at 310 W. 43 St.

## 3 weeks, 1,055 'Militant' subs to go!

BY PAUL PEDERSON

With three weeks to go, we are 55 subscriptions shy of the 2,000 mark—where we should be—to reach the goal of 3,000 new *Militant* subscribers by November 20.

Special sales efforts that began last weekend as part of an extended target week that goes through the November 8 election day in the U.S. should help put the drive ahead of schedule again by next week.

Here are some examples:

In Livingston, California, the *Militant* was warmly received at the picket lines and rally at the Foster Farms poultry plant. Among those bringing the paper there were Socialist Workers Party candidates for local offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco. At the October 29 rally of 1,500 in front of the plant and subsequent sales in surrounding communities 90 workers bought copies of the paper and 14 subscribed.

Two SWP candidates from Atlanta—Eleanor García and Lisa Potash—campaigning at the October 28–29 South Atlantic Global Women's conference (see article on page 8), where 14 people subscribed to the *Militant*.

"I'm sending in the subs we sold the last few days," wrote Joe Swanson from Des Moines October 30. "All but a few are workers. The majority are meat packers. The subs sold in Norfolk, Nebraska, after the fourth trip bring the total sold there to 34. We also sold 10 Pathfinder titles as we campaigned door-to-door with the *Militant* this weekend." In Norfolk, *Militant* readers have reached out to meat packers who walked out in September to protest 10 firings and the denial by the bosses of prayer breaks for workers who are Muslim, most of them Somalis.

Campaigning at factory gates where socialists sell the paper regularly is netting subs in other countries too. *Militant* readers in Canada sold a subscription November 1 outside the Maple Leaf slaughterhouse in Toronto, bringing their total to 83 and boosting their confidence to meet their new quota of 150—double their initial goal.

Every reader can help. Please contact the *Militant* directly to order a bundle at 70 cents per copy to sell subs to friends, relatives, co-workers, or fellow students. Or you can join others in subbing teams (see directory on page 10).

percent of its doctors and Haiti 35 percent, according to a study by the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Some 25,000 Cuban doctors are currently providing medical services

in 66 countries, Reuters reports. The Cuban government is also training medical students from around the semicolonial world to help meet the health-care needs in their countries.

## \$15,000 a week needed for party-building fund

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey—With three weeks to go in the Socialist Workers party-building fund, half of the \$90,000 national quota needs to be collected—an average of \$15,000 per week—by the November 20 deadline.

The fund is an annual effort to help finance the work of the Socialist Workers Party, which needs the money to respond to opportunities posed by the new political situation today.

Four SWP leaders just returned from participating in the first book fair in the African country of Equatorial Guinea. The *Militant* has been carrying coverage of the event. Donations to the fund helped make this trip possible.

Here is what supporters of the fund reported from a couple of cities about last week's fund-raising activities.

"We held a successful rally October 29," wrote Steve Warshell from Houston. "The featured speaker was Diana Newberry, SWP candidate for City Council District 14 in Los Angeles. She spoke about the role of the revolutionary party in the struggle for socialism. Eighteen people attended and gave \$540 toward our quota of \$3,500. In preparing for the event, a large mailing was sent out with a return pledge envelope. Already one person who could not attend the forum returned it with a donation."

"Youth from the State University of New York at Albany, from University of Massachusetts in Amherst, and from Bridgewater State College joined a fund-raising event here October 29," wrote Laura Garza from Boston. "They and others had also been at a march and rally in opposition to the war in Iraq held at the Boston Common earlier in the day. The program

featured Doug Nelson speaking on 'Cuba, Venezuela, and Washington: the Sharpening Conflict in the Americas.' Ross Hogan, a Young Socialist who is a student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, also spoke about his experiences on a recent team selling *Militant* subs in the Midwest. We took in \$379 at the meeting, with some new pledges included. We are now organizing calls and visits to wrap up collections and send in the remainder of our quota on time."

To donate, write checks or money orders to the SWP and send them to 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

### Fall 2005 'Militant' Sub Drive September 17–November 20 Week 6 of 9

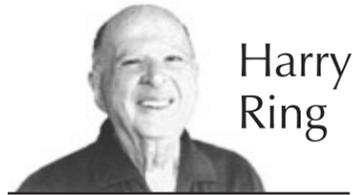
Country	Quota	Sold	%
SWEDEN	30	23	77%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh*	30	24	80%
London**	80	61	76%
UK total	110	85	77%
UNITED STATES			
Salt Lake City*	45	34	76%
Des Moines*	150	113	75%
Price, UT*	80	58	73%
Birmingham*	75	54	72%
San Francisco*	95	67	71%
Boston*	120	84	70%
New York**	450	306	68%
Pittsburgh*	100	67	67%
Seattle*	100	67	67%
Newark**	270	179	66%
Atlanta**	115	75	65%
Philadelphia*	125	80	64%
Twin Cities*	160	101	63%
Chicago*	115	72	63%
Houston*	125	78	62%
Washington*	100	62	62%
Miami*	120	74	62%
Los Angeles*	185	113	61%
Detroit*	20	9	45%
U.S. total	2,550	1,693	66%
AUSTRALIA*	40	26	65%
CANADA*	150	83	55%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	30	18	60%
Christchurch	20	9	45%
N.Z. total	50	27	54%
ICELAND	22	8	36%
Int'l totals	2,952	1,945	65%
Goal/Should be	3,000	2,000	67%

### \$90,000 SWP Party-Building Fund Sept 11–Nov 20: Week 7 of 10

	Pledge	Collected	%
Salt Lake City*	850	725	85%
Atlanta*	6,500	4,675	72%
Newark	4,000	2,896	72%
New York*	14,000	8,681	62%
Philadelphia	3,000	1,835	61%
Los Angeles*	9,500	5,100	54%
Price, UT	1,700	926	54%
Boston*	3,300	1,685	51%
Birmingham*	2,000	1,113	48%
Twin Cities	4,500	2,121	47%
San Francisco	9,500	4,375	46%
Des Moines	1,500	680	45%
Chicago	5,000	1,960	39%
Houston	3,500	1,375	39%
Seattle	8,300	3,115	38%
Miami	1,700	545	32%
Washington	3,000	945	32%
Pittsburgh	3,500	870	25%
Other	2,011	1,517	75%
TOTAL	87,361	45,139	50%
Goal/should be	90,000	63,000	70%

\* raised quota

**From traffic to classroom**—Racial profiling is reaching into classrooms and schoolyards. In Miami, Dade



Harry Ring

County, “Black elementary students were five times most likely to be suspended than their white school mates,”

the *Miami Herald* reported. NAACP officials say the numbers show a school system “stained by racism.”

**A Third World area?**—“FAIRBANKS, Alaska—Soaring energy costs in rural villages will be the focus of the Alaska Federation of Natives annual convention this week. More than 13 of Alaska’s 113 villages have already shut down their municipal governments and 39 have cut services such as police and

road maintenance to pay fuel bills. The six-day meeting is expected to attract almost 3,000 people.”—*USA Today*, October 18.

**Natural as capitalism**—“Heating bills may rise up to 60%—Hurricanes hit natural gas production hard”—News headline.

**Sample: How Labour gov’t invites low hits**—“Private patients treated without a wait” and “Life-saving cancer

drugs kept from NHS [National Health Service] by red tape”—Two recent headlines from the *Times*, London.

**See, some do learn**—Washington D.C.—“American University’s board of trustees meets to consider whether president Benjamin Ladner should remain at the school.

“Ladner is on administrative leave while auditors examine more than \$500,000 he and his wife have spent over the past three years.”—News item.

**Union time for sure**—“Utah has one of the largest wage gaps between women and men in the nation, according to a new federal report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Utah ranks next to last among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Wyoming is in last place.

“The report showed that on average Utah women working full time were paid 69% of what male workers made. Based on median wages, that’s about \$219 less per week.”—News item.

## How workers won socialized medicine in the UK

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

In 1946 the year-old Labour Party government in the United Kingdom introduced legislation creating the National Health Service (NHS). This program—establishing free, lifetime health care for all—was a product of a mass labor upsurge that swept Labour into office in July 1945. It remains in place to this day, though greatly weakened as a result of cutbacks by Conservative and Labour governments the last 60 years.

During World War II, Labour had joined a Conservative Party-led coalition government to defend the British Empire’s interests in the inter-imperialist slaughter. The Labour leadership signed on to Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s call to sacrifice “blood, toil, sweat, and tears.”

Under the impact of mounting struggles by workers at the end of the war, however, Labour decided to shift direction and campaign against the Conservatives. Its platform included calls for nationalization of coal and other industries, public works to build affordable housing, and socialized medicine.

The *Fourth International*, predecessor of the Marxist magazine *New International*, published a number of reports at the time on the outbreak of labor battles against the declining living conditions in spite of a wartime no-strike pledge by the union officialdom. “100,000 Yorkshire miners were on strike; 50,000 shipyard, aircraft, munitions workers were out in England, Scotland, and North Ireland,” it reported in its April 1944 issue.

“The British workers are weary of the imperialist war,” said the lead article in the Aug. 4, 1945, *Militant*, which featured Labour’s electoral victory on its front page. “They are suffering severely under rationing and black markets. Mass unemployment is again on the way. There is a chaotic housing situation, with millions of workers living in slum hovels and bomb-blasted tenements. All Churchill could promise the workers was a continuance of this state of affairs. Meanwhile the British capitalists are on the offensive against the unions.”

The elections in July 1945 brought a crushing defeat for the Tories as working people and many in the middle class saw Labour as the best vehicle for making advances in jobs, working conditions, and a broad range of social demands. The Labour Party won an absolute majority—taking 393 seats in Parliament against 189 for the Conservatives and 12 for the Liberals. Working-class districts were solid for Labour, which also won 90 percent of the vote among soldiers.

The defeat of the Tories was significant because it came “on the very morning of the Allied imperialists’ victory over their German adversaries,” said the Aug. 4, 1945, *Militant*. “Churchill personified that victory. Yet the vapors of patriotic imperialist propaganda... could not deflect the British workers from their purpose.”

The establishment of the National Health Service was one of the centerpieces of Labour’s social reform program. When it came into effect in 1948 it sparked a huge surge in demand from workers who had been unable to afford medical care, but could now benefit from free care for all, “irrespective of means, age, sex or occupation.”

Since its introduction the NHS has suffered the fate of most reforms under capitalism, though it took decades to reverse a number of the gains registered



City workers on strike in London, April 29, 1947. Labor upsurge at end of World War II led to establishment of nationalized health care in United Kingdom.

in the 1940s. Governments of both of the two main parties of British imperialism—Labour and Tories—have introduced “market reforms.”

Hospitals now employ private contractors and seek additional funding through private companies, resulting in sharpening competition for scarce resources and a more class-divided health-care system. Workers in Scotland, for example, may face waits of up to five years for operations. Prescriptions are no longer free. Dental care, which is available at subsidized rates but has never been free, may be difficult to obtain in some areas because

of the lack of dentists who do “NHS work.”

In September the British Medical Association reported there would be job cuts and hospital ward closures.

The struggle for the right to free medical coverage also created a consciousness among health workers that often made it possible for non-UK residents visiting the country to also receive care. As Labour and Tories alike have encouraged hospitals to “compete for patients,” however, these and other gains have been eroded. Yet neither party has dared to outright dismantle this social conquest of the working class.

### 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 14, 1980

More than half a million people marched past the U.S. embassy in Tehran November 4.

The massive demonstration was called by the students at the embassy to commemorate the first anniversary of the embassy occupation, and the anniversaries of the exile of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to Turkey in 1963 and the slaughter of students at Tehran University by the shah in 1978.

Revolutionary socialists in Tehran report that the action consisted primarily of high school students. Many of them, women and men, were armed with M-1 rifles and wore military uniforms. Workers also marched in several contingents.

Slogans were leveled against the U.S. government for its continuing attacks against the Iranian revolution. The action was a show of readiness and determination by the Iranian people to defend their revolution from the Iraqi aggression.



November 14, 1955

Nov. 9—Today an all-white grand jury in Mississippi gave a clean bill of health to J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, lynchers of the 14-year-old Negro boy, Emmett Louis Till, as a mounting wave of terror and murder sweeps through the South.

Despite the fact that Milam and Bryant confessed to the kidnapping charge, despite the testimony of Moses Wright, Till’s uncle, who identified the pair as the men who abducted the youth, the Leflore county grand jury brazenly refused an indictment. And the Mississippi authorities consider the Till case closed. But the case is not closed for the Negro people of the South who are being subjected to an intensified campaign of terror since the whitewash of Till’s murderers.

Despite this fresh evidence of wanton racist terror, and despite persistent demands for federal intervention, Congress and the Administration

haven’t lifted a finger to defend the civil rights of the Negro people.

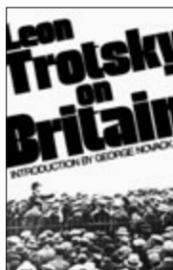


November 1, 1930

Brazil is the fourth South American country to overthrow the government in the course of the last three months.

In Bolivia and Peru, with the sympathy of the great masses, the liberal bourgeoisie staged triumphant movements, and supported by British imperialism managed to defeat the feudal elements which for years while in power had worked hand in hand with Wall Street financial interests.

In Argentina the pro-British government of Hipolito Irigoyen was turned out by a military coup of the big bourgeoisie supported by American imperialism. A virtual reign of terror was then instituted against the proletarian organizations. The Communist and anarchist press has been suppressed and several anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist leaders have been executed.



For further reading

Leon Trotsky on Britain

Trotsky’s writings during 1920s when labor militancy led to the 1926 nationwide general strike. \$26.95

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## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Lakeside meat packers in Canada to vote on tentative agreement

TORONTO, November 2—Negotiators for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 401 have reached a tentative first contract agreement with Tyson-owned Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta. Workers will likely begin voting on the proposal as of November 4. "It's not everything we needed, but it's a union shop," bargaining committee member Reuben Mayo told the *Militant* by phone. Picket lines have remained strong since the hard-fought strike began on October 12. "About 40 to 50 scabs have come over to the union," striker Zacharia Ibrahim told the Militant Labor Forum by phone hookup October 30. "This morning seven more joined."

With nearly 1,000 picketing and an equal number entering the plant, including several hundred office workers and management personnel, the bosses had been able to maintain a minimal level of production. Last week production ground to a halt for three days when unionized federal meat inspectors refused to cross the picket line. Production resumed when Tyson bosses won a court injunction ordering the union to let the inspectors cross. However, Tyson bosses had been unable to resume the slaughter on the second shift.

CBC news reported that Local 401 president Doug O'Halloran predicted a close ratification vote. "The contract is not all things to all people," he said. After a defeated strike the union was decertified in the 1980s.

—John Steele

### Sacked Gate Gourmet workers maintain protest pickets

LONDON—Eighty locked-out Gate Gourmet catering workers continued their daily picket line protest at Heathrow Airport October 31. The 713 sacked Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) members voted September 28 to accept a deal brokered by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the company. Return to work was offered to 187 workers, with a further 210 able to seek reemployment or paid voluntary redundancy (severance). An additional 172 workers had already signed for voluntary redundancy and an unnamed 144 face compulsory redundancy.

British Airways and Gate Gourmet, which supplies flight meals for the airline, finally signed a new catering contract October 20, which goes until 2010. For almost five weeks the increasingly angry workers have waited for confirmation of a return to work or redundancy payments.

Sacked workers told the *Militant* of their determination to maintain the protest pickets. "We are staying on the hill until this is sorted out," said Paviter Sanghera, whose wife was also sacked. "We're not giving up our fight for our rights. We'll stay until we get our job or our money." Another worker, Jaswinder Singh, added, "We're proud we've stayed outside. They say we're troublemakers, but we're not slaves."

—Celia Pugh

### Striking parking lot attendants picket Pittsburgh garages

PITTSBURGH—"This garage is full, of injustice and greed," was the favorite chant of more than 100 unionists whose picket stopped cars from entering a Pittsburgh Parking Authority garage

for two hours here in the downtown section of the city on the morning of October 26. Pickets included members of the Teamsters, Service Employees International Union Local 3, United Food and Commercial Workers, United Steelworkers, and Laborers unions. City cops arrested 14 union members.

Teamsters Local 926 steward Tina Brocto told the *Militant* that there were strikers there from Alco Parking, Central Parking, Pittsburgh Parking Authority, and Grant Oliver garages. The parking lot attendants have been on strike for more than two months. Brocto said the companies are insisting on a wage freeze and demanding workers pay more for health-care premiums.

—Tony Lane

### New York sanitation contract calls for one-person crews

NEW YORK—The Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association reached agreement October 12 with New York City on a new contract that provides a 17.5 percent pay raise over 51 months and what the *Chief*, a civil service employees weekly, calls "far-reaching productivity measures." For the first time some garbage trucks will have only one worker—the driver—who will also unload the large, metal "roll-on" garbage bins. For this job workers will receive an extra \$80 a day. Wages for new hires will be reduced below regulation pay for the first two years they're on the job. Workers will now be required to pick up more garbage every day. These moves are projected to reduce the workforce by 200. The city's 6,600 sanitation workers had been working without a contract since November 2002.

—Brian Williams

### 1,500 march in Stockholm in defense of union rights

STOCKHOLM—Some 1,500 people marched here October 20 to protest the firing of Per Johansson, the president of Local 119 of the Union for Service Communications (SEKO), which organizes the subway drivers here. Union members wore blue jackets with the inscription "We Refuse To Shut Up" on their backs. Connex, the private company that runs the subway,

## GM to slash health benefits after deal with UAW tops

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

General Motors announced October 17 a tentative agreement with the United Auto Workers (UAW) that it says will cut health-care benefits in the current contract by \$3 billion a year.

Hardest hit will be retirees who for the first time will have to pay deductibles, co-payments, and premiums for medical care, up to \$752 a year for a family. The agreement would reduce GM's liabilities for health care for pensioners, which stood at \$77.5 billion at the start of this year, by \$15 billion. Workers currently employed will now have higher drug co-payments and are being asked to give up \$1 an hour in 2006 by deferring cost-of-living adjustments and planned wage increases. Union members must still vote on this deal, though a date has not yet been set.

GM chairman Richard Wagoner praised the health cuts as the "single biggest cost reduction in a single day in the history of GM." GM is the largest private health-care provider in the Unit-

## Teachers end strike in British Columbia



Militant/Dennis King

Rally in Vancouver, British Columbia, October 21 backing teachers on strike.

BY NATALIE DOUCET

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—"We didn't get what was absolutely necessary," Jinny Sims, president of the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF), told a crowd of thousands of teachers gathered for a rally and contract vote here October 23. "But we made [provincial premier Gordon] Campbell come to the table and make a compromise." Teachers voted 77 percent for the offer, ending the two-week strike. The union had recommended approval of the contract, which does not include guarantees on class sizes.

The 38,000 teachers walked out October 7 for a wage raise and a

limit on the increasing size of classes. They struck after the provincial government announced it would extend a contract it had imposed on them in January 2002.

"We were out for two weeks in an 'illegal' strike and we stuck together even though we didn't get everything we wanted," Michael O'Neill, a teacher, told the *Militant*. "It's a victory. We had a lot of support. We represented the anger and frustration of people in this province."

Thousands had rallied October 21 to back the striking teachers. The Canadian Union of Public Employees, which called the rally, said between 5,000 and 7,000 workers attended.

fired Johansson on the pretext he was "disloyal" when he informed the press of deficient safety and fire protection in the subway. "Fire Connex, not Per!" workers chanted. Two weeks earlier, subway workers had shut down 86 of 112 trains in a one-day strike to protest the firing.

—Catharina Tirsén

### MSHA hearings focus on drug abuse, not real safety problems

SALT LAKE CITY—The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) held a public meeting here on October 24 on "alcohol and drug abuse by miners." It's the first of seven set to take place in coal mining states across the country, including Missouri,

Alabama, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Mike Dalpiaz, vice president of the United Mine Workers of America from Price, Utah, told the media when these hearings were announced, "Nobody wants drugs and alcohol in the workplace, period. But I've been in the industry for 30 years and I don't see it as a problem." He also said that MSHA would better serve coal miners by addressing the dangers of rock falls, methane gas explosions, and dust that causes black lung disease.

Company representatives were the main participants at the hearing here, asking MSHA for help in monitoring the behavior of miners.

—Paul Mailhot

ed States, covering 1.1 million workers, pensioners, and their families.

The recent filing for bankruptcy protection by Delphi Corp., the largest U.S. auto parts supplier, may lead GM to demand even greater pension and health-care cuts from its union workforce. As Delphi's former parent company, GM "could be on the hook for up to \$12 billion in liabilities at Delphi, up from a previous estimate of \$11 billion," noted Reuters.

GM is also looking into selling a controlling interest in its financial division, General Motors Acceptance Corp. (GMAC), to pull the credit rating of its bonds out of junk status. This move, however, would "divert earnings from GM," noted Goldman Sachs analyst Robert Barry. In 2004, 80 percent of GM's earnings came from GMAC.

The health care benefit cuts are "a very important step," GM head boss Wagoner told the *New York Times*. "I didn't say it was the last step, and it's not the first step," he added. Last June Wagoner had announced the elimination of 25,000

jobs from U.S. plants by 2008.

GM follows the footsteps of most major airlines, and steel, and other companies that have increasingly used the threat of bankruptcy to rationalize the imposition of profit-seeking cuts in wages and benefits. Big business has enlisted many scribblers to help the bosses demoralize the workers into accepting such attacks. A column in the November 7 *Business Week* is one such example.

"Fat wages and benefits can't last when competition is cutthroat," states David Welch in this news commentary. To embellish his message, Welch says he comes from a blue-collar family who is watching the latest attacks by GM with "mixed emotions." Describing how his father lost his job as a union machinist, he then argues that UAW workers have no choice but to accept much deeper concessions as GM's market share continues to slide. "UAW workers aren't there yet, but the clock is ticking," he says. "The UAW should be glad they've had it this good for so long."

# Poultry workers in South fight to organize union

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

RUSSELLVILLE, Alabama—Workers are building support for union recognition at the Gold Kist poultry plant here in their fight for improved pay, better working conditions, and respect from the company. “We want the union at our plant because people are getting tired of the way the company treats us,” said Marinda Newsome, who has worked six years at the plant.

Newsome was among some 20 workers attending a weekly meeting at the Winn Wood Inn to discuss how to win more support for the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) among the more than 1,500 workers at the plant. The majority of the workers are from Mexico, Guatemala, and other Latin American countries.

The fight takes place shortly after 700 workers at the Koch Foods poultry plant in Morristown, Tennessee, voted overwhelmingly September 9 for the UFCW.

Gold Kist has fought tooth and nail against workers’ organizing efforts, pressuring them to vote down the union twice in the 1990s. More recently the company has organized separate anti-union meetings in English and Spanish and sent out letters to workers stating that it will “use all means to keep the union out of Russellville.”

Gold Kist is the third-largest integrated chicken company in the United States, accounting for more than 9 percent of chicken produced last year. In August the company reported profits of \$87 million for the first nine months of fiscal 2005.

“The company is making a lot of money,” said Brenda Goodloe, who trims breast meat and is moved from job to job. “Last year they gave us a 15-cent raise but then increased the line

speed four or five birds a minute and raised the cost of insurance. People are working harder but the wages are the same.” The plant processes about 35 birds a minute.

Many workers born abroad have been threatened with firings and deportation if they express support for the union, Goodloe noted. Despite this intimidation she recounted an incident about six months ago when some 300 workers—mostly immigrants from Latin America—from deboning and 80 from leg quarters walked off the line to demand higher pay and an end to forced overtime.

“It was ridiculous working so many hours, with no definite time to leave,” said Goodloe. “A certain line would be told to come in at 5:00 a.m. and not leave until 6:00 p.m.”

The brutal line speed and the need for better pay are driving workers to push for union power. Many of them expressed anger about the lack of seniority rights, which the bosses use to put the most militant workers and those they don’t like on the hardest jobs.

Goodloe, who is Black, remarked how racist discrimination resulted in her being bumped from job to job. When she developed carpal tunnel syndrome, “the company doctor told me that I didn’t get it there but from another job.” She pointed to threats of firing that the bosses hurled at Delores Smith, who last December slipped on a greasy metal plate and broke her ankle. “They told her if she saw her own doctor she would be fired.”

Smith, who prepares boxes to hold processed chickens, said the company nurse, without even looking at her ankle, told her to take ibuprofen and go home. Later Smith looked at her ankle and saw pieces of bone protruding through

## Philadelphia: Transit workers strike to defend health-care benefits



Getty Images/William Thomas Cain

PHILADELPHIA, October 31—Members of Transport Workers Union Local 234 picket outside bus depot of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA). The 5,300 bus, subway, and trolley operators, along with 320 members of United Transportation Union Local 1594, struck early this morning to defend health-care benefits.

In a cynical public campaign, SEPTA and government officials argue: more and more workers are being forced to pay for medical coverage, so why shouldn’t transit workers do the same? Pennsylvania governor Edward Rendell, a Democrat, told the workers that anyone who thinks they won’t have to pay health-care premiums “better move to Mars or some other country.” Workers began picketing at 12:01 a.m., after a year of contract extensions and a breakdown in negotiations.

—OSBORNE HART

her sock. When her son took her to the emergency room, X-rays showed her ankle was broken in three places.

Smith had another accident last July when folded-up boxes that workers upstairs send to her via a chute tumbled out and knocked her eyeglasses to the floor, breaking the frames.

“They sent me home for the day, saying it was my fault,” said Smith. “I also got a write-up.”

At first, Gold Kist refused to pay for new glasses, which she said would cost \$378. With her base wage of \$8.40 an hour, that would exceed her weekly pay.

The company has now offered to pay \$38 toward the glasses.

Smith’s co-worker, Donna Porter, explained that “when I saw how the company mistreated Delores and didn’t want to help her, that made me want to fight for the union.”

Porter, who has worked a year and a half at Gold Kist, remarked how the bosses promote abuse. “Screaming and yelling are commonplace. The company has no respect for our integrity. I’m hoping we win the union.”

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### NEW JERSEY

**Newark**  
The Fight for a Woman’s Right to Choose Abortion Today. Fri., Nov. 11, 8:00 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd fl. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

### NEW YORK

**Manhattan**  
Oppose Imperialist Campaigns against Syria and Iran! Fri., Nov. 11. Dinner 7:00 p.m.; program 8:00 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 307 W. 36th St. 10th fl. (near 8th Ave.; use north elevators). Tel: (212) 629-6649.

### PENNSYLVANIA

**Philadelphia**  
The Cuban Revolution and the Fight Against U.S. Imperialism. Fri., Nov. 11. Dinner 6:30 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Tel: (215) 455-2682.

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland**  
Imperialist Hands off Syria! Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 11, 7:00 p.m. Donation: \$3. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Tel: (09) 276-8885

**Christchurch**  
Oppose New Zealand Imperialism in the Pacific! Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League. Sat., Nov. 19, 5:00 p.m. 287 Selwyn St., Spreydon. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

### SWEDEN

**Stockholm**  
Government Proposal for New ‘Antiterrorism’ Law: An Attack on Democratic Rights. Fri., Nov. 11, 7:00 p.m. Bildhuggarvägen 17 12144 Johanneshov. Tel: 468 31 69 33.

# Foster Farms workers walk out in California

Continued from front page

workers—the League of Independent Workers of the San Joaquin Valley—gave a talk in Spanish and English, which was translated into Punjabi by one of the workers.

Cheers broke out when Meraz paid tribute to the strength of the many women workers who are part of the fight, and to those in the Punjabi community who provided food and drink for hundreds of workers and supporters each day on the picket line.

Production was slowed at the plant but not stopped. According to Meraz, 1,103 signed the roster indicating participation in the walkout while half the plant, including “replacement” workers hired through a contractor, stayed inside.

A layer of workers who have been fighting for many years to forge a strong union at Foster Farms are spearheading the struggle.

These workers began to organize for an election decertifying the United Food and Commercial Workers eight years ago. They took this action after a 17-day strike in 1997 that left them with a contract that included only a 70-cent wage increase over five years, and increased payments by workers for medical coverage. “We didn’t get the support we should have from the union,” Isabel Mendoza, who voted against that contract, told the *Militant* at the time.

The workers organized the League as a new union, which won a majority among workers in a vote in 2004.

To strengthen their ability to negotiate a contract, the union affiliated with the International Association of Machinists (IAM) several weeks before the walkout. The company has refused to accept this affiliation, calling it illegal.

“Foster Farms won’t respect our vote for the new union,” said Gloria Castigo, one of the veteran fighters at the plant. “That’s why we came out.”

“Your impressive numbers send a message to Foster Farms that they cannot deny,” IAM District Lodge 190 business representative Jim Beno said at the rally. He announced the opening of a permanent union headquarters at 416 Main Street in Livingston.

Raj Brinder Dhaliwal, one of those who helped organize the new union, has worked for 26 years on the line. He pointed to deteriorating health benefits and low wages as key issues in the struggle. Since 1993 wages have increased by a total of \$1.45, for an average annual raise of 12 cents, he said. At the same time, costs for medical coverage have gone up, including a \$25 charge for each doctor visit as well as large deductibles.

Sam Arceo, who also participated in the 1980 and 1997 strikes, is a forklift driver with 28 years in the plant. After knee, shoulder, and elbow surgeries, he

now has approximately \$500 a month garnished from his paycheck to cover medical bills. “I’ve worked all these years to pay for this,” Arceo said. “This should be coming to me.”

Maria Caballero, a machine attendant with 25 years in the plant, said she makes a typical wage for a line worker at the plant—\$9.28 an hour. She has joined the fight because of the low wages. “Prices are going up,” said Caballero. “A gallon of milk is \$3.75. You pay \$50 a week for gas. After all that, there’s nothing left to take home. They charge \$7 for one of these chickens. That’s an hour of work.”

“They’ve harassed us, threatened us, discriminated against us—a lot of injustices,” said Francisco Alvarez, a union coordinator in packaging who’s worked in the plant for one year.

A union complaint with the National Labor Relations Board for unfair labor practices by the company is scheduled to be heard December 14.

“We’re stronger because we ourselves are fighting and we believe in ourselves,” said Gurbax Samra, a 28-year veteran in the plant. As an example he pointed to the workers who have become coordinators of union activity in every department.

*Betsy Stone and Seth Dellinger contributed to this article.*

# Vote Socialist Workers Nov. 8!

Continued from front page

cause, she said, is that of defending workers from the attacks by the ruling class.

Newberry firmly believes there should be free health care and equitable social security for all. She also defends union power in order to counteract, as she put it, the abuses of unscrupulous bosses who pay miserly wages and exploit their employees.

“The system is based on profits, and it’s a ‘dog-eat-dog’ society,” she explains. “It’s about time people have a working-class alternative on the ballot.”

Newberry, the 16th of 17 children born and raised in Ohio, has worked hard jobs since she was very young. She has worked on the railroad in Pennsylvania and in hat and garment factories in Los Angeles. She currently works as a meat packer. She never attended university or college, but her passion for the socialist movement has taken her to several cities across the country. About four years ago, she arrived in Boyle Heights.

This candidate assures us that she would use the city council position to champion the socialist cause. For starters, she would fight for all working people to have affordable housing.

“I’m excited that more and more people are receptive to these ideas. And it’s not some utopia. It’s already been done in Cuba, when the workers took power there,” she says, pointing out “there will be no peace until there’s a revolution in this country.”

## SWP candidates in Atlanta get hearing for socialist program

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA—The fighting, working-class program of three Socialist Workers Party candidates running in the municipal election is attracting attention here.

“Socialist candidate thinks big,” states an October 20 headline in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* on the mayoral race. “James Harris is a socialist. In an era where unions lack the clout they once claimed, Harris is not shy about his anti-capitalist convictions.”

Harris is running against incumbent Shirley Franklin, recently profiled in *U.S. News and World Report* as one of “America’s Best Leaders.” Meanwhile, Atlanta ranks fifth in child poverty in the United States, and the city’s answer to homelessness is to convert an old jail with a few hundred beds into a shelter and pass an anti-panhandling ordinance.

“I have only one criticism of the mayor: that she’s a capitalist politician and what she is putting forward for the city of Atlanta are things that will benefit the wealthy and will not benefit the working class,” Harris told the paper.

In a *Journal-Constitution* interview published the same day, Lisa Potash, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council president, explained, “I believe that working people need to build a labor party based on a fighting trade

union movement. What happened with the hurricane is fresh proof that the Democrats and Republicans cannot and do not function for the working people.”

In a debate on *People TV* with her opponent, incumbent Lisa Borders, Potash argued against the Beltline project—a plan to raise the value of investment property in the city that will increase rents and housing prices and drive more working-class families out or into worsening conditions.

Borders and Mayor Franklin have made support to the Beltline plan the centerpiece of their re-election bids.

“I’m opposed to it. The Beltline is not about parks, inner city transit, or jobs,” said Potash. “Atlanta is becoming more and more segregated every day. The Beltline will continue this resegregation.” The socialist candidates are distributing a statement urging working people to attend a November 7 Atlanta City Council hearing on the Beltline to oppose the plan.

In an October 13 article, the *Journal-Constitution* quoted Eleanor García, the Socialist Workers candidate for City Council in District 10, noting



Hoy/Andrea Alegría

Diana Newberry, SWP candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 14, at the party’s campaign headquarters October 28.

her campaign’s “overriding theme of organizing unions.”

The socialist candidates have traveled to Charleston, South Carolina, to extend their support to the efforts by independent truckers at the port to organize into the Teamsters union. They have sold subscriptions to the *Militant* at the United Parcel Service plant gate here, where members of Teamsters Local 728 are heading into contract negotiations.

García and Potash campaigned at the October 28–29 South Atlantic Global Women’s and Human Rights conference held at Spelman College, where Potash called for defending Iran from U.S. attacks. Conference participants invited the two socialist candidates to speak at other colleges in Atlanta, Rome, and Gainesville, Georgia, as well as Asheville, North Carolina, and Bowling Green, Kentucky.

## SWP candidates in 2005 elections

City/State	Candidates
Atlanta	James Harris, Mayor, Lisa Potash, City Council president* Eleanor García, City Council District 10
Birmingham, AL	Clay Dennison, City Council District 8* Jeanne FitzMaurice, School Board District 8* (Election in Birmingham held October 11)
Boston	Margaret Trowe, Mayor Laura Garza, City Council At-Large*
Des Moines, IA	Edwin Fruit, City Council At-Large*
Houston	Anthony Dutrow, Mayor* José Aravena, City Controller Amanda Ulman, City Council At-Large-1
Los Angeles	Diana Newberry, City Council District 14* Seth Dellinger, City Council District 10
Miami	Omari Musa, Mayor* Eric Simpson, City Commissioner District 5*
New Jersey	Angela Lariscy, Governor* Michael Ortega, State Assembly District 28*
New York	Martín Koppel, Mayor* Dan Fein, City Comptroller* Arrin Hawkins, Manhattan Borough President* Sarah Katz, Bronx Borough President
Pittsburgh	Jay Ressler, Mayor* Cynthia Jaquith, City Council District 8 Ryan Scott, City Council District 12
Philadelphia	John Staggs, City Attorney Rebecca Crysdale, City Controller
San Francisco	Romina Green, City Treasurer Laura Anderson, City Attorney Gerardo Sánchez, Assessor-Recorder
Seattle	Chris Hoepfner, Mayor* Cecelia Moriarity, King County Executive David Rosenfeld, City Council, Position 2
St. Paul, MN	Jacob Perasso, Mayor* Rebecca Williamson, School Board*

\*On ballot (All remaining candidates have write-in status)

## What the Socialist Workers Party stands and fights for

In addition to what’s outlined in the Socialist Workers campaign platform below, the SWP candidates have been recently highlighting the demands to socialize medicine—making health care a free, lifetime right for all; and nationalize the energy monopolies—taking power companies and electricity distributors out of private hands and running them as public utilities for the benefit of the majority (for more details see “SWP candidates in California: Nationalize energy, health care!” in last week’s issue).

• **Support workers’ struggles to organize trade unions and to use and extend union power to defend themselves and other working people from the bosses’ assaults. Defend the labor movement from the continuing offensive by the employers and their twin parties of capitalism—the Democrats and Republicans. Build a labor party, based on the unions, that fights in the interests of working people.**

- For the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of U.S., UN, and other imperialist armed forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Korea, Haiti, Colombia, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.
- For a massive federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union scale.
- No cuts in present or future Social Security benefits, Medicaid programs, or workers compensation. Extend Social Security to cover universal, government-guaranteed, lifetime health care for everyone in this country.
- Fight cop brutality. Abolish the death penalty.
- Defend and extend affirmative action in employment, education, and housing.
- No national ID card. End all federal and state

**Working people face an unrelenting offensive by the employers, who—driven by the need to reverse the decline in their profit rates—are intensifying speedup, lengthening work hours, eroding job safety, cutting pensions and health-care coverage, and seeking to undermine Social Security and break down class solidarity. The imperialist wars abroad by Washington and its allies, from Iraq and Afghanistan to others they are preparing, including threats against Iran, Syria, and north Korea, are an extension of the war on workers and farmers at home.**

The resistance today by working people to these assaults points to the road forward: to rely on our collective power and solidarity and organize independently of the capitalists and their parties to advance the common interests of workers and farmers worldwide. We need to build a revolutionary movement that will lead a fight by working people and their allies to take power out of the hands of the ruling billionaire class, establish a workers and farmers government, and join the worldwide struggle for socialism.

Vote Socialist Workers Party this coming Tuesday and continue campaigning for this revolutionary working-class program beyond November 8!

• **Support the efforts of semicolonial countries to acquire and develop the energy sources necessary to expand electrification—a prerequisite for economic and social advances. Expose the drive by Washington and its allies to prevent the nations oppressed by imperialism from developing nuclear power and other sources of energy needed to bring much of humanity out of darkness.**

regulations aimed at turning a driver’s license into such a document.

- Repeal federal and state laws mandating immigration-document checks by employers.
- Defend a woman’s right to choose! Oppose restrictions on access to abortion.
- End Washington’s economic war against Cuba! U.S. hands off Venezuela!
- Defend the constitutional right of GIs as citizen-soldiers to engage in political discussion, debate, and activity.
- Stop farm foreclosures! Government-funded cheap credit for working farmers and price supports to cover production costs.

# Patrick Fitzgerald helped convict Lynne Stewart, too

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Democratic Party politicians and the liberal press have lately turned U.S. Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald into a hero who is supposedly defending democratic rights by indicting Lewis Libby (see article below).

Fitzgerald's claim to fame before recently hitting the headlines, however, was prosecuting the U.S. rulers' "war on terror," including helping convict attorney Lynne Stewart.

Stewart is the first defense lawyer convicted on "terrorism" charges by the government. She has been waging a public campaign to pressure U.S. District Judge John Koeltl to hand down a minimum sentence. On October 25 Koeltl rejected Stewart's appeal of her conviction and request for a new trial.

Fitzgerald worked for 13 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York. In September 2001 he became the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. "As the first head of New York's terrorism prosecution unit, Fitzgerald either

personally prosecuted or supervised some of the landmark terrorism cases predating the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001," the *Chicago Tribune* reported.

These cases included the 1996 conviction of Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a Muslim cleric, on frame-up charges of conspiracy to bomb the World Trade Center three years earlier. The cleric was sentenced to life in prison plus 65 years. The *Tribune* noted that Fitzgerald "used a Civil War-era statute prohibiting planning crimes against the nation" in prosecuting Abdel-Rahman. Fitzgerald followed up on this frame-up by assisting in the conviction of the cleric's attorney, Lynne Stewart.

At the heart of the case against Stewart were charges that she conspired to violate Department of Justice Special Administrative Measures (SAMs). These measures, drafted by Fitzgerald, imposed harsh restrictions on her client. On orders from this top prosecutor, Abdel-Rahman was prohibited from speaking to the media, and was strictly limited in his access



Getty Images

Attorney Lynne Stewart speaks to press outside New York federal courthouse on April 9, 2002, the day she was indicted on "terrorism" charges. Patrick Fitzgerald, now hailed by liberals for the Libby indictment, was central to Stewart's indictment and conviction.

to mail, telephones, and visitors. It was Fitzgerald who called Stewart in July 2000 to tell her she was suspended from contact with her client because she had released a statement by Abdel-Rahman to the media. Fitzgerald also served as the prosecution's first witness against Stewart when the trial began in June 2004. Stewart has described Fitzgerald as "a crusader...in the medieval sense."

Much of the "evidence" against Stewart was based on government wiretaps of more than two years of conversations between her and Abdel-Rahman and

videotapes of their meetings in prison.

Stewart was convicted last February on all five charges of "conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist activity" and "defrauding" the government in relation to the SAMs. She was immediately disbarred and faces up to 30 years in prison. Her case against this frame-up has won the support of the National Lawyers Guild, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and others. Sentencing is set for December 22.

Fitzgerald's career, on the other hand, appears to be taking off.

## Indicted for perjury, White House official faces 30 years in jail

Continued from front page of Iraq more effectively.

Appearing on CNN's "Larry King Live" October 28, Democratic senator Barbara Boxer applauded the Libby indictment, saying that if the White House had listened to its liberal critics and avoided the argument about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, "we could have...gone in there with the whole world instead of what we've done."

The lead editorial in the October 29 *New York Times*, on "The Case Against Scooter Libby," concluded, "The big point Americans need to keep in mind is this: There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq."

The *Times* ran an accompanying editorial making it clear its argument was not whether but how to conduct a war policy. Under the title "A Demagogue in Iran," it urged Washington to intensify its political and military pressure on Iran (see article on page 3).

Referring to the Libby indictment, the *Financial Times* of London in an October 29-30 editorial remarked, "Republicans can argue that the Plame affair reflects a trend toward criminalising honest policy differences, in this case the rationale for going to war against Iraq. It is indeed a worrisome development."

Nonetheless, after a two-year inquiry by the federal grand jury, the FBI, and a special prosecutor, no one has been charged with the original sin of revealing the identity of a spy.

Instead, vice presidential aide Libby faces a sentence three times greater for alleged inconsistencies in his interviews with the FBI, and then for accepting those statements as fact under oath before the grand jury.

The other top administration official involved—"Official A" in the indictment—is assumed to be Karl Rove, the president's senior adviser. Rove has not been charged at this point. He has acknowledged talking to the press about Plame's CIA connection, but has argued that he didn't break the law because he drew his knowledge not from secret

documents but from other reporters.

The current dispute in Washington has been accompanied by increasingly uncivil discourse, as seen in the flap around *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, who spent 85 days in jail for refusing to testify before the grand jury. Miller was ostensibly protecting the source—allegedly Libby—who leaked Plame's identity to her.

After publicly defending one of their lead reporters while she was in jail, the *Times* editors have scrambled to distance themselves from Miller. In an October 21 memo, *Times* executive editor Bill Keller stated that he would have been more careful in defending Miller if he had known of her "entanglement with Libby."

*Times* columnist Maureen Dowd penned an October 25 column attacking Miller's personal character under the heading "Woman of Mass Destruction." While criticizing Miller's pre-Iraq war reporting, she wrote, "Judy's stories about W.M.D. fit too perfectly with the White House's case for war."

In subsequent public interviews Dowd has gossiped that Miller's career and her objectivity as a reporter were ruined in part by her "history of dating powerful men."

*New York Post* columnist Andrea Peyser described this comment as an "obscenely personal" insult, saying Dowd ripped into her colleague "for having a slutty reputation that Dowd claims warped her reporting."

In an October 25 article expressing concern about the destabilizing effects of this factionalization within bourgeois politics, *Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, no friend of the White House, wrote, "Before dragging any Bush administration officials off to jail, we should pause and take a long, deep breath."

"In the 1990's, we saw the harm that special prosecutors can do," Kristof wrote. "That was true particularly of Kenneth Starr's fanatical pursuit of Bill Clinton." He was referring to the salacious sex scandal that led to Clinton's impeachment by Congress

in his second term.

In an October 29 op-ed article in the *Washington Post*, two former Justice Department lawyers, David Rivkin and Lee Casey, warned about the powers of the special prosecutors that have been appointed since the Watergate scandal led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974. "For special counsels, as under the code of the samurai, once the sword is drawn it must taste blood," they wrote. "With the law books filled with a great assortment of crimes, a prosecutor stands a fair chance of finding at least a technical violation of some act on the part of almost anyone."

Special counsels are "deprived of normal constraints such as resource limitations," they continued. "Another vital missing ingredient is supervision. Normally federal prosecutors have political superiors who review their de-

isions.... Fitzgerald was specifically excused from even this minimal check on his power and as a consequence was accountable only to himself."

The current political storm registers the crisis of confidence within U.S. ruling circles, as they march toward an increasingly unstable future of depression, wars, and class conflicts. Republican pundit Peggy Noonan touched on this mood of unease in an October 27 column in the *Wall Street Journal*. She said there was a widespread sense that "in some deep and fundamental way things have broken down and can't be fixed...any time soon."

Noonan emphasized that she was not just "talking about 'Plamegate'" but about "the whole ball of wax.... I believe there's a general and amorphous sense that things are broken and tough history is coming."

Atlanta ... San Francisco ... Twin Cities ... New York

### 'We Start with the World and How To Transform It' Report from First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair

**FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER**, in October 2005 a book fair was held in the Central African country of Equatorial Guinea. Five supporters of Pathfinder Press took part, making its titles available. Their experiences in that country—a former Spanish colony and staging post for the slave trade, in an oil-rich region where Washington is today increasing its military buildup—shed light on the openings for militants in the new political situation being produced by intensifying conflicts among contending classes worldwide.

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# How a revolutionary party meets test of war

Below is an excerpt from *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for November. It records the development of an internal conflict in the Socialist Workers Party immediately following the Stalin-Hitler pact and the outbreak of the Second World War. Under pressure of these world events, a section of the party began to reject the theoretical foundations, political principles, and organizational methods upon which the SWP had been founded—includ-

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

ing Marxist theory on the nature of the Soviet Union and the obligation of revolutionists to defend it against imperialist attack.

James P. Cannon was a leader of the Communist Party in the United States following the Russian Revolution of 1917. He was expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 for supporting Leon Trotsky's fight to continue V.I. Lenin's revolutionary course. A founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, Cannon served as its national secretary and then national chairman until his death in 1974. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Meeting in 1945 in defense of 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Minneapolis Teamsters union framed up under the Smith "Gag" Act for expressing their opposition to the interimperialist slaughter in the Second World War.

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Political struggles in general, including serious factional struggles in a party, do not take place in a vacuum. They are carried on under the pressure of social forces and reflect the class struggle to one degree or another. This law is demonstrated in the most striking manner in the development of the present discussion within our party....

The Second World War, no less than the First, strikes all organizations and tendencies in the labor movement with cataclysmic force. Our own organization is no exception. Like all others, it is being shaken to its foundations and compelled to reveal its real nature. Weaknesses which remained undisclosed in time of peace are rapidly laid bare with the approach of war. Numerous individuals and whole groupings, whether formally members of the Fourth International or sympathizers, are being submitted to the same tests. There will be casualties, which may seem to indicate a weakening of the movement. But that is rather the

appearance of things than the reality. Trotskyism is the veritable doctrine and method of proletarian revolution; it reveals its true substance most unflinchingly in times of crisis, war and revolutionary struggle. Those who have assimilated the program, the doctrine, the method and the tradition into their flesh and blood, as the guiding line of struggle, cling all the more firmly to the movement under the pressure of the crisis.

It is only those who took Bolshevism as a set of literary formulas, espousal of which gave one a certain distinction in radical circles without incurring any serious responsibilities; those who adopted Trotskyism as a form of "extreme radicalism" which never went beyond the bounds of sophisticated debate—it is such people who are most inclined to falter and to lose their heads under the pressure of the crisis, and even to blame their panic on that same "Trotskyism" which simply remains true to itself.

Everybody knows the crisis has dealt heavy blows to the imposing movement of Stalinism. With the signing of the

Soviet-Nazi pact the flight of the Stalinist fellow-travelers began. They could stomach the Moscow Trials but not the prospect of coming into collision with the democratic government of U.S. imperialism. After the Soviet invasion of Poland and then of Finland, the flight of the fellow-travelers became a rout. This wild migration attracted wide attention and comment. We ourselves contributed our observations and witticisms on this ludicrous spectacle. Up to now, however, we have remained silent on an analogous phenomenon in our own "periphery." The flight of the more sophisticated, but hardly more courageous, intellectual fellow-travelers of American Trotskyism has been scarcely less precipitate and catastrophic....

Insofar as our party membership consists in part of petty-bourgeois elements completely disconnected from the proletarian class struggle, the crisis which overtook the periphery of our movement is transferred, or rather, extended into the party.

## Houston truckers

Continued from front page

year, on a dedicated run from Freeport, Texas, to Clinton, Tennessee, a \$4,000 run, the company took \$1,200, leaving the drivers \$2,800. "This year they are only leaving us \$1,900 for the run—and it costs us \$1,000 for the fuel," said Santos, who is from Puerto Rico. He has been a driver for six years and has worked for BTT for the last year.

"The company terminated three drivers to try to intimidate us," he added, as picketers arrived with lunch for all. "But we are still here. We are organizing our breakfasts and lunches here."

Anthony Dutrow is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Houston.

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# The pornographication of politics

The indictment of the U.S. vice president's chief of staff is nothing but a political football by Democrats against the Bush administration. After two years of labors, special counsel Patrick Fitzgerald could not cough up any criminal wrongdoing of substance. He indicted Lewis Libby instead for not being totally forthcoming to FBI agents and then sticking to that in front of the grand jury. In fact, it's likely that no one will be charged with revealing the identity of an undercover CIA agent, the deed Fitzgerald was called to investigate in the first place.

Liberal politicians upped the volume of their claims last week that the case is about disagreements with the White House over Washington's Iraq policy and its rationale for the war. That's sheer demagoguery. The only alternative Democratic politicians have offered to the Bush administration's course in Iraq is to propose deploying more troops and getting more allies on board for the imperialist military operation. This lack of alternatives within the bourgeoisie to the course of the war party—the great majority of Democratic and Republican officeholders—makes the crisis in ruling circles worse.

The Libby indictment is a product of increasing factionalism both between and within the dominant parties of capitalism and their peripheries. Just when the rulers need stability, self-confidence, and a bipartisan core “all good people” can agree on, the opposite is happening. The growing polarization among the wealthy families that rule the United States is as much an element of the new political period we have entered as the increased readiness of sections of the working class to resist the bosses' offensive against our wages and job and living conditions.

The crisis of confidence of the U.S. rulers is rooted in their mounting financial and economic vulnerability, the political and military challenges Washington confronts worldwide, and the sharpening class conflict these conditions generate. America's propertied ruling families and their political representatives in both the Democratic and Republican parties have become increasingly conscious of the need to use both the economic and military power of U.S. imperialism. Gone is the illusion that the outcome

of the Cold War was a victory in itself that would bring global stability under the domination of Pax Americana. The rulers sense the uncontrollable forces carrying them toward a future of sharpening crises, marked by depression, war, and violent class battles.

The frustration born of a vague but growing awareness of this vulnerability, combined with the inability to find a self-confident course to decisively overcome it, is the single greatest source of the deepening factionalism, demagoguery, and degradation of political discourse—its pornographication—that characterize all bourgeois politics in the United States today.

This coarsening of politics has been displayed in the recent sensational exchanges between many editors and reporters. The *New York Times* is in the midst of this, with *Times* journalist Judith Miller at the center of the Libby affair. The personal attacks on Miller by *Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, such as her article “The Woman of Mass Destruction,” and the related rebuttals, are also telling about the crisis and degeneration of the daily claiming to publish “all the news that's fit to print,” and of the rest of the big-business media.

The problem with the capitalists, their political representatives, and their mouthpieces, however, is not that they are immoral, hypocritical people as individuals. The scandal mongering is fueled largely by the far right and the left within bourgeois politics to profit from middle-class insecurities and drag workers along with the declining bourgeoisie itself down into the pit of resentment and salacious envy. This became the stock-in-trade of the Nazis in the 1920s and '30s.

As millions of workers see the ruling class and its parties become more unanimous in carrying out not only wars abroad but a war on working people at home—while fighting among themselves over meaningless scandals—they resist these assaults. In the process vanguard workers get politicized. They become more open to the idea that we need to build a working-class party based on the unions that can fight for the interests of the oppressed and exploited worldwide.

# New hero of liberals: frame-up expert

“Trim,” “plain,” “soft-spoken,” “polite,” “calm,” and “firm.” These were the praises the first paragraph of a lead, front-page article in the October 29 *New York Times* heaped on the new darling of the liberals: Patrick Fitzgerald. The prosecutor was taking on “The Untouchables” and striking a blow for justice and the rule of law, the *Times* exclaimed. All that for indicting a top aide of Vice President Cheney, not for the crime Fitzgerald was asked to investigate two years earlier but for supposedly lying to FBI agents and the grand jury.

As the article on page 9 shows, however, this new hero of the Democratic Party and other liberals is nothing but a persistent engineer of frame-ups and an avid user of grand juries.

The grand jury is a thoroughly anti-working-class institution of capitalist “justice.” Anyone subpoenaed must appear before a grand jury—usually without legal counsel—and is required to answer any and all questions whether relevant to the case or not. Deliberations are secret. Refusal to “cooperate” with a grand jury investigation can result in contempt of court charges. Such charges have landed in jail many opponents of U.S. government

policies, like Puerto Rican independence fighters.

The role of “special counsel” fits Fitzgerald like a glove. Given enough time, such prosecutors, not accountable to anyone but themselves, can indict even a ham sandwich. Given the immense powers and unlimited time and resources these prosecutors have—and have used since the Watergate scandal in the 1970s in order for one faction of the ruling class to go after another when polarization deepens among the wealthy—even mouthpieces of big business like the *Washington Post* have begun to complain about the special counsel institution itself.

Fitzgerald has excelled in this assignment. He not only played a central role in railroading defense attorney Lynne Stewart on “terrorism” charges but drafted the very administrative rules the government claimed Stewart breached.

There is no reason to rejoice about Fitzgerald's conduct in the Libby case. To the contrary, working people have every reason to fear that such practices would be used against the labor movement or others advocating a change in government. Special prosecutors and grand juries should be abolished altogether.

# Florida: millions in dark after Wilma

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI, October 31—In the wake of Hurricane Wilma, more than 6 million people in South Florida were left without electricity for nearly a week. Officials said power would not be restored in some areas until November 22.

Some 240 electrical substations were put out of commission and 15,000 electrical poles were toppled or seriously damaged. Poles are supposed to withstand storm winds but must be maintained or replaced. Florida Power and Light has not carried out a systematic inspection of its towers and pole lines since 2001, according to state records.

Utility workers have been working to restore power—most rapidly to downtown office buildings and to hotels in Miami's wealthy South Beach area. Working-class districts have not been a priority.

Patients have had to wait hours in packed hospital emergency rooms because many doctor's offices remain closed. Six days after the storm, some dialysis centers had not reopened.

Many factories remained closed a week after the storm due to lack of power, leaving workers without income. Public schools remain closed.

For a week gasoline was in short supply because service stations lacked power to pump gas, and lines at pumps stretched for hours. Some workers had difficulty getting to their jobs because of the gas shortage.

Among those waiting hours in line for gas was Charles Willcoxson III, an electrician for 30 years and a member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 212 in Cincinnati. He and a couple of co-workers had come to Miami to help out prior to the hurricane, and were trying to head home.

“You'd think they would be more prepared,” he told the *Militant*. “It's more expensive to run electrical lines underground because of the heat factor, but they could do it. They could also build barriers around substations. Contractors charge the customer the same but pay nonunion workers less than union, and then pocket the difference.”

Farm worker communities were also hard hit. In rural Immokalee there was no immediate food or relief for the 40,000 residents. Some 100 poorly built trailer homes there were destroyed, and a worker was killed when winds destroyed the boarding house where she lived. Sugar cane cutters in Pahokee were left without work as fields were flattened.

In Florida the death toll from the hurricane is 21, including several killed from carbon monoxide poisoning during the power outages.

Florida governor John Ellis Bush sought to deflect criticism of the slow and inadequate government response by blaming people for being unable to obtain needed supplies. “People had ample time to prepare. It isn't that hard to get 72 hours worth of food and water,” he said. For millions the power outages lasted much longer than 72 hours.

Part of the government response has been a curfew imposed in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

In contrast with the United States, in Cuba the revolutionary government and working people mobilized to save lives. Not a single death was reported as a result of Wilma. In face of heavy flooding, more than 640,000 people were evacuated. Thanks to prior arrangements, some 80 percent were safely housed with family and friends.

Cuba has simultaneously sent volunteer medical teams to Guatemala and to Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, hard hit by the storm. Cuban volunteer doctors are also serving in Pakistan in the wake of the devastating earthquakes there.

# LETTERS

## FBI murdered Ojeda Ríos

The murder of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos at the hands of the FBI is a statement to the impunity and arrogance with which the U.S. federal repressive apparatus operates in Puerto Rico.

Like the so-called natural disasters precipitated by the capitalist profit system recently, the oppressive conditions that are evident to socialists are in plain view for the entire world to see. Ojeda Ríos's murder has made manifest that Puerto Ricans live in a colonial system whose people, resources, and territorial integrity are at the disposal of the American government. The FBI tried

to humiliate and demoralize the independence movement. It succeeded in flaring rejection of the colonial condition. Puerto Ricans, and working-class people worldwide, must respond to this criminal offensive on the part of reactionaries with a movement to end imperialist oppression in all its forms.

Juan Delect  
Arizona

## Northwest Airlines threatens

I thought the headline and article “Northwest Airlines to annul all union contracts” [October 31 issue] should have read, “Northwest

Airlines threatens to annul all union contracts.” Following the example of United Airlines and USAirways, Northwest is seeking to stampede workers into signing contracts to cut wages and gut benefits.

Rick Young  
Chicago, Illinois

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