

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**March on Washington  
protests Iraq war**

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## Justice for the Jena 6! Drop the charges now!



The Daily Town Talk/Tia Owens-Powers  
July 31 march through Jena, Louisiana, demanded justice for six Black students.

We stand with the thousands marching in Jena, Louisiana, and in solidarity actions across the country on September 20 to demand justice for the Jena Six.

These six Black youths face felony charges with possible decades-long prison terms because they stood up to racists who hung nooses at their high school. Far from an “innocent prank,”

### EDITORIAL

nooses are aimed at terrorizing Blacks and anyone else who gets “out of line” in capitalist society. They recall decades of legal and extralegal violence—from Klan lynchings to cop riots.

The harsh prison sentences hanging over the heads of the Six are all too familiar for millions of working people caught up in the capitalist “justice” system. Black men are more than

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## Jena 6 fight resonates widely

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON, September 14—Thousands of people throughout southern states and beyond are mobilizing to demonstrate September 20 in Jena, Louisiana. They are demanding freedom for Mychal Bell and that felony charges be dropped against five other Black Jena High School students.

A small victory was registered to-

day in the fight for justice for these men, called the Jena Six, when a state appeals court threw out the felony conviction against Bell. The judge ruled that Bell, who was 16 at the time of his arrest, should not have been tried as an adult.

District Attorney Reed Walters said he would appeal the decision to the state supreme court. Bell could still

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## Campus meeting on Cuban 5 draws students, others in D.C.

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 12—Some 175 students and others attended a meeting today hosted by the Howard University Law School on the case of five Cuban revolutionaries being unjustly held in U.S. jails.

The event was the first in a series of public events about the case in the area. They are part of a month of stepped-up activities in an international campaign to build support for the Cuban Five.

“This is the first time in history that we’ve seen a conviction on espionage charges without a single piece of classified documents,” said Leonard Weinglass, one of the attorneys for the Cubans. Weinglass was the featured speaker at the event. “Of 20,000 pages of documents that were seized, not one was classified.”

Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González have been locked up in U.S. jails since 1998. A federal court in Miami convicted and sentenced them on frame-up charges in 2001. The five were in the United States monitoring counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups that have car-

ried out violent attacks on Cuba from the United States.

Weinglass explained how defense lawyers had argued unsuccessfully for a

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## Underdevelopment magnifies impact of Indonesia quakes

BY PAUL PEDERSON

September 16—At least 12,000 homes in Indonesia’s Sumatra island were destroyed in a series of earthquakes that began September 12. The first quake registered 8.4 on the Richter scale. It was followed the next day by two more that registered 7.1 and 7.8 along with an estimated 60 aftershocks.

The destruction of life and infrastructure was magnified by the underdevelopment of Indonesia stemming from centuries of direct colonial rule, followed by decades of imperialist exploitation and misrule by local capitalist regimes. The economy of Indonesia is dominated by Australia, Japan, the United States,

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## Minnesota meat packers rally to defend union NLRB calls decertification election



Militant/Tom Baumann

September 19 picket line outside Dakota Premium Foods preceded rally backing meat packers there defending their union from a company decertification drive.

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota, September 16—The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced September 12 that a union decertification election will be held at the Dakota

Premium Foods beef slaughterhouse here. The plant is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789.

The election will take place at least

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### As we go to press...

Seventy unionists from the Twin Cities area, including workers at Dakota Premium Foods, rallied across the street from the plant after work. Among the unions represented were the Teamsters, Service Employees International Union, United Transportation Union Local 660, and American Federation of State,

County, and Municipal Employees Local 3800, currently on strike against the University of Minnesota.

Earlier in the day, a delegation of six Dakota workers went to the company offices on their lunch break to demand management allow union representatives into the plant and stop harassment of union activists.

## White House: Iraq ‘drawdown’ part of long-term troop presence

BY DOUG NELSON

Achieving Washington’s goals in Iraq will require a long-term military presence, President George Bush, Gen. David Petraeus, and U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker, have all said in recent speeches. The three have also ratcheted up pressure on Iran, and to a lesser degree Syria, citing those governments as a major problem for U.S. interests in Iraq and the Middle East.

In a September 13 speech, Bush supported Petraeus’ recommendation to Congress days earlier to reduce U.S. troops in Iraq to their “pre-surge level”—from 20 to 15 combat brigades—over the next nine months. “Long-term U.S. ground force viability will benefit” from such a drawdown, said Petraeus, the top U.S. military commander in Iraq. Both he and Bush warned against “premature” troop reductions and made no further projections.

Petraeus said his recommendation was based on the progress U.S. and allied forces have made on the ground

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## Meat packers union sues ICE over Swift raids

BY JOE SWANSON

AND SETH GALINSKY

DES MOINES, Iowa—The union that represents workers at five of six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants targeted in a massive immigration raid last December is suing the federal immigration police.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) filed the suit September 12 in a U.S. district court in Amarillo, Texas. It charges that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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# Political activist fighting deportation speaks at N.Y. forum

BY GABRIEL GARCÍA  
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—At a Militant Labor Forum held here September 7, political activist Víctor Toro described his fight against deportation. Two months earlier he was arrested by immigration cops while on a train in upstate New York, returning from California, where he had campaigned for the legalization of undocumented workers.

Toro, a founder of the community group Vamos a la Peña del Bronx, has been active in support of immigrant workers, in defense of the Cuban Revolution, and other political work since he arrived in the United States in 1984.

Noting the approach of September 11, he said that while the media focuses on the attacks on the World Trade Center, the date also marks the bloody U.S.-backed military coup that overthrew the government of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973. He explained that, as a member of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Chile, he opposed the Pinochet regime's reign of terror, was jailed, and later left the country as a political refugee. Today he remains without papers because the Chilean government claims he is officially classified as "dead."

Now, Toro said, he was ordered to appear at a deportation hearing on September 12 in an immigration court in Buffalo, six hours away. He said he was trying to get the hearing moved to New York City, where it would be easier for supporters to attend.

Several days after the forum, Toro told the *Militant* he had won that initial legal battle, "thanks to the support I've received." He is now awaiting a new court date in New York City.

"This is part of a broader fight," he

said, "the fight by 12 million undocumented workers across the country for a general amnesty." He pointed to the importance of the May Day mobilizations by immigrant workers the last two years, and the example of Elvira Arellano, who, although recently deported to Mexico, continues to speak out for the legalization of the undocumented.

Toro also backed the struggle of Peruvian workers who emigrate to his native Chile. "They are bombarded by propaganda that Chile is a land of opportunity. The reality is that nearly one million Peruvians are forced to work there for wages of \$2 a day."

Paul Pederson, who spoke for the

Socialist Workers Party, pledged continued support for Toro's fight against deportation. He explained that the same profit drive by the capitalists that has drawn millions to this country as a source of superexploited labor was the one responsible for the recent deadly mine collapse in Utah. In both cases, he said, the result has been resistance by working people and discussions on how to fight most effectively.

He pointed out that growing numbers of immigrant workers are losing their fear and joining struggles, both for the legalization of the undocumented and fights to organize or strengthen unions to defend safety and dignity on the job.



Militant/Paul Pederson

Víctor Toro is fighting deportation

## ‘Offside’ shows women in Iran challenging restrictions

Offside, 2006, 88 minutes, directed by Jafar Panahi.

### IN REVIEW

BY CINDY JAQUITH

*Offside* is an Iranian film that presents a refreshing, fun look at how young women in Iran are challenging restrictions on their rights—in this case, the right to go to soccer games.

In Iran, soccer games are open only to men, but more and more women are demanding the right to get into the stadium—and a growing number are simply sneaking in. Director Jafar Panahi's movie was inspired in part by his daughter's attempt to get into a soccer game.

Panahi directed *The Circle*, which also deals with women's rights and other social issues. His preferred method is to cast untrained actors and actresses, rather than professionals. In *Offside*, he cast young women with no training and



Women who try to sneak into soccer game in Iran cheer from captivity in the film *Offside*

asked each of them to come up with their own disguise to get into the game.

The film follows six young women who try to sneak into a soccer stadium to see a game between Iran and Bahrain. We see one of them arriving on a minibus of soccer fans. Young men on the bus can tell she is female, but they decide to keep quiet because they don't want to hurt her chances of getting in.

She eventually gets caught, as do four other women. Soldiers place them in a pen just outside the stadium bleachers. They can hear the game, but can't see it. Then a sixth prisoner arrives. She had connived to get a military uniform and made it all the way to the officers' box.

The women berate the soldiers for denying them their right to see the game. The soldiers have a hard time coming up with reasons why the women should be banned. At one point they argue, "There are lots of men in there. They'll be curs-

ing and swearing." The women reply, "We promise not to listen."

One of the young women insists she needs to go to the bathroom, which turns into an amusing escape attempt. She eventually returns to the pen, having watched part of the game, because she's worried that the soldier in charge of the female prisoners will get into trouble for her escape. He's an Azerbaijani peasant who is due to be released from the service and anxious to get back to his farm and ailing mother. Until this unexpected episode, the Azerbaijani soldier feels only irritation at the young women who he sees as well to do idle people out to have fun.

Right before the conclusion of the game, the female prisoners are loaded into a minivan to be taken to the Vice Squad. In the course of their trip to jail, Iran wins over Bahrain. See the movie for the rest.

## THE MILITANT

### Free the Cuban Five!

*A stepped-up international campaign to win freedom for the Cuban Five was launched September 12. In the pages of the ‘Militant’ you can read about these five revolutionaries locked up in U.S. jails and the fight to win their release. Don’t miss a single issue!*



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# March on Washington opposes war in Iraq

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, September 15—Some 15,000 people marched here today against the war in Iraq. It was the first of three major antiwar actions slated to take place this fall.

Most participants came from eastern states, with smaller groups from the West and Midwest. The spirited march included many youth.

“This is my first march,” said Lisa Mitchell-Brooks, 36, a software program manager from Bronx, New York. “I got tired of throwing things at the TV and cursing Bush and Cheney.”

This was the second protest in as many weeks for Morgan Thomas, 19, a political science student at Howard University and a member of the campus Amnesty International chapter. Morgan said she heard about the demonstration from flyers on campus “and at the Jena Six rally a student urged people to come.”

Thomas was referring to a campus rally of 1,500 students last week in support of six Black high school students in Jena, Louisiana, who face long prison terms. Many participants in today’s antiwar march carried signs or wore T-shirts demanding “Drop the charges! Free the Jena 6!”

“It’s good to see so many young people here,” said James Bynum, 66, a retired high school teacher from Portland, Oregon. “I had to take a red-eye flight but this crowd is very encouraging. Impeaching the Bush bunch is the only way to end wars.”

Bynum’s sentiments on impeachment were echoed by many speakers at the rally. “The only thing that can stop Bush and his gang is impeachment,” said former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark.

Other speakers emphasized lobbying.

Cindy Sheehan, who became a prominent antiwar activist after her son Casey was killed in Iraq, was among the speakers promoting civil disobedience. She encouraged participation in a “die-in” at the Capitol following the march. “We need to lay our bodies on the line and shut down schools, federal buildings and Congress,” she said.

Cops used chemical spray against people participating in the “die-in” as they attempted to cross a police barricade. Some 189 people were arrested

at the civil disobedience action. City authorities also harassed march organizers in the weeks leading up to the demonstration, issuing fines and breaking up a press conference. Brian Becker, national coordinator of the ANSWER coalition, the principal organizer of the action, told the rally that the city has issued \$40,000 in fines against the group for putting up flyers and posters.

The antiwar march was led by a group of uniformed Iraq war veterans marching behind a large U.S. flag. There was also a prowar rally of about 700 organized by the rightist outfits Gathering of Eagles and Free Republic that featured speeches by retired military officers. Later the prowar demonstrators lined one side of Pennsylvania Avenue behind police barricades, taunting the an-



Militant/Ben Joyce

September 15 demonstration in Washington was first of three major antiwar actions this fall

tiwar marchers. They held signs reading “No surrender! No retreat!” and “Save Iraqi Lives! Stay the course!” Groups of rightists also confronted antiwar protesters on the Capitol grounds, in one case

almost leading to a fight.

Many antiwar marchers interviewed considered the demonstration a success. Georgia State University student Zack

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## Foreclosures add to grind on working class

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The percentage of U.S. homeowners facing foreclosure hit a record high in the second quarter of 2007, and more than 5 percent of all mortgage payments were delinquent, according to statistics released September 6 by the Mortgage Bankers Association of America (MBA).

While this crisis affects millions, it hits working people especially hard, given the bosses’ grind on living standards and working conditions.

Prices of many basic necessities are at all-time highs. Food prices jumped 4.2 percent in the 12 months ending in July. A gallon of milk is up 51 cents on average since February. A bushel of wheat is up 60 cents since January; a gallon of gas, 20 cents higher than a year ago.

These trends come on top of the squeeze on wages, benefits, and job conditions for the U.S. working class that began more than two decades ago. Faced with declining profit margins, the employers have pushed—and in many industries, succeeded—in forcing workers to work faster, longer, and with fewer benefits.

Average earnings for workers in the United States have steadily declined from the mid-1970s to today. Real weekly wages do not match levels from 40 years ago. When adjusted for inflation, the median hourly wage dropped 2 percent between 2003 and 2006. This

drop is even greater when cuts in benefits are factored in.

A September 3 report by the United Nation’s International Labor Organization said the United States “leads the world in labor productivity.” The report found that workers in the United States work more hours—an average of 1,804 per year—than those in most other advanced capitalist countries. They also produce more per hour than workers in any other country except Norway. At the heart of this “productivity miracle” is the degree to which bosses have succeeded in speeding up production and forcing fewer workers to do the same amount of work at the expense of safety and job conditions.

The capitalists have combined these assaults on the working class with massive financial speculation to stimulate economic growth. But the growth isn’t based on expanding production. The speculation on housing is now beginning to unwind. Working people bear the brunt of the effects of this process. Because of the grind on wages, benefits, hours, and conditions, workers have a much thinner cushion to absorb ups and downs in mortgage payments and grocery bills.

The largest percentage jump in foreclosures and delinquencies comes in the category of home loans known as subprime. Such loans are overwhelmingly extended to individuals with few assets who have previously been denied credit. Banks and other lending agencies have lured thousands of cash-strapped workers into the schemes, raking in massive profits off the high fees and interest rates.

Adjustable rate loans also account for a big share of the delinquencies and foreclosures. Through such loans workers can buy a home with little or no money down and low initial payments. After a couple of years the interest rates—and monthly payments—reset. But there is no accompanying “reset” of wages. An estimated 2.5 million people risk foreclosure in the next 18 months when their monthly mortgage payments jump.

The highest rates of foreclosures nationwide are in Ohio and Michigan—states whose working populations have been deeply affected by capitalist “restructuring” of the steel and auto industries. The percentage of homes in Ohio in serious delinquency or foreclosure is more than twice the national average.

Foreclosure proceedings began on one percent of all mortgages in Michigan during the second quarter of this year.

Michigan, the center of the U.S. auto industry for decades, leads the country in unemployment, at 7.2 percent in July. Ohio is fifth, with 5.8 percent. The national unemployment rate in August was 4.6 percent.

## UAW, GM in contract talks

BY CHAUNCEY ROBINSON

September 18—The United Auto Workers union (UAW) continued negotiations with General Motors Corp. (GM) today as its 73,000 members at GM plants nationwide went to work for the fourth day under an expired agreement.

One of the central issues in the negotiations is retiree health care. GM is asking for a fund for retirees, aimed at cutting billions of dollars in GM’s health-care costs. The company would give a certain amount of money to the fund and the union would take over responsibility for it. The UAW has asked for job guarantees in exchange.

The trust would be invested and would grow and shrink based on the success of those investments and how much is paid out. Retirees could face higher health-care costs or a complete loss of coverage if the fund runs out of money. Along with health care, the two sides have yet to come to an agreement on wages and “cost-cutting.” The changes that GM is seeking range from getting fewer workers to take on more jobs to outsourcing work deemed not directly related to building vehicles. The company also wants to cut the cost-of-living allowance and gut the union’s Jobs Bank, through which members get most of their take-home pay while laid off.

Strike preparations began at GM plants across the United States on September 14. Lead negotiator for the UAW Cal Rapson wrote in a September 13 note to members that “a strike might well be unavoidable” if the union didn’t make more progress in negotiations.

This June, the UAW agreed to a concession contract with Delphi Corp., GM’s largest parts supplier, that included major cuts in wages, plant closings, and the elimination of the Jobs Bank.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**Socialist Candidates Speak Out.** Speakers: Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of San Francisco; Chauncey Robinson, SWP candidate for sheriff; Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for district attorney. Fri., Sept. 28. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; panel, 7:30 pm. 3926 Mission St. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It—Lessons from the Past Century.** Speaker: Chuck Guerra, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 28, 7:30 pm. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707.

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

**Defend the Jena Six!** Fri., Sept. 28. Dinner, 6:30 pm; program, 7:30 pm. Suggested donation: \$5 Dinner, \$5 program. 1311 1/2 E Lake St. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**The Political Legacy of Thomas Sankara.** Speakers: Mike Taber, Socialist Workers Party; Ingrid Franco, Young Socialists. Fri., Sept. 28. Dinner, 7:00 pm; program, 8:00 pm. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd Fl. Tel.: (973) 481-0077.

### TEXAS

#### Houston

**Free the Cuban Five!** Speakers: Tom Kleven, professor, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Texas Southern University; Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party candidate for controller. Fri., Sept. 28. Dinner, 6:30 pm; program, 7:30 pm. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel: (713) 688-4919.

## CALENDAR

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Stop the War at Home & Abroad.** National march, Sat., Sept. 29. Tel: (212) 633-6646. [www.TroopsOutNow.org](http://www.TroopsOutNow.org). Sponsors: Troops Out Now Coalition and others.



# New York campus meeting builds Young Socialists

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

## YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY CASEY LOGAN

CLINTON, New York, September 13—"What's behind imperialism's spreading wars and financial disorder?" was the title of a program at Hamilton College sponsored by the Young Socialists here today.

A dozen people, including eight students, attended. The event was chaired and organized by Chris Batchelder, 19, a student at Hamilton College. Speakers included YS leaders Ben O'Shaughnessy from New York City and Ben Joyce, a student at the State University of New York at Albany.

"Iraq is the most important front for U.S. imperialism in its multi-theater war that extends from Iraq and Afghanistan to the Philippines and beyond," said O'Shaughnessy. "The wars abroad are an extension of the continued assaults on the working and living conditions of workers and farmers here at home."

O'Shaughnessy said that neither capitalist party is offering any alternative to the course at home or abroad. He said the recent hearings in Congress show the rulers are committed to staying in Iraq for the long term.

"Young people are asking what is the cause of imperialist war? Who benefits?" said Joyce. "Most importantly, what can be done?"

Joyce explained that the YS, alongside the Socialist Workers Party, fights to build a movement of workers, farmers, and youth in the United States capable of taking power out of the hands of the exploiters and building a system based on human solidarity, not the dog-eat-dog morality of capitalism.

"The YS will be in Washington, D.C., on September 15 and 29 to demand 'Not one penny, not one person for Washington's wars,'" said Joyce. "We invite all those who oppose the imperialist war drive to join us."

In addition to antiwar actions, Joyce said the YS is reaching out on campuses to build meetings in defense of the Cuban Five as part of an international campaign of stepped-up activity to win their release.

"The Cuban Five are an example for revolutionary-minded young people today," said Joyce. "Their will to continue to fight has not been broken behind bars, despite attempts by the rulers to break



Militant/Ben Joyce

YS contingent at September 15 antiwar march in Washington, D.C. Young Socialists built this and other antiwar actions at a September 13 event at Hamilton College in Utica, New York.

their spirits. They continue to resist, as millions of Cubans have, against imperialism for almost 50 years."

During the discussion, several students asked what the YS thought about running in elections and what party young people should vote for.

O'Shaughnessy responded that communists use capitalist elections to reach out broadly to working people and youth with a working-class alternative. He said that the YS campaigns for and runs on the Socialist Workers Party ticket in local, statewide, and national elections. He encouraged all youth repulsed by the bipartisan course being carried out to vote for the Socialist Workers ticket

in local elections this fall and the 2008 presidential elections.

"The problem is bigger than one person," said Batchelder. "There's a system in place running on profit and exploitation and there is a need to change the system to make any sort of change."

After the program several students signed up for more information about the YS and to get involved in protest actions. Batchelder invited those present to join others organizing on campus to attend an antiwar action in Syracuse, New York, on September 29.

"Hopefully this is the start of a sustained YS presence on campus," said Batchelder.

# Jena 6 fight resonates due to 'racism that exists today'

Continued from front page

be charged in juvenile court. Four of the remaining defendants were 17 at the time of the arrest and are not affected by the judge's ruling.

"It's great that the court struck down the first conviction," Sterling Kokroko, 26, a student from Texas Southern University, told the *Militant*. "But this is about racism right across this country. We are demanding freedom for all the Jena Six. Drop all the charges. It is crucial that we be there next week."

The Jena Six students were arrested following a December 4, 2006, fight with a white student. The fight followed months of racist harassment and attacks against Black students.

A year ago, African American students in Jena, a central Louisiana city of 3,000, began campaigning to challenge racist practices at their school. At an Aug. 31, 2006, school assembly a Black student asked if Black students had a

right to sit under a schoolyard tree where only white students sat. Following the assembly, he sat under it. The next day three nooses were hanging from the tree. White students who hung them received suspensions of three days.

Five days after the incident, Black students organized a sit-in under the tree to protest the light suspensions.

The day of the sit-in, the district attorney addressed an emergency school assembly. He told the protesting African American students they should stop making a fuss about the "innocent prank." He threatened that if they did not, "I can take away your lives with a stroke of my pen."

Harassment increased in the following months. On December 1, a Black student was beat up by whites at a party. The next day a young white man pulled a loaded shotgun on a Black student, who disarmed him. No charges were filed against the white man, but the Black youth was later arrested.

On December 4 another fight occurred. Justin Baker, a white student, was injured, treated at a local hospital, and attended a school social later that day. Six African American students were arrested and charged with attempted second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Their bail was set from \$70,000 to \$138,000. They were all expelled from school.

Bell went to trial first. His public defender called no defense witnesses and an all-white jury rapidly convicted Bell of aggravated assault. The charge carries a possible 15-year sentence.

Relatives of the students formed the Jena 6 Defense Committee, appealing for support around the country. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the NAACP, National Lawyers Guild, Millions More

Movement, other civil rights organizations, and dozens of student organizations across the country have spoken in defense of the Jena Six.

On July 31 people from other Louisiana cities, as well as from Texas and other states, came to a rally in Jena. Last month Jena high school students wearing "Free the Jena 6" t-shirts were told over the school public address system that the shirts were banned from school.

"Some people say they are surprised about what happened there. I'm not," Zadia Murphy, a member of the campus NAACP chapter and the Council of Ethnic Organizations at the University of Houston, told the *Militant*. "They have exposed the racism that exists today, and not just in Jena."

Amanda Ulman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Houston mayor, contributed to this article.

## 51 arrested in Iowa immigration raid

BY KEVIN DWIRE

CLARION, Iowa, September 15—Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested 51 workers during raids on six DeCoster Farms egg processing facilities here September 13.

"They came around 9:35 a.m. I got a call on my cell phone that the *migra* was there," a worker who asked to remain anonymous told the *Militant*. "Cops in unmarked cars had surrounded the egg farm together with the *migra* about two minutes before. We got into a car and took off and ran into the police right way. When we took off, the *migra* followed us. Another car with workers got stuck, but we managed to get away."

"I think the raids are racism," he said. "We just want to work."

ICE spokesperson Tim Counts said that most of the workers, who are originally from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, "will end up being deported. Our agency has determined they are in the country illegally."

The farmland around Clarion is dotted with egg processing and hog confinement operations, many owned by DeCoster Farms. Some workers told the *Militant* that they are paid \$7.00 an hour. Others get paid piece rate.

"The companies need us," said a woman who works in a hog confinement facility and asked that her name not be used. "My husband is a midwife to the pigs," she joked. "He takes care of them when they give birth. I tell him, what would the company do if we didn't come to work for a week or two? They can't raise the pigs without us."

In 2001 and 2006 immigration cops arrested more than 120 workers during raids on DeCoster facilities. According to the *Des Moines Register*, the recent raid "was a follow-up to a 2003 action against Austin 'Jack' DeCoster, the company's owner, who pleaded guilty in federal court in Sioux City to two counts of aiding and abetting the continued employment of illegal immigrants."

As part of the plea bargain reached in that case, DeCoster, who got five years' probation, agreed to a five-year program that enables ICE to inspect the company's records and facilities unannounced.

In 2002 DeCoster Farms agreed to pay \$1.5 million to women workers who were raped and abused by supervisors. According to *Rural Migration News*, the women said that supervisors "sexually assaulted female employees and threatened to kill those who complained."

### Chicago rally: 'Defend Jena 6!'

CHICAGO, September 16—Melissa Bell and Marcus Jones, parents of jailed Louisiana high school student Mychal Bell, addressed a rally of 500 here today at Whitney Young High School. Bell is one of the Jena Six.

The rally was sponsored by the Chicago chapter of the National Action Network (NAN). Al Sharpton, NAN founder, spoke. "We are going to Jena and we are not going to back down until we have all the charges dropped," he said. He also announced plans to build a march in Chicago against police brutality.

—DENNIS RICHTER



## California laundry workers strike for union



Militant/Dean Hazelwood

COMMERCE, California—Striking laundry workers and their supporters held a spirited picket line and rally here September 15. These workers at Prudential Overall Supply organized by UNITE HERE have stopped work to back striking workers at the company's Vista and Milpitas, California, plants. "The workers at the other plants want a union and the company is trying to intimidate them," said Lily Villanueva, who works in the Commerce facility. "There is lots of abuse. It is very hot in the plant and they are told not to drink water so they won't have to go to the bathroom. Whether or not you get a raise is up to the supervisor. We went out in solidarity with them."

—WENDY LYONS

# Canada forestry workers firm in two-month strike

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO  
AND NED DMYTRYSHYN

PORT MCNEILL, British Columbia—"We have to fight to hang on to our unions because without them, we have nothing," said striking forestry worker Lois Williams, a scaler and a member of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1-2171, in a September 15 interview.

Since going on strike July 21, 7,000 unionists on the British Columbia coast have maintained picket lines. They have affected the operations of Island Timberlands, Interfor, and 31 other companies represented by Forest Industrial Relations Ltd. (FIR). The workers are striking to end management's ability to impose shifts and use nonunion contractors. Safety is also a key issue—43 forestry workers were killed on the job in 2005.

"The companies just want to push production," said logger Wendy Clarke. "All they care about is their shareholders, not the workers." Clarke, co-chair of Local 1-2171's strike committee in Powell River, had just returned from monitoring the movement of log booms by nonunion contractors hired by Interfor in Jervis Inlet. "We will be continuing and stepping up these actions,"



Militant/Dan Grant

September 14 picket line of striking forestry workers in Powell River, British Columbia.

she said.

The USW is also fighting to bring the expiration date of the coastal workers' contract in line with that of the interior forestry workers. Strikers explain this will enable them to fight as one union—something they lost with a 2003 government-imposed contract. "We need to get that common date back in 2009," said Jack Miller, a logger and union safety representative here in Port McNeill.

In addition to maintaining picket lines, the strikers have carried out actions on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast. USW members and spouses blocked a nonunion truck for Western Forest Products (WFP) from taking lumber in Port Alberni September 12. More than 300 rallied outside the WFP headquarters in Duncan September 7 to demand FIR get back to the bargaining table. WFP is the largest player in FIR.

In Port McNeill, more than 100 strikers and their supporters marched September 5. A September 25 action is aimed at getting women out to show support for the strike. Union members want to counter antistrike material sent by the companies to union households.

For further information, contact USW Local 1-2171 in Port McNeill at (250) 956-4312.

## Indonesia: earthquakes' impact magnified

Continued from front page  
and other imperialist powers.

"Almost 75 percent of houses on the coastline along a 10-kilometer stretch are badly damaged and collapsed," Frans Karal, a local official, told the press. An estimated 15,000 buildings have collapsed or been seriously damaged. Agence France-Presse reported September 15 that rescue workers are still scouring the rubble to search for victims feared trapped.

The official death toll is 23. Another 88 are reported injured. Both figures are expected to increase. Hundreds of thousands of people living along the coasts have fled to the higher ground.

The island has 1,100 miles of coast along the Indian Ocean. In December 2004, an undersea earthquake near the northwestern coast sent a massive tsunami rippling across the Indian Ocean. More than two-thirds of the 230,000 people killed in that disaster were in northern Sumatra.

As in 2004, the impact of this most recent disaster is amplified by centuries of imperialist domination. Indonesia, and Sumatra in particular, are rich in natural resources—oil, gas, palm oil, rubber, lumber, gold, and numerous other minerals. Much of the country's wealth is today siphoned off by monopolies and giant banks in the imperialist centers. This system is propped up locally by Indonesia's ruling class of landlords and capitalists.

The country's debt to international banks equals 45 percent of its gross domestic product. The imperialists use this unpayable debt as a mechanism to further extract the country's wealth.

The majority of Indonesia's 235 million people survive on less than \$2 a day, and 18 percent on \$1 a day or less. The 80 million-plus people in the latter category "spend a quarter of their earnings on rice, which has risen in price by more than a third in the past year," the *Economist* reported in September 2006.

Indonesia's government began efforts to build a network of tsunami warning systems along the coast following the 2004 disaster. Government officials claim the system will be fully functional by 2008.

But the warning systems that have been installed so far played little or no role in minimizing the social catastrophe this time.

The fundamental problem is the lack of electricity and infrastructure, includ-

ing for modern communications.

In one village the warning siren did not work due to a power outage. The village was hit by a small tsunami. A radio and Internet early warning system in Padang, one of the hardest-hit cities, also failed.

According to official government statistics, more than one-fifth of Sumatra's population has no access to electricity. More than half live in villages without a telephone.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 1, 1982

Unarmed civilians gunned down in their homes, women and children rounded up and driven away in cattle trucks, wounded patients murdered in their hospital beds—the entire world has reacted with shock and anger at the appalling images of the massacre in West Beirut.

Denying "any blame whatsoever" for the massacre, the Israeli government said that those charging it with complicity in the deed were leveling "a blood libel."

But the Israeli cabinet formally approved the entry of the rightist forces into the Palestinian refugee camps. Israeli troops escorted the killers to the place of their crime, backed them up with tanks, and lighted their way with flares.

President Reagan said he was "horrified" by the massacre. But the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was fully supported by Washington from the very beginning.

The Israeli phosphorous bombs, cluster bombs, and high explosive shells that had caused nearly 50,000 casualties in Lebanon even before the latest massacre were all made in the USA.



September 30, 1957

An outraged world public opinion finally compelled President Eisenhower to send federal troops to escort the nine Negro school children into the Little Rock High School.

The pressure compelling Eisenhower's about-face was both national and international. In this country the Negro people were aroused to an anger surpassing even that caused by the lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till two years ago.

[W]hen [Arkansas Governor Orval] Faubus did withdraw the National Guardsmen from Central High School, it was with the certainty that the Negro children would still be kept out—this time by a racist mob.

The most informative account appeared in the *New York Post* (Sept. 24) which said:

"There was ample evidence today that the segregationist mob at Central HS yesterday had organization and leadership. Prominent in the crowd was Jimmy Karam, State Athletic Commissioner, operator of a professional strike-breaking service and close friend of Gov. Faubus."



October 1, 1932

All eyes on Gillespie, Illinois! On October 3 the first conference of the Progressive Miners of America will go into session in this mining town. This will mark the high point of the first phase of our activities in the Illinois coal fields.

Then will begin the second phase of our work—the steady, plugging, day-to-day work of getting subs, making contacts and mouth-to-mouth discussions. In this work the *Militant* must be our best and ever-present spokesman. Our present distributions are good but whether a miner gets two successive issues is a hit-and-miss proposition. If our policy is to be made clear to the miners, especially the more advanced miners, they must get and read the *Militant* regularly.

The solution of the problem is to get subs for the miners. We have a list of miners who want the *Militant* but cannot afford even fifty cents for a half-year sub. Just as fast as we hear from you we will begin to transfer those names to the *Militant* mailing list.



# ‘A revolution needs an entire people mobilized’

Che Guevara speech, ‘To be a revolutionary doctor, you must first make a revolution’

*Below is an excerpt from Che Guevara Talks to Young People. It is one of several titles from Pathfinder Press on Cuba's living revolutionary example highlighting the communist course of Ernesto Che Guevara. The excerpt below is from a talk given by Guevara on Aug. 19, 1960, that inaugurated a series of discussions by Cuba's Ministry of Public Health. At the time the Ministry's priority was the creation of a network of rural hospitals and clinics to extend health care to the majority of peasants who had no access to regular services prior to the revolution. A system of free medical care was progressively introduced and by 1963 covered the entire country. We reprint it on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Guevara's death in combat in Bolivia on Oct. 9, 1967. Copyright © 2000 Pathfinder Press, Aleida March/Che's Personal Archive. Reprinted by permission.*

## BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Compañeros: This modest ceremony is only one among hundreds being held as the Cuban people celebrate day by day their freedom and the advance of all their revolutionary laws, their advance along the road to total independence. But I find it interesting nonetheless.

Almost everyone knows that a number of years ago I started out my career to be a doctor. And when I started, when I began to study medicine, the majority of the concepts I hold today as a revolutionary were absent from the storehouse of my ideals.

I wanted to succeed, as everybody wants to succeed. I dreamed of being a famous researcher. I dreamed of work-



Meeting with medical students in Havana, Cuba, Aug. 19, 1960. From right to left medical doctors and commanders of the Rebel Army Oscar Fernández Mell, Ernesto Che Guevara, and José Ramón Machado Ventura. At far left is Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén.

ing tirelessly to achieve something that could really be put at the disposal of humanity, but that would be a personal triumph at the same time. I was, as we all are, a child of my environment.

Through special circumstances and perhaps also because of my character, after receiving my degree I began to travel through Latin America and got to know it intimately. Except for Haiti and the Dominican Republic, I have visited—to one degree or another—all the countries of Latin America. Given how I traveled, first as a student and afterward as a doctor, I began to come into close contact with poverty, with hunger, with disease, with the inability to cure a child due to lack of resources, with the numbness that hunger and unrelenting punishment cause until a point is reached where a parent losing a child becomes an accident of no importance, as is often the case among those classes in our Latin American homeland who have been dealt the heaviest blows. And I began to see there was something that seemed to me almost as important as being a famous researcher or making a substantial contribution to medical science: it was helping those people.

But I continued to be, as all of us always are, a child of my environment, and I wanted to help people through my personal efforts. I had already traveled a lot—I was then in Guatemala, the Guatemala of Arbenz—and I had begun to make some notes to guide the conduct of a revolutionary doctor. I began to look into what was needed for me to be a revolutionary doctor.

However, the aggression came, the aggression unleashed by the United Fruit Company, the State Department, [John] Foster Dulles—they're really all the same thing—and by the puppet they put in who was named Castillo Armas—*was* named! The aggression was successful, since the people were not yet at the level of maturity the Cuban people have reached today. So one fine day, I, like many others, took the road of exile, or at least I took the road of fleeing Guatemala, since that was not my homeland.

Then I realized a fundamental thing: to be a revolutionary doctor, or to be a revolutionary, there must first be a revo-

lution. The isolated effort, the individual effort, the purity of ideals, the desire to sacrifice an entire lifetime to the noblest of ideals—all that is for naught if the effort is made alone, solitary, in some corner of Latin America, fighting against hostile governments and social conditions that permit no progress. A revolution needs what we have in Cuba: an entire people who are mobilized, who have learned the use of arms and the practice of unity in combat, who know what a weapon is worth and what the people's unity is worth.

Then we get to the heart of the problem that today lies ahead of us. We already have the right and even the obligation to be, before anything else, a revolutionary doctor, that is, a person who puts the technical knowledge of his profes-

ate a new type of human being. If each one of us is his own architect in doing so, then creating that new type of human being—who will be the representative of the new Cuba—will be much easier.

It is good for you—those present here, residents of Havana—to absorb this idea: that in Cuba a new type of human being is coming into existence, one that cannot be entirely appreciated in the capital, but that can be seen in every corner of the country. Those of you who went to the Sierra Maestra on July 26 must have seen two absolutely unheard-of things: an army with picks and shovels, one that takes such pride in marching in the patriotic celebrations in Oriente province with its picks and shovels ready, side by side with the militia *compañeros* marching with their rifles. [Applause] But you must also have seen something more important: You must have seen some children who by their physical stature appear eight or nine years old, but who are nevertheless almost all thirteen or fourteen. They are the most authentic children of the Sierra Maestra, the most authentic children of hunger and poverty in all its forms. They are the creatures of malnutrition.

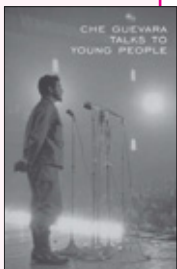
In this small Cuba with four or five television channels, with hundreds of radio stations, despite all the advances of modern science, when those children for the first time came to school at night and saw electric lights, they exclaimed that the stars were very low that night. Those children, whom some of you would have seen, have now been brought together in schools where they are learning everything from the ABCs right up to a trade, right up to the very difficult science of being a revolutionary.

These are the new types of human beings emerging in Cuba. They are being

## CHE GUEVARA TALKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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Militant / T.J. Figueroa

Cuban doctor and South African nurse in orthopedic ward of hospital in rural township in South Africa. Thousands of Cuban doctors volunteering all over the world are an example of the “new type of human being” created by the Cuban Revolution that Che talks about.

sion at the service of the revolution and of the people. Then we come back to the earlier questions: How does one do a job of social welfare effectively? How does one reconcile individual effort with the needs of society?

Once again we have to recall what each of our lives was like prior to the revolution—what each of us did and thought, as a doctor or in any other public health function. We must do so with profound critical enthusiasm. And we will conclude that almost everything we thought and felt in that past epoch should be filed away, and we should cre-

born in isolated places, in remote points in the Sierra Maestra and also in the co-operatives and workplaces.

All that has a lot to do with the topic of our talk today: the integration of the doctor or any other medical worker into the revolutionary movement. Because the revolution's tasks—of training and nourishing the children, educating the army, distributing the lands of the absentee landlords among those who sweated every day on that same land without reaping its fruit—those are the greatest works of social medicine that Cuba has achieved.



# Cuban academics attend Latin American Studies conference in Montreal

BY SAM MANUEL

MONTREAL—Opposition to the U.S. government's hostility toward Cuba marked the 27th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), held here September 5–8. LASA, a U.S.-based academic association, moved its meeting to Montreal after Washington blocked Cuban academics from attending the last several congresses in the United States and in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico by denying them visas.

This year the largest delegation of Cuban academics and writers ever to attend a LASA congress spoke on panels, gave workshops, read poetry, and showed Cuban films.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, was a featured speaker. He appealed to the academics, writers, and researchers present to support efforts to win the release of five Cuban revolutionaries being held unjustly in U.S. jails.

"We want to especially welcome our Cuban colleagues who are attending this congress in unprecedented numbers," said outgoing LASA president Charles Hale at the opening session. Hale reported that 120 Cuban academics and writers were in attendance. He also said that of the 5,000 participants in the congress, 1,200 were from Latin America.

"We are meeting here because of the U.S. government's action last year in denying visas to the entire Cuban delegation to our last congress," Hale said. Participants in the congress applauded

as he reported that in response to that exclusion, LASA's board had approved a resolution not to meet in the United States again until the policy of refusing to grant visas to Cuban academics is changed.

Just weeks before LASA's 2006 congress in Puerto Rico the U.S. government denied visas to all 55 Cuban scholars who had planned to attend. In 2004 all 65 Cubans planning to attend that year's LASA meeting were informed just 10 days before that they would be barred from entering the United States. In 2003 only 60 of the 105 Cuban academics scheduled to attend LASA's congress were given visas.

The main speaker at the opening session was Canada's Governor General Michaëlle Jean. She spoke about the Canadian government's "collaboration" with governments in Latin America in "reestablishing democracy" in Haiti. Canada has some 100 cops in Haiti as part of an international "peacekeeping" mission.

Jean never mentioned Cuba, with which Canada has diplomatic and trade relations. In one of the workshops Elena Diaz from the University of Havana explained that while Canada has normal relations with Cuba it joins with the United States and the European Union to pressure Cuba.

Alarcón spoke to a packed room of more than 800. It was the largest session of the congress and had to be moved from its original location. He called for an end to the decades-long

defense attorneys argued for throwing out the convictions. "We are waiting for a decision we hope will vitiate this injustice and begin to set the record straight," said Weinglass.

The meeting was chaired by Kurt Schmoke, dean of the Law School and a former mayor of Baltimore.

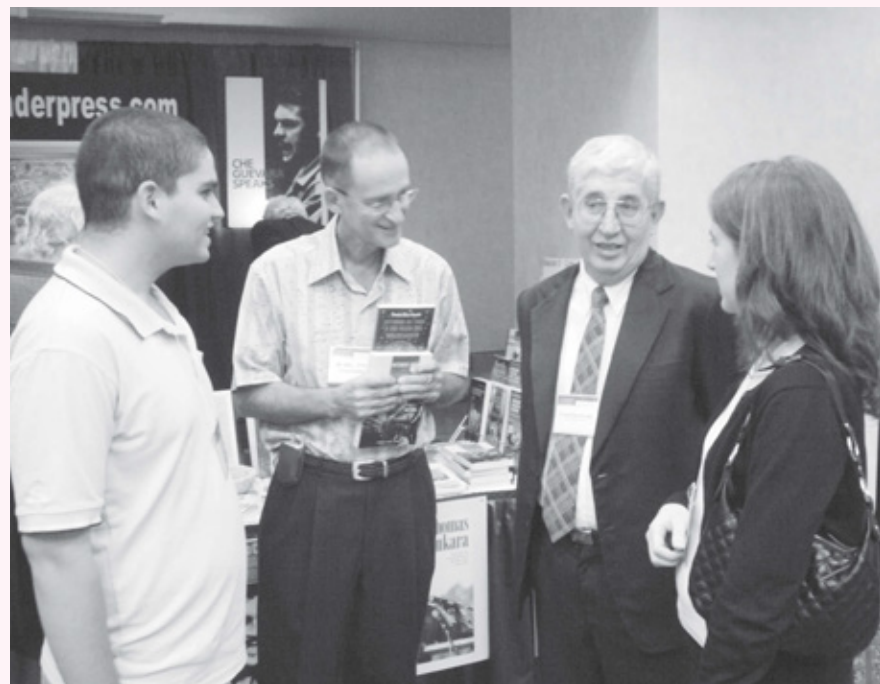
In response to a question from the audience, Weinglass urged people to join Free the Five defense committees to get out the word about this case.

"I thought the meeting was excellent," Roland Blackman, 24, a law student from Atlanta, told the *Militant*. Blackman said that he had heard about the case before. "I believe Cuba has the right to protect its interests," he said.

"You have to be optimistic," law student Detravivus Bethea, 30, said in an interview at a reception after the meeting. "They might have a chance if it is moved out of Miami." He added that building support for the case and for other frame-up victims was important. He and other students are planning to travel to Jena, Louisiana, to support the Jena Six—Black students facing jail sentences for allegedly fighting with white students after nooses were hung from a school yard tree.

"I came because you don't hear about these cases in school when people are being wrongfully convicted," said Sasha, 26, a law student

## Pathfinder at Latin American Studies meeting



Militant/Arnold Weissberg

MONTREAL—Tomás Diez Acosta (second from right), author of *October 1962: The "Missile" Crisis As Seen From Cuba*, speaks at a September 8 lunch break meeting and book signing at the Pathfinder Booth at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Congress in Montreal. Acosta participated in the general mobilization of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces during the crisis. His book was the best-selling Pathfinder title at the LASA congress.

Participants in the congress bought 32 Pathfinder titles and 14 copies of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, a magazine of the Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba that is distributed by Pathfinder. Other top sellers at the meeting included *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolution* by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983–87 revolution in Burkina Faso; *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War*; *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*; *Sexism and Science* by Evelyn Reed; and several copies of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist theory and politics.

—SAM MANUEL

aggression by Washington against Cuba, which has cost thousands of Cuban lives and countless economic hardships.

He explained that the five Cubans framed up on charges of conspiracy to

commit espionage and murder committed no crimes. They were in the United States to gather information about the activities of organizations that have carried out attacks against Cuba from Florida, Alarcón said.

The four-day meeting included more than 1,000 workshops and panels. Scholars from across the United States and Latin America, including from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Brazil, made presentations. The next LASA congress is scheduled to take place in June 2009 in Rio de Janeiro.

## Howard University hosts Cuban 5 event

Continued from front page

change of venue just a few miles north to Fort Lauderdale. In Miami the "chances for a fair trial were virtually zero," he said, due to the number of counterrevolutionary Cuban Americans there.

A three-judge panel threw out their convictions on this basis in 2005. The full 12-judge court later reversed the decision and reinstated the convictions.

At a Federal Appeals hearing last month (see September 10 *Militant*),

who preferred not to give her last name.

Law student Alexandra Gormely, 23, said she came because "I'm not so hot on things the U.S. government is attempting to sweep under the rug."

## U.S. hostility toward Cuba marks Florida custody case

BY RUTH ROBINETT

MIAMI—The state of Florida is challenging Rafael Izquierdo, a farmer in Cabaiguán, Cuba, over custody of his 5-year-old daughter. The U.S. government's hostility toward the Cuban Revolution permeates the case.

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) took the girl and her 10-year-old half brother into custody in December 2005 when their mother, Elena Perez, was unable to care for them. Perez and the children immigrated from Cuba to the United States in 2005 after winning a visa lottery. Eighteen months ago, DCF placed the children in foster care with Joe and Maria Cubas, a wealthy Cuban-American family in Coral Gables, Florida. The DCF is arguing for the court to grant permanent custody to the Cubas family.

"The United States is reluctant to repatriate a child to a communist country," said Judge Jeri B. Cohen.

Joe Cubas gained notoriety as a sports

agent who aggressively recruited Cuban baseball players to defect. According to the *Miami Herald*, he did this by "stalking the star-studded Cuban team around the world from Tokyo to Millington, Tennessee." He profited from commissions on his clients' multimillion-dollar professional contracts.

On September 12, Cohen threw out key pieces of the state's case. Earlier, Cohen dismissed the state's charge that awarding custody to Izquierdo would amount to "child abuse" because it would damage the five-year-old to remove her from a wealthy foster home and return her to Cuba.

DCF is trying to get the court to rule that Izquierdo abandoned his child after allowing his wife to immigrate with her. Perez wants the girl returned to him.

"Believe me, if it was up to me, it would be a lot easier," said Cohen, referring to the burden of proof required under Florida law to rule that a parent abandoned their child.

### U.S. denies visas to wives of Cuban 5

September 12—The International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five reported that the U.S. government denied visas today to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wives of two of the imprisoned Cuban revolutionaries.

Two days earlier, mayors of 13 California cities—including Berkeley, Pasadena, Richmond, Salinas, and Santa Cruz—sent a letter to the Justice Department calling for the visas to be granted.

Salanueva, who is married to René González, and Pérez, married to Gerardo Hernández, have been trying for eight years to visit their husbands in jail. Washington has denied them visas every time they have applied.

—CINDY JAQUITH



# Socialist candidates campaign at Australia protest

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Alasdair Macdonald and Ron Poulsen, Communist League candidates in the upcoming federal elections, campaigned at a September 8 protest here against the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

Some 10,000 people joined the demonstration. The right to protest became a key issue as a massive police operation was mounted to lock down half the city center during the APEC forum. The forum was attended by government leaders from the 21 APEC member states, including U.S. president George Bush.

“We call for the repeal of all ‘anti-terror’ laws, say no to special police powers, and defend the right to protest,” said Poulsen, campaigning at the demonstration. “We also call for an end to the federal government’s takeover of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.”

Rows of cops lined the march route, blocking every side street with riot buses. Backed up with a water cannon purchased for the event, the police cordoned off the park where the final rally was held. The New South Wales government said the security “overkill” was necessary “to protect our city.” Despite police warnings of a violent protest, the march was largely peaceful. The protest had as its official demands “Bring the



Militant/Bob Aiken

Ten thousand protested the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Sydney, Australia.

troops home”; “Defend workers’ rights”; and “Stop global warming.” It was organized by the Stop Bush Coalition.

Prior to the APEC summit, Bush and Prime Minister John Howard announced agreements to strengthen the close military alliance between the United States and Australia. Bush also met with Labor Party opposition

leader Kevin Rudd, who calls for scaling down Australian forces in Iraq. Bush said it was impossible to separate the war in Iraq from the war in Afghanistan, which Labor supports.

“The Communist League demands the immediate withdrawal of Australian and all ‘coalition’ troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, and all other

theaters of the so-called war on terror,” said Poulsen. “And we call for all Australian troops and cops out of East Timor and the Pacific.” He encouraged protesters to attend a Militant Labor Forum that evening opposing Australian and New Zealand imperialist intervention in the Pacific.

Macdonald, 26, a meat packer and member of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees’ Union, pointed to the number of youth who had joined the protest. “To the young people here today who want to fight against war, racism, police brutality, and the destruction of the environment, I explain that these are the consequences of capitalism. I encourage young fighters to join the Communist League campaign.

“We join protests to demand the repeal of the antiunion WorkChoices laws and to fight for safe working conditions. We say that safety is a union question—no worker has to die on the job,” Macdonald said. Macdonald was asked about climate change, one of the issues being discussed at APEC. He answered that it is the bosses who are responsible for destroying the environment in their never-ending quest for profits.

## Union files lawsuit against immigration cops

Continued from front page

(ICE) agents unlawfully detained workers and violated their constitutional rights during the raids.

The UFCW lawsuit asks that ICE carry out any future raids in accordance with “the due process clause and equal protection guarantee” of the Fourth and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

The lawsuit also demands that the Department of Homeland Security and ICE pay damages to the workers.

ICE agents arrested 1,297 workers at the plants, but union officials have said more than 12,000 workers were detained against their will during the operation. The plants raided were in Cactus, Texas; Grand Island, Nebraska; Greeley, Colorado; Hyrum, Utah; Marshalltown, Iowa; and Worthington, Minnesota.

UFCW officials said that some workers who weren’t accused of breaking

any laws were handcuffed for hours and denied access to phones, bathrooms, legal counsel, and their families.

According to ICE, 274 of the people arrested during the raids were charged with identity theft or other crimes unrelated to violating immigration laws. Nearly all were convicted.

Of those arrested for being in the country illegally, 649 had been removed from the United States as of March 1, the most recent numbers available.

Two Marshalltown Swift workers, Michael Ray Graves and Alicia Rodriguez, are among eight people named in the federal civil rights lawsuit. Union officials expect at least three times that many to testify against the federal agents.

In the lawsuit, Rodriguez said she was held for six hours, and “assaulted and battered by at least one ICE agent.” Union officials told the press that they

have photographs of the bruises she suffered during her detention. She told the *Des Moines Register* that she was never advised of her rights to remain silent or to counsel or permitted access to an attorney.

One of the workers at the Greeley, Colorado, plant, Sergio Rodriguez, told the Associated Press that he was taken from the plant and detained for about 12 hours at a Denver detention center before federal officials found out he was a legal permanent resident. Rodriguez, 46, said he unsuccessfully asked officials six times to use the telephone. He also said he was handcuffed tightly using temporary plastic handcuffs that left marks on his wrists for more than two weeks after his arrest.

“Work is not a crime, and workers do not leave their constitutional rights at the plant gate,” UFCW International President Joseph Hansen said.

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# Join defense efforts for Jena 6!

**Continued from front page**

seven times as likely to be imprisoned as whites. Blacks make up 41 percent of the prison population, but just 13 percent of the overall population.

Racism permeates the entire capitalist system. In the workplace, the employers profit from paying Blacks less and forcing them into the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs. This discrimination helps drag down the working conditions of all workers. Bosses foster anti-Black prejudices in an attempt to keep the class divided and to prevent workers from fighting together for better conditions.

But the racist oppression the rulers mete out is only one side of the story. Workers who are Black have a long political record in the United States of playing a leadership role in mass struggles that is disproportionately weighty compared to their numbers in the working class as a whole. This record begins in the closing years of the U.S. Civil War and the postwar battle for Radical Reconstruction, through the battles that built the unions and the industrial labor movement, through antiracist struggles during World War II. The mass civil rights and Black liberation struggles from the mid-1950s through the early 1970s had a social and political impact on the working class and the labor movement that contin-

ues to this day.

This legacy is an enormous strength for the working class today, as fights against deteriorating safety conditions, declining wages, and antiunion assaults become more and more pressing. Workers who are Black will be an indispensable component of the fighting political vanguard of the labor movement in the sharpening class battles ahead.

When asked by a reporter in 1965 if he was trying to wake Black people up to their oppression, Malcolm X replied, “No, to their humanity, to their own worth, to their heritage.”

Five decades ago, workers and peasants in Cuba woke up to their humanity. They took political power out of the hands of the exploiters and made a socialist revolution. With that act, they eliminated the material roots of racist oppression. Today, workers and peasants in Cuba have a powerful tool to combat racism—a government that represents the interests of the majority.

As Cuba’s toilers learned, the capitalist rulers will never correct injustice of their own accord. Joining mobilizations in defense of the Jena Six can help expose this frame-up and make the rulers pay a high political price for the blatant racism they foster. Justice for the Jena Six! Drop all the charges now!

# Minnesota meat packers rally for union

**Continued from front page**

60 days from the date of the announcement. In the meantime, workers are stepping up their fight to keep the union in the plant.

“All of us have to vote for the union,” said kill floor worker Argelia Dias.

“No more stalling—justice now!” reads the leaflet for a September 19 protest in front of the plant. It lists what workers are fighting for in a new contract as “slower lines and adequate staff,” “wage increases,” “union access to the plant,” and “an end to blatant harassment of union stewards and leaders.”

Local 789 activists are building the protest by talking to coworkers and contacting other unions. They’ve also made announcements and passed out flyers at events in the community. They promoted the action at a benefit for members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees on strike at the University of Minnesota and at a Mexican Independence Day celebration.

“The protest is very important because you can see the union there, and the union is us, the workers,” said Dias. “We have to be there and support each other.”

On September 7, the company denied union representatives access to the plant. Pro-union workers on the kill and deboning sides passed out a flyer during break September 14 protesting this. “This denial is a

violation of our Union Contract and also against national labor law for unionized work places,” the flyer said. “We must stand together over this outrageous attempt to separate us.”

For its part, management is stepping up efforts to get the union out. Hours before the union found out about the NLRB decision, management held a meeting in the plant with the workers. Plant manager Steve Cortinas said they wanted the election held as soon as possible. He said the company had given raises every year for the past 14 years, except for one. No discussion was allowed after Cortinas spoke.

“Like management said, take a look at the last 14 years and that’s exactly what we have to explain to workers,” said Dias. “For them to take a look at the real history.” The pro-union newsletter *Workers’ Voice* cites the case of Miguel Gutierrez, a worker who had almost 10 years seniority. In a recent company meeting, Gutierrez said there were no raises before workers won a union contract in 2002. Other workers have reported there were no raises for five years.

The meat packers have been working under an expired contract since the end of June, when the company launched its decertification campaign.

*Rebecca Williamson is a trimmer at Dakota Premium Foods and a member of UFCW Local 789.*

## LETTERS

**Troy Davis**

This is to update readers on Troy Anthony Davis, who won a stay of execution from the Georgia Board on Pardons and Paroles on July 18, just 24 hours before he was to be executed for a murder he didn’t commit. (See article in August 20 *Militant*.)

The Georgia Supreme Court

has agreed to hear his appeal in November. Davis’ website is [www.troyanthonydavis.org](http://www.troyanthonydavis.org).

*Cheryl Goertz  
Atlanta, Georgia*

**Safety in the mines**

The *Militant* supplement in August 2007 described the dangerous retreat mining methods that were used at the Crandall Canyon mine where six miners remained trapped underground.

I worked at a number of UK collieries where different methods were used.

In 1969 coal bosses changed the method of support from steel girders to roof bolting. This system is cheaper than using more conventional supports, and mining unions have long been skeptical about the safety of it.

At Bilsthorpe colliery in Nottingham a technique known as “skin-to-skin working” was used where roof bolts were used where a new roadway was driven directly alongside an older working. In 1993 the roof collapsed, killing three miners.

The National Union of Mineworkers “does not accept the concept of roof bolting as substitute for orthodox support,” according to *The Hazards of Coal Mining*.

*Jim Spaul  
London, England*

**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.**

# War in Iraq

**Continued from front page**

in weakening al-Qaeda.

Since last January, when Washington launched the largest escalation of the war since the 2003 invasion—what the rulers call a surge—more and more Sunni tribal factions have joined occupation forces in fighting al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda’s brutality against civilians of all backgrounds has earned it a growing hatred. This, along with the group’s disruption of commerce, has led many bourgeois factions that had either previously allied with or tolerated al-Qaeda to now see it as their most immediate problem.

This unanticipated opening for Washington prompted the occupying army to redefine its allies and adjust its tactics. Petraeus called this change “the most significant development of the past eight months.”

The U.S. military has increasingly recruited and assisted these Sunni forces, many of which previously fought the occupation. As a result, a number of Sunni tribal leaders outside Baghdad are gaining influence in the provinces as they drive al-Qaeda out.

Competition for power and resources among wealthy layers in Iraq remains deeply divided along national, tribal, and religious lines, and this development helps fuel the process toward greater regional autonomy in the country. Three-quarters of Iraqis belong to one of 150 tribes. Iraqi Kurdistan has been largely autonomous for some time.

Petraeus also described how U.S. ground forces are targeting “Shi’a militia extremists” he claims are supported by Iran. He accused the Iranian Republican Guard Corps’ Qods Force of arming and training insurgent Shiite militias in Iraq. “Iran, through the use of the Qods Force, seeks to turn the Iraqi Special Groups into a Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests,” he said. The Iraqi Special Groups militia is a faction of Muqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army. Petraeus said coalition forces have captured fighters and leaders of such militias, including a senior Lebanese Hezbollah operative.

Iraq’s cabinet suspended the license of private military contractor Blackwater September 18 after some of its mercenaries reportedly killed at least eight civilians and wounded 13 in west Baghdad September 16. Blackwater is now restricted to the “green zone,” which includes the U.S. embassy and Iraqi government offices.

Crocker defended Blackwater, which has more than 1,000 personnel in Iraq. He said there was “simply no way” Washington could do without such agents. More than 30 U.S. security contractors have been killed, he added.

In a September 10 statement to Congress, Crocker gave one example that sheds some light on conditions faced by Iraqi working people. “Many neighborhoods in the city [Baghdad] receive two hours a day or less from the national grid,” he said. Iraq’s minister of electricity said it would take \$25 billion over nine years to meet electricity demand.

# Antiwar march

**Continued from page 3**

Papageorge, 18, came with a carload from Atlanta. This was his third march, which he said went well and was spirited. “Petraeus’ report was an attempt to sedate the gains made within the antiwar movement,” he said. “[Hillary] Clinton and [Barack] Obama are just trying to win votes, and it has nothing to do with human lives or why we should get out.”

Quentin Miller, a student at the University of the District of Columbia, said he had considered joining the military to help pay for school but decided not to after two friends were sent to Iraq. Miller said he plans to march again on September 29. An antiwar march in Washington, D.C., that day is sponsored by the Troops Out Now Coalition.

Another antiwar coalition, United For Peace and Justice, has called regional protests for 10 cities October 27.

*Maura DeLuca and Osborne Hart contributed to this article.*

### CORRECTION

An error appeared in the September 24 *Militant* (issue 35) in the article on a strike by members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees at the University of Minnesota. The number of unionists walking out was 1,245, not 3,500.