

Utah miners fight for union

BY MARCO ANTONIO RIVERA

PRICE, Utah—"We are not going back to work till we all go back to work," shouted 70 miners in Spanish at their employers at the Co-Op mine near this city September 22. The miners had halted production and calmly organized themselves into man trips to come above ground. They had taken off their mining bibs and gathered at the bosses' office.

The press here reports that the Co-Op
Continued on Page 2

Socialist Workers campaigners join San Francisco immigrant rights sendoff rally

BY MARK GILSDORF

SAN FRANCISCO—Carrying signs with demands such as "Stop immigration raids and deportations" and "Jobs for all" in English and Spanish, half a dozen Young Socialists for Britton marched here September 20 with other demonstrators to City Hall, where a rally of 2,000 was held as a sendoff to the Immigrant Workers
Continued on Page 7

Washington aids Tel Aviv's plans to remove Arafat from Palestine

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Aiding and abetting the Israeli regime's plans to expel Palestinian Authority (PA) president Yasir Arafat, Washington vetoed a resolution before the United Nations Security Council September 16 that condemned the Israeli cabinet's decision to "remove" the Palestinian leader.

Two days later, U.S. president George Bush, at a joint press conference with Jordanian king Abdullah II at Camp David, said that "Prime Minister Abbas was undermined at all turns by the old order—that meant Mr. Arafat." Bush was referring to the September 6 resignation of the PA's former prime minister Mahmoud Abbas, who had
Continued on Page 11

Federal court in Florida gives Cuban hijacker 20 years in jail

BY ASKIA TOURE

MIAMI—At a September 19 sentencing hearing in the U.S. District Court here, Judge Shelby Highsmith sentenced Adermis Wilson González, who hijacked a Cubana Airlines plane this spring, to 20 years in prison. The sentence is the minimum for such a crime. Wilson said he will appeal.

Wilson, 34, took control of the AN-24 plane, with 51 people aboard, during a flight from the Isle of Youth to Havana March 31. He threatened to blow up the plane with hand grenades, and demanded that the pilot take him, along with his wife and son, who were also on board, to the United States. The
Continued on Page 10

Immigrant rights caravan on the road across the U.S.

Thousands send off buses for Freedom Ride in California, other states

BY BETSEY STONE AND OLGA RODRIGUEZ

LOS ANGELES—More than 1,000 people, the majority of them members of trade unions, rallied at City Hall here September 20 to demand rights for immigrant workers. They were sending off a contingent of 140 people from Southern California taking part in the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. Departing from 10 cities across the country, 18 busloads of "freedom riders" will be converging in Washington, D.C., on October 1 and 2. They will then travel to New York for a large rally on October 4 in Flushing Meadow Park, Queens.

In addition to the rally in Los Angeles, sendoff events were held the same weekend in San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland, Oregon.

In San Francisco, some 2,000 unionists held a march and rally. Many of the demonstrators chanted in Spanish, "Aquí estamos y no nos vamos" (We're here and we're not leaving). Lively contingents of the hotel workers, longshore, and other unions were prominent in the action.

The rally was addressed by United Farm Workers (UFW) cofounder Dolores Huerta and other union officials. Among the speakers were several politicians, including Gov. Gray Davis, who was there to campaign against the recall vote against
Continued on Page 5



Militant/Frank Forrestal

September 20 rally of 1,000 at Los Angeles City Hall to send off buses for Freedom Ride.

Appeal to readers for funds to replace stolen camera

On September 10, the *Militant's* camera bag—containing our new Canon EOS 10 D digital camera and three lenses—was stolen at an event in New York covered by a *Militant* reporter. The total loss amounts to \$4,000. We appeal to our readers for contributions to help us replace this equipment. Please send your special contribution (earmarked for the camera) to the *Militant* at 152 W. 36th St. Room 401, New York, NY 10018.

Bomb damages presidential palace in Caracas

Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez cancels U.S. visit citing security concerns

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

A bomb blast inside the Miraflores compound, the presidential palace in Caracas, woke up residents throughout the downtown area of Venezuela's capital in the early morning hours of September 19. The explosion occurred in the parking lot of the barracks for the presidential Honor Guard, located in the front of the compound. Windows of the regiment's building were shattered and the roof of a workshop collapsed. No injuries were reported.

Officials of the government of President Hugo Chávez blamed the pro-imperialist opposition for creating a climate that encourages such actions. National Assembly delegate Tarek William Saab, of the governing Fifth Republic Movement (MVR), said the bombing could be attributed to "the desperation of individuals who want to cause destabilization," according to the online publication *Venezuelanalysis.com*.

The attack on Miraflores was the first since April 11, 2002, when a third of the military's top-ranking generals staged a coup, taking over the presidential palace and attempting to oust Chávez. The coup, which had Washington's tacit support, was short-lived, however. Chávez was back in Miraflores within two days. The Venezuelan bourgeoisie made a second attempt to topple Chávez's nationalist government with a two-month bosses' "strike" last December and January.

Both times, mass mobilizations by workers and peasants turned back the employers' moves.

The bombing of Miraflores took place one week after the pro-imperialist opposition suffered a third major blow.



Miraflores Press

Soldiers examine damage from September 19 explosion at the presidential palace in Caracas.

On September 12, the country's National Elections Commission rejected a petition for a referendum to recall the president. The effort was organized by the opposition coalition Coordinadora Democrática (Democratic Coordination), whose heart and soul is Fedecámaras, Venezuela's main big-business association.

"The opposition miscalculated," said Antonio Aguillón, a unionist in Caracas, in a September 22 telephone interview. "They were pushed by Washington again and again to try to overthrow Chávez. They have failed, and they are desperate. We can expect more bombings and assassination attempts."

In recent trips to Colombia, U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld and other U.S. government and military officials have praised Bogotá for its fight against "narcoterrorists" in Colombia and have stated that the Venezuelan government is not doing its part to fight "terrorism." These veiled threats have been made at a time when Washington is taking steps to strengthen its military presence in Latin America. Caracas charged that

15 U.S.-made Black Hawk helicopters flown by the Colombian military violated Venezuela's airspace September 9. Such incidents indicate that Washington may be trying to embroil Venezuela in a regional conflict.

The day before the attack on Miraflores, Chávez announced the cancellation of his impending trip to the United States. He had been scheduled to visit the country September 25-29 to address the United Nations General Assembly in New York, among other activities. At a September 17 lunch meeting with foreign journalists in Caracas, Chávez cited security concerns for canceling the
Continued on Page 3

Also Inside:

China replaces police with troops at border with N. Korea 4

Native American leader Leonard Peltier salutes Cuban people for 50 years of Moncada 6

Director of Cuban institute for sex education speaks of changing attitudes on gay rights in Cuba 9

'I won't start World War III for you,' British general told Wesley Clark in Kosova in 1999 11

Utah miners fight for union

Continued from front page

mine is operated by C.W. Mining Co. and is owned by the Kingston family. This family has drawn considerable notoriety in recent years after being accused of sexual abuse of young women through polygamous activity. The mine is located near Huntington, Utah, some 35 miles south of Price in the heart of the state’s coal-mining area.

The bosses responded to the workers by saying, “There is already a union here, and what you are doing is illegal,” referring to the company-organized “union.”

The workers at Co-Op recently decided they needed a real union and enlisted the support of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Miner’s firing sparks walkout

Safety issues and the attempt to victimize workers are at the heart of this struggle that erupted into a walkout by the mostly Mexican-born workforce after William Estrada, a worker born in El Salvador, was “suspended with intention to dismiss” by the company.

“This has been a long time coming,” said José García, a miner at Co-Op. “We have been discussing, preparing and uniting for some time. We have elected representatives in all production crews to defend ourselves. We had decided we would not let the bosses get us one by one and that we would deal with their harassment and the safety problems together. We now approached the UMWA to help us with whatever steps are needed to get a union bargaining election here and eventually get a contract.”

Earlier that morning the company had suspended Estrada, an equipment maintenance worker, for refusing to sign a disciplinary warning the week before. This was the third attempt to victimize a UMWA supporter in recent weeks.

The company had tried to suspend another worker four days earlier. Some 15 workers found out about this, stopped production, and went together to talk to the bosses.

According to the miners involved, the company was attempting to suspend that worker for doing some “fire-bossing”—that is, carrying out the mine safety inspections that are scheduled before every shift. These are duties his immediate foreman is responsible for. But this foreman was ignoring his responsibility and had instructed the worker to carry out the inspection. The mine supervisor then threatened to disci-

pline the worker.

The miners demanded not only to reverse the suspension of the worker, but also to send home the boss who forced him to break the rules. “Twenty times the big boss told us he was not going to go back on his decision to suspend our co-worker,” said a miner. The miners told the bosses they would not go back to work and they would pull out the rest of the workforce if the company did not do as they said.

The production boss who serves as representative of the company “union” convened a meeting of the bosses present. Management then announced that the worker would not be suspended and that the boss who forced the worker to do fire-bossing duties would be sent home instead.

The company had been successful in suspending another supporter of the UMWA organizing drive the previous week. Workers negotiated his job back and vowed that no one would be victimized.

Bosses call in sheriff

On the morning of September 22, the workers tried to negotiate with the company to get Estrada’s job back. The bosses refused. When the workers made it clear no one was returning to work until Estrada got his job back, the company called the sheriff’s department. The sheriff proceeded to tell the workers to leave.

“Take them all out of here,” one of the bosses ordered the policeman, according to participants.

“We don’t have enough room for all these people,” responded the sheriff. “Do you want me to call the INS?” he asked, referring to the immigration police.

The workers evacuated company property and met at a local park in Price.

Day shift workers were joined by co-workers from the other shifts who were called on the way to the park. After much discussion, workers reiterated their decision that they either would go back together or that nobody would go back. They organized a representative delegation to accompany Estrada next morning to negotiate his return. A meeting of all workers was set to follow in order to hear a report on the company’s response.

The company allowed only one worker to accompany Estrada. After much discussion on the merits of their disciplinary note, the company told Estrada and the other worker that they would give them an answer the next day.

The miners have been told that everyone who participated in the union action the previous day was fired.

At the meeting later that morning with some 75 workers present, the unionists heard a report on the meeting with the company.

Workers reported that a UMWA representative joined them. “We were very happy to hear from the union representative that the UMWA would file an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board with the union seal on our behalf,” said Fermín Pérez. The workers also decided that it was time to organize press conferences to tell the world they were fighting for union representation.

The workers elected a representative who would negotiate their return back to work. Knowing that the company is in need of getting production out, and that it will try to break their ranks one by one, they decided that dealings with the company need to be carried out through this elected representative of theirs. The workers acknowledged that the company succeeded in getting some workers to come into work on the day shift. A list was made along with assignments for contacting those workers to discuss the situation with them.

Spouses’ auxiliary initiated

The miners also decided that it was time to involve their spouses into the struggle. A special women-only meeting for all the spouses was called for that afternoon. The meeting would be led by the three female workers in the mine.

They proceeded to document all the unsafe conditions that had led the workers to walk off the job, along with all the incidents of harassment. Discussion was initiated on possible participation in the upcoming Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride sendoff rally in Salt Lake City.

Miners reported that after the meeting had broken up and some leaders were talking, a group of three workers approached them. They said they were part of the dozen or so Mexican-born workers who are employed by the Kingston family at the Railco coal loading facility down the road. They said they had heard from close friends in town about the struggle at Co-Op and wanted to join the fight for a union. After some discussion, these workers were warmly invited to participate in a meeting of all the workers, families, and friends the next day in the local park.

The owners of the Co-Op mine are notorious not only for the exploitation of their employees but for accusations of abuse of young women in their family.

According to an August 28 Associated Press article, Mary Ann Kingston, now 22, and her attorneys filed a suit in a state court

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August 1, naming 242 family members and 97 businesses operated by the Kingstons. “The suit seeks more than \$110 million from what Mary Ann Kingston and her lawyers called a ‘secretive religious society and economic organization’ that teaches and promotes sexual abuse of young girls through illegal and underage marriages, incest, and polygamy,” the article said. “The Kingston clan, also known as the Latter-Day Church of Christ, is believed to have more than 1,000 members and a \$150 million business empire in six Western states, based mainly in the Salt Lake valley area. Marriages of half-sisters, first cousins, nieces, and aunts are part of their religious beliefs.”

According to the article, Mary Ann Kingston was born into the family and was told by her father, John Daniel Kingston, that she would become the 15th wife of his brother, David Kingston, when she turned 16. She was indeed forced to marry David Kingston and was later beaten by her father for attempting to flee.

A related story in the August 14-27 *Salt Lake Observer* said, “One of Kingston’s most profitable enterprises is a bituminous coal and lignite mine in Huntington (Carbon County), which at one time brought in revenues of \$1 million a month, according to the *Observer’s* sources.”

Workers at this mine are now determined to give these bosses the best fight possible to win their jobs back and organize with the UMWA.

“Because they have been able to smash attempts that have been made in the past to take them on,” said García, “the company thinks it will be able to scare us and make us beg for our jobs. But we have never come this far and we are going to finish what we started here.”

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The Militant

Vol. 67/No. 34

Closing news date: September 23, 2003

Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
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Published weekly except for one week in January, June, September, and December.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 594-1014; Fax (212) 594-1018.
E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The Militant **website** is: www.themilitant.com
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.
Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.
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Asia: Send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Bomb damages gov’t building in Venezuela

Continued from front page
trip, and said his government would not provide details at this point. He stated that he regretted most not being able to speak at a public meeting in Manhattan. A coalition to welcome Chávez, made up of Venezuela solidarity groups and other organizations in New York, had organized a September 26 event featuring the Venezuelan president at New York’s Riverside Church.

According to the online publication *Vheadline.com*, police investigators in Caracas said it was a stroke of luck that the September 19 blast caused only limited damage. The bomb thrown into the compound missed the military fuel tanks by 44 yards and came very close to hitting the main munitions storage area.

On September 19, Caracas suspended oil shipments to the Dominican Republic because traders handling them were allegedly involved in a plan to assassinate Chávez, said Venezuela’s energy and mines minister, Rafael Ramírez, according to Reuters. The Venezuelan government has accused Carlos Andrés Pérez, the country’s former president under the reign of the social democratic Democratic Action party, of being involved in this plot. Pérez, who has a mansion in the Dominican Republic, along with homes in Miami and elsewhere in the United States, has denied the charge.

Chávez’s regime has drawn the ire of the big majority of the country’s capitalist class for taking measures that have cut into the prerogatives of finance capital and raised the expectations of working people. These include an agrarian reform law, a bill that benefits working fishermen to the detriment of large commercial fishing companies, legislation strengthening state control of the country’s national patrimony in oil and natural gas, and allocation of state funds for cheap housing and other social programs.

Washington and the local bourgeoisie are also hostile to Chávez because of his government’s closer economic and political ties with revolutionary Cuba. These include Havana’s assistance in Venezuela’s current massive literacy campaign and a project to send hundreds of Cuban volunteer doctors to offer medical services in the poorest neighborhoods of Caracas and other cities and rural areas, where residents have had virtually no access to health care.

Mission Robinson

At ceremonies throughout Venezuela in September, Chávez and other government officials handed literacy certificates to 200,000 people who graduated from literacy classes. According to the Cuban daily *Granma*, some 300,000 Venezuelans had completed the program as of September 21.

In one such event at Miraflores, Jesús Serpa, a peasant from the mountainous areas in the state of Miranda, said that no other government had paid attention to the needs of working people in the countryside, such as teaching everyone how to read and write.

“We have with us here the teacher Leonola Relys,” Chávez said in response, according to *Granma*, “representing the Cuban people, Fidel [Castro], and this army of collaborators who are helping us to achieve what seemed unthinkable.”

The literacy campaign launched at the beginning of this year is called Mission Robinson. It was named after Simón Rodríguez, a nationalist poet and schoolteacher in Caracas who used the pseudonym Robinson Crusoe. Rodríguez served as a teacher to Simón Bolívar—Venezuela’s national hero and a leader of the struggles against Spanish colonialism in Latin America.

Mission Robinson’s goal is to eliminate illiteracy in the country. As of the end of last year, some 2 million people did not know how to read and write—12 percent of the country’s adult population. To accomplish this goal, about 100,000 volunteers are being organized across Venezuela. So far, at least 60,000 have signed up, overwhelmingly college and high school students.

Joel Pantón, 26, who recently graduated from medical school at the University of Carabobo in Valencia, Venezuela’s third-largest city, is one of these volunteers. Cuba has helped the literacy campaign “in a way that increases our self-confidence,” he said in a September 14 telephone interview with the *Militant*. “Cuba didn’t send thousands to ‘indoctrinate us about communism,’ as



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Fishermen at Cumaná, Venezuela, during visit by *Militant* reporters July 20, 2002. Delia Bermúdez (center) said she’d heard of how Cuba wiped out illiteracy—“that’s what we need here.” To her left are her sons Yorbanis and Rommel and their father, Francisco.

the *escuálidos* charge,” he stated. He was using a derisive term—literally the “squalid ones”—employed widely in Venezuela to refer to the pro-imperialist opposition. “Cuba sent 25 instructors to share their experience in wiping out illiteracy in the first years of the revolution, along with contributing all the TV sets, VCRs, videocassettes, and printed material we now use to teach people how to read and write.”

In September 1960, a year and a half after the triumph of the revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and established a workers and farmers government, Fidel Castro—Cuba’s prime minister at that time—addressed the United Nations General Assembly, announcing to the world: “In the coming year, our country intends to wage its great battle against illiteracy with the ambitious goal of teaching every single illiterate person in the country”—one million Cubans, roughly one-third of the adult population then—“to read and write.” That’s what they did, as some 100,000 young people, most of them teenagers, went to the countryside and lived and worked alongside peasant families, eliminating illiteracy by the following year and learning much in the process themselves.

Knowledge about this accomplishment of the Cuban Revolution has been spreading through Venezuela’s fishing villages, farm cooperatives, and working-class neighborhoods for the last two years. During a visit to Cumaná, a fishing center on Venezuela’s northern coast in July of last year, this reporter got such evidence firsthand. Delia Bermúdez, the mother of two fishermen interviewed by the *Militant*, said she had heard from Cuban physical education teachers and doctors who had done volunteer stints in the area that illiteracy had been eliminated in Cuba within one year. “I don’t know how they did it,” Bermúdez said, “but that’s what we need here.” Rommel and Yorbanis Bermúdez, her sons, explained that illiteracy is detrimental to their daily lives. They would no longer let their father go to the market to sell the day’s catch, they said, because the middlemen robbed him doubly “since he doesn’t know how to read and write.”

These conditions are now being confronted across the country.

Pantón said that he and other volunteers use community centers, schools, and people’s homes to teach literacy classes in the evenings. The campaign has received such enthusiastic support among working people across Venezuela that even some businesses are trying to get at least a little of the credit for the massive effort, according to Pantón. “McDonald’s has offered its fast-food stores as places that can be used for literacy classes,” he stated.

‘In the Heart of the Barrio’

Plan *Barrio Adentro* (In the Heart of the Neighborhood) is similarly popular among working people but has come under intense fire from Venezuela’s medical association and big business.

“We’d never thought we’d get a doctor around these parts,” Yanis Narváez, 26, told Associated Press reporters August 7. Narváez lives in the Resplendor neighborhood of Caracas, where many homes are

made of cardboard and tin. Vivian Iglesias, a Cuban volunteer doctor offering basic medical services in that area, was taking the temperature of Narváez’s feverish toddler that day. “I don’t think she is doing anything bad, like a lot of people say, just because she is Cuban,” Narváez said about Iglesias.

She was referring to slanders in the big-business media about the program that has brought 1,000 Cuban doctors and nurses so far to serve as volunteers in the poorest working-class neighborhoods, mostly around Caracas up till now. The opposition is charging that this program “is proof that Chávez wants to impose a communist system like that of his friend and mentor, Cuban president Fidel Castro,” according to AP.

“I never imagined things would be like this,” Iglesias said of the living conditions in Resplendor. “But I like the Venezuelans. I like how they talk, their sayings, and if I can help, that’s great.”

Iglesias and the other Cuban medical personnel volunteering in Venezuela get a stipend of \$250 per month, a fraction of what most Venezuelan doctors make.

Responding to the accusation that these volunteers are there to spread communism among the poorest layers of the country’s toilers, another Cuban doctor, Roberto Hernández, who serves in the San Pablito barrio of Caracas, told the *Washington Post* on August 24, “I am here only as a doctor. When I talk politics, it’s only when I have been asked about my country. And I tell them that I hope Fidel lasts another 100 years.”

The 45,000-member Venezuelan Medical Federation has also claimed that doctors like Iglesias and Hernández are taking jobs away from 8,000 unemployed local physicians.

“That’s a big lie,” said Pantón, who has just started practicing medicine in Valencia and volunteers at a community clinic like the Cuban doctors. “Most of the Venezuelan doctors don’t want to ever set foot in neighborhoods like Resplendor or Catia. They call them ‘slums.’ They despise the people living there. Many of them live to make money,

not to save lives. The government appealed to Venezuelan doctors to join the program along with the Cubans. Less than 100 have volunteered.”

Responding to virulent attacks on Plan Barrio Adentro by Venezuelan Medical Federation president Douglas León Natera, Freddy Bernal, the pro-Chávez mayor of the Libertador municipality of Caracas, announced in a TV program September 16 that his office was organizing a march to show the popularity of the project and denounce the federation’s demands to dismantle it. “I invite Mr. Natera,” Bernal said, according to a news report in the Venezuelan web site *aporrea.org*, “to go to the barrios himself. I’ll wait there for him along with the people. We are not going to allow a bunch of tramps, which is what most members of the Federation are, to come and rob the Venezuelan people of this dream.”

Politicization of working people

Under these conditions of sharpening class confrontation, a rapid politicization of the toilers is taking place. As the *Militant* reported last week (see “Pro-imperialist opposition is dealt blow in Venezuela” in the September 29 issue), dozens of factories shut down by the owners during the bosses’ lockout early this year have been occupied by the workers who are running production, in some cases for months now. Peasants have stepped up land takeovers, forcing government authorities to accelerate implementation of the new agrarian reform law passed in 2001. Many of these actions by working people have been attacked, as employers have used police units loyal to them and private thugs to murder militants. More than 70 peasant leaders have been killed in such incidents the last two years, according to interviews with peasants in several states.

Most organizations in the labor movement have shattered and new ones are being formed. The top leadership of the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV)—the country’s largest trade union federation until last year—backed the bosses’ “strike.” It has since become a shell of its former self. CTV president Carlos Ortega has fled the country and is currently in Costa Rica.

A new union federation, the National Union of Workers (UNT), was formed in August. A report in *Venezuelananalysis.com* said the following about the conclusion of the UNT meeting: “Nationalize the banks! Take over the enterprises that have shut down and have them run instead by workers! Refuse to pay the foreign debt and use the funds to create jobs! Reduce the workweek to 36 hours! Create new enterprises under workers’ control!—These are some of the demands that emerged from the action program workshop, which were enthusiastically endorsed by the First National Congress of the National Union of Workers (UNT) of Venezuela August 1-2.” The gathering was attended by 1,300 delegates, representing 120 unions and 25 regional federations.

SUTISS, the steelworkers union, which was among the largest industrial unions in the CTV, however, did not join the UNT as its organizers earlier expected. SUTISS president Ramón Machuca and other unionists across the country who have been part

Continued on page 4

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Róger Calero speaks in Australia, Sweden

Talks to unionists, students on lessons of his victorious antideportation fight

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Róger Calero and two supporters met up with a dozen or so workers leaving the Morris McMahon can manufacturing plant after work September 1, during his three-day visit to Sydney, following his trip to New Zealand. Keith Brown, a union delegate and one of the leaders of a successful 16-week strike at the plant that ended July 2, congratulated Calero on his recent win over U.S. government efforts to deport him.

“I would not be here if it wasn’t for the support of hundreds of people like yourself around the world,” replied Calero. Brown responded: “We know all about that. It was exactly the same here. We [strikers] were 40 people in a cast of thousands.”

Workers at the metal factory, a majority of them immigrants and women, won a union agreement, or contract, during the strike. As their fight progressed they reached out to other unionists for financial support and reinforcements on the picket line.

Calero visited Sydney during his international “Fight to Win” tour to speak on the lessons of his defense campaign and thank those who helped win his fight to remain a permanent resident in the United States (See accompanying article, “‘El Español’ covers Calero’s Sydney visit” for details of the case).

Defense campaign supporters held a public meeting the evening before the McMahon visit. Calero told the 15 people present that his defense was not fought primarily in the legal arena. “Nothing had changed with the laws” used by the rulers against hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers, he said. “What changed in my case was the fight they did not expect”—a fight organized so that “even if we didn’t win we would make the government pay the highest political price.”

Ron Poulsen spoke for the Communist League. “The labor movement in Australia faces similar attacks on immigrant workers as part of a broader assault on workers rights,” he said. “The government’s actions have included seldom publicized factory raids to grab workers without papers and the brutal expulsion or detention of thousands of asylum-seekers labelled ‘boat people.’”

Participants asked about the campaign for the release of the five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails, the struggles of immigrant workers in the United States, and the impact of Washington’s new “national security” laws.

Calero also spoke at a lunchtime meeting of 10 people at the Bankstown campus of the University of Western Sydney. One student asked him for suggestions on waging the campaign to close the detention centers where asylum seekers are held and end the brutal treatment they face. The question sparked a wider discussion. Calero explained that this “was a question not just for immigrants but for the entire working class.”

Calero also met meat packers at Primo, a large plant where several workers had supported his campaign, and workers at the Rheem water heater factory, where there

have been rolling stoppages and company lockouts over a new enterprise contract.



BY ANDREAS BERGERHEIM
AND CATHARINA TIRSÉN

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—“Not only did we get support, we extended support during the campaign against my deportation. We are here now to share the lessons that if you fight like this, you can win.”

That was how Róger Calero, an editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for the *Militant*, described his defense campaign on student radio K103 here September 8 during his visit to this city in the south of Sweden.

Andreas Bergerheim, a member of the Young Socialists, joined Calero in the interview. Young supporters in Sweden of the socialist worker had moved into action as soon as they heard of his arrest last year, he said. “We started to collect names and send letters,” said Bergerheim, “mainly by asking people in working-class suburbs like Angered.”

Asked whether there are similar cases in Sweden, Bergerheim explained that he had “met with young people in Hagfors who had guarded a Salvadoran family from being deported for several weeks, 24 hours a day. It was a real social struggle. They had the support of the whole community.” He also talked about the fight of Nadina, a young Bosnian girl who faced deportation despite a severe eye sickness that would not be treatable in her native country. Nadina and



Militant/Jenny Kyng

Róger Calero speaking at public meeting in Sydney August 31. Picture appeared alongside an interview in *El Español en Australia*, a Spanish-language weekly.

her family were deported September 12.

At a public meeting in Angered the next day, Calero was welcomed by Martha Hernández, a cleaner at a meatpacking plant. She said that after being approached by a co-worker she had signed a petition to defend his right to stay in the United States. Catharina Tirsén spoke on behalf of the Communist League.

In the discussion Calero noted that he had found out about similar attacks on immigrant workers in each country that he had visited.

He spoke by phone with one of the youth who had taken part in the Hagfors fights. She told him that one family member had his visa application approved, and the rest of the family plan to renew their applications.

“I never thought we could win this,” she said. “Sometimes that is what you think when you are in the middle of the fight,” Calero said. “But if you just keep fighting and reaching out like you did, you have the best chances of winning.”

Dag Tirsén contributed to this article.

Class polarization sharpens in Venezuela

Continued from Page 3

of the Bolivarian Workers Force—a labor federation tied to the governing Fifth Republic Movement—were focusing their efforts on launching a political organization, the Workers Party (PT) of Venezuela. The PT’s first national assembly is set to take place in the city of Guyana, Bolívar state, September 27.

Washington’s destabilization campaign

This political ferment among the toilers is at the heart of what’s fueling Washington’s campaign to destabilize and eventually topple the Chávez government.

During a visit to Bogotá August 19, U.S. secretary of state Donald Rumsfeld praised Colombian president Alvaro Uribe for an “excellent job” in combating “narcoterrorism.” Rumsfeld was referring to the regime’s war on government opponents, some of whom are waging a guerrilla struggle led by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and by the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN).

In a similar visit to Bogotá a week earlier, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, “compared Venezuela to Iraq’s neighbors that allow ‘weapons or fighters’ to cross the border,” according to Dow Jones reporter Charles Roth. “It’s not helpful when countries don’t fully support the antiterrorism fight,” Myers reportedly said in reference to the Venezuelan government.

In January, Gen. James Hill, chief of the U.S. Southern Command, told a conference in New York that “narcoterrorists” and Islamic groups were using Venezuela’s Margarita Island to launder money, according to Dow Jones.

These statements by White House and Pentagon officials have been made as Washington re-launched its effort, put on the back burner the first half of this year, to strengthen its military intervention in Latin America, particularly in Colombia, which shares a 1,400-mile-long border with Venezuela.

The Colombian military, which has been receiving training from hundreds of U.S. Special Forces troops, has accused Caracas of permitting Colombian guerrillas to use its territory as a base of operations—a charge the Venezuelan government denies.

In mid-July, former Colombian finance minister, Juan Manuel Santos, told an audience in Caracas that Venezuela is trying

to buy 50 MiG fighter jets from a Russian manufacturer. Venezuelan ambassador to Colombia Carlos Rodolfo Santiago immediately denounced him as a “cynical and irresponsible liar.”

These accusations are accompanied by other provocations, which pose the prospect of a regional conflict between the two countries. On September 9, Venezuelan foreign minister Roy Chaderton told reporters that 15 U.S.-made Black Hawk helicopters flown by the Colombian military had violated his country’s airspace at Los Bancos near Guasdalito on Venezuela’s southwest frontier with Colombia.

Washington, which is behind this aggressive stance by Bogotá toward Caracas, has also become more open in the last two months in its desire to get rid of Chávez. The Venezuelan president assailed interference by U.S. ambassador to Venezuela Charles Shapiro in favor of the faltering opposition efforts to organize a referendum to oust Chávez. Shapiro visited the country’s National Elections Commission and held a news conference at the board’s offices, offering U.S. “technical assistance” for the poll.

“This is a sovereign nation, ambassador, and you must respect this country and your government must respect this country,” Chávez said in response. “What prerogative does ambassador Shapiro have

to visit them?”

There are also indications that Washington may be contemplating putting economic pressures on Venezuela. For the first time in 50 years, U.S. companies did not import any reformulated gasoline from Venezuela in July, while importing other petroleum products.

Faced with this increasingly overt campaign of destabilization by U.S. imperialism, the Venezuelan government has continued to stand up to Washington in the international arena, including in opposing the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq, even if cautiously.

On September 22, the Venezuelan delegation to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said it was unacceptable for the Iraqi delegation to attend that week’s OPEC output policy talks as a voting member. Iraqi delegates from the U.S.-picked Governing Council in Baghdad were scheduled to attend an OPEC meeting for the first time since U.S. and British forces toppled the Saddam Hussein regime and began a long-term military occupation of the country.

“Our position is clear,” said Rafael Ramírez, according to the Associated Press. “Venezuela hopes to have Iraq included within OPEC, but the internal situation of Iraq should be resolved, and there should be recognition by the UN.”

Beijing deploys troops along N. Korea border

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

The Chinese government has stationed substantial forces along its 870-mile border with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Carried out in early September, the move came as Beijing increased pressure on the DPRK to halt its development of nuclear weapons. At the same time, Pyongyang has protested Washington’s arms build-up in south Korea, including its installation of the latest Patriot missiles. Such moves are “creating a stumbling block to resolving the nuclear problem,” stated the Korean Central News Agency. Some 37,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the south.

The Chinese foreign ministry announced the border deployment September 15, saying its troops had taken over patrols from the Chinese People’s Armed Police Force. Some 300,000 Chinese troops are based in the provinces closest to north Korea, along with 250,000 members of the Armed Police

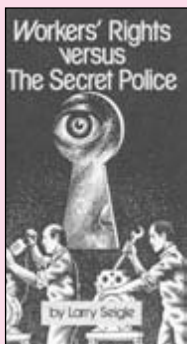
Force.

The moves came shortly after the August 27–29 six-party talks in Beijing. Representatives from the governments of the United States, Japan, China, Russia, and south Korea attempted to pressure Pyongyang there to drop development of a nuclear defense. While saying it was ready for talks, Pyongyang refused to take steps toward disarmament demanded by Washington. Beijing appears to be concerned itself—Washington’s interests aside—with the prospect of its neighbor becoming a nuclear power. After the talks, Chinese deputy foreign minister Wang Yi said that “the differences between north Korea and China are comprehensive.”

In late February Beijing closed an oil pipeline to the DPRK for three days. According to the *Korea Times*, China supplies 70 percent of north Korea’s energy needs and 40 percent of its food.

Further reading

**Workers’ Rights
versus the Secret Police**
by Larry Seigle



How, since the inception of the modern revolutionary workers movement in 1848, the ruling classes have responded with police spies, agents provocateurs, and political frame-ups. \$5.00

Available from
www.pathfinderpress.com
or from bookstores, including those
listed on page 8.

Freedom Ride

Continued from front page
him. Also joining the San Francisco event were campaigners for the Socialist Workers candidate for governor, Joel Britton. They joined with those protesting deportations and factory raids, supporting the demand of amnesty for all immigrants, and backing union struggles that many immigrant workers have been part of.

At the rally in downtown Los Angeles, several hundred construction workers from Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties, wearing the orange T-shirts of the Laborers International Union of North America, made up one of the largest contingents.

Other sizable groups of unionists included home-care workers, hospital workers, and janitors who are members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), garment workers from UNITE, and members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE). Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), California Federation of Teachers, and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists also participated.

A hotel worker and member of the SEIU, who asked not to be identified by name, said that her daughter was one of the Freedom Riders. “We want to get our papers and win the right to be legal. We want benefits. We want driver’s licenses and we want our children to have a decent education,” she said.

Legalization of status

Opening the rally, María Elena Durazo, president of HERE Local 11 and national coordinator of the Freedom Ride, said the demonstrators are calling on the government to legalize the status of all immigrant workers, guarantee equal legal protection on the job to all workers regardless of immigration status, and shorten the long wait for residency applications.

For U.S. residents who have applied to bring spouses and children to join them in this country, the waiting list is at least five years, and seven years for families from Mexico, according to the U.S. State Department’s “visa bulletin.”

The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO as well as a number of immigrant rights organizations, Black rights groups, and elected officials. In a number of cities, unions have helped organize events to publicize the cross-country caravan.

The proposal for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride was initiated two years ago by the hotel and restaurant workers union. HERE was part of the effort that led the AFL-CIO executive board in 2000 to advocate an amnesty for undocumented workers and the repeal of laws that impose sanctions on employers who hire these workers. This was a reversal of the AFL-CIO’s longstanding position of backing the U.S. government’s anti-immigrant policies.

An estimated 10 million workers in this country—the exact figure is hard to determine—lack residence papers. The historic wave of immigration to the United States over the past three decades has had a big

impact on the union movement. Today, there is a substantial immigrant component in many unions, such as the UFCW, UFW, the garment and textile workers union UNITE, and the Laborers. Workers seeking to organize unions have had to confront efforts by the bosses to take advantage of the existence of a section of workers deprived of legal protection.

The rally in Los Angeles reflected the mood of resistance among layers of immigrant workers. Olga Ramirez, an asbestos worker, pointed to the women construction workers in the Laborers contingent. “We’re not quiet any more,” she said. “We’re speaking up, even yelling, moving ahead!”

Organizers of the cross-country caravan have evoked the traditions of the Freedom Rides that mobilized Black rights fighters in the early 1960s.

One of the featured speakers at the Los Angeles rally was Rev. James Lawson, Jr., a participant in the 1961 freedom ride from Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi, to desegregate public transportation. Lawson, who is president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, proclaimed, “We are here today for the cause of the immigrants and the unions.”

“At the heart of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was the notion that an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” he said. “The freedom ride is not just about immigrants but about all peoples.”

The freedom riders going on the buses



Militant/Susan Lamont

Ryan Scott, right, Socialist Workers candidate for district attorney in San Francisco, and other Young Socialists for Britton campaigners participate in September 20 San Francisco rally to kick off Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride.

were greeted with applause as they marched to the front. Some carried placards with the slogan of the civil rights movement: “I AM A MAN.” Some of the women’s placards said: “I AM A WOMAN.”

Renán Armendarez Cuello, host of the popular show “*El Cucuy de la Tarde*,” spoke of conditions he witnessed in a nearby garment factory. “There was no drinking water, the workers had to bring their toilet paper from home, and it was 110 degrees inside,” he said. “The buildings here are constructed with the blood

and sweat of immigrants who do not have rights, who want to get them.”

“Can we get them?” he asked. The crowd broke into chants of “*¡Sí se puede!*” (Yes, we can.)

Other speakers included UFW president Arturo Rodríguez, Miguel Contreras, executive director of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Joe Hansen of the UFCW, Los Angeles mayor James Hahn, several members of the state legislature and congress, and representatives of immigrant rights groups.

Fund supporters step up efforts to meet goal

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The pace of contributions to the July 12-October 15 Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund has picked up over the past week, with more than \$13,000 being collected toward the \$80,000 goal. Organizers of the fund around the country have reported plans to use the final month to collect on pledges and win new donations.

The reports below of fund meetings addressed by SWP leaders demonstrate the response socialist workers are finding among workers and youth to the socialist perspective on political developments and the need to build the revolutionary party.

To contribute to the fund please send your donation to SWP, 152 W. 36th Street, Room 401, New York, NY 10018. All checks should be made out to SWP.



BY RACHEL FRUIT

TAMPA, Florida—Margaret Trowe from Boston spoke here September 20 on the world capitalist crisis and the growing resistance of working people. Thirteen people attended the program and dinner and contributed \$486. An additional \$300 came in from people who were not able to attend. Trowe also spoke at a fund event in Miami the next night.

In response to one question about the union officialdom’s campaign to defend

“American” jobs, Trowe said, “We have to build international links in the labor movement. When workers take over factories in Venezuela, that helps us, and they need to learn about the struggles of workers in the United States.”

A student at the University of Florida in Gainesville who had been part of the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange in July spoke in the discussion about opportunities for political work on the campuses, including the fight to free the Cuban Five.



BY MARTY RESSLER

PITTSBURGH—Laura Garza, Socialist Workers candidate for Boston City Council, spoke here September 20 on “The Working Class and the Fight for Women’s Rights.” Among other points, Garza described how capitalist industrialization draws peasants away from isolated village life into low-paid factory work. This puts them in position to be part of the labor movement, and—in the future—the “jail break” by women, rebelling against their second-class status, which will be part of the fight for socialism.

The 13 participants donated \$590 toward the Pittsburgh goal of \$3600, with \$75

of that in new pledges.

The next evening Garza addressed the same topic in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Three members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union from a local meatpacking plant, a college student from Wilkes Barre, and two other young workers were among the dozen people who took part. The meeting raised \$950.



BY ILONA GERSH

DETROIT—At the September 20 fund event here, SWP and Young Socialists leader Romina Green spoke on “The 50th Anniversary of Attack on the Moncada Garrison in Cuba, 30th Anniversary of U.S.-backed Coup in Chile: One Way Forward to the Victory of Humanity. Follow the Moncada Road.”

Participants contributed \$675 toward the local goal of \$2,500. The next day, Green took part in a lively discussion at a house meeting with two immigrant workers from Mexico working in a Detroit meatpacking plant.

CALENDAR

Rally with the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Welcome the Immigrant Workers Freedom Riders from Minnesota and Rally for In-State Tuition for Maryland’s Immigrant High School Students. Wed., Oct. 1, 12:00 noon. *University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Welcome the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. Wed., Oct. 1, 6:30 p.m. *Bible Way Temple, 1100 New Jersey Ave. NW.*

March in Solidarity with Immigrant Workers and Others in the D.C. Parking Industry. Thurs., Oct. 2, 7:00 p.m. *Farragut Square (K St., NW, between Connecticut Ave. and 17th St.)*

NEW JERSEY

Jersey City

Rally by Freedom Riders and Supporters. Fri., Oct. 3, 2:00 p.m. *Liberty State Park.*

NEW YORK

Queens

Mass Rally to Celebrate Freedom Ride. Flushing Meadows Park. *Information from www.iwfr.org. Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride sponsors include AFL-CIO, National Council of La Raza, UNITE, United Food and Commercial Workers.*

Other events

NEW JERSEY

Newark

U.S.-Cuba Relations: Why Washington’s Cold War against Cuba Doesn’t End. Speaker: Mary-Alice Waters, President of Pathfinder Press. Wed., Oct. 1, 2:30 p.m. *Rutgers University, Paul Robeson Campus Center, Room 232, 350 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Sponsored by Student Government Association.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

March for an End to the Occupa-

tion of Iraq; Money for Jobs, Education and Health Care; Fight Back against the Patriot Act. Sat., Oct. 25. Sponsored by Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (A.N.S.W.E.R.) and United for Peace and Justice.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Reality of the World Capitalist Crisis Today. Help Meet the \$80,000 Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund. Speaker: James Harris, member of SWP National Committee. Sat., Oct. 11. Dinner 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. Donation \$5 each for dinner and program. *3717 George Ave., NW. Tel: (202) 387-1590.*

CANADA

Toronto

Free the Cuban Five—Political Prisoners Held Captive in the United States. Evening of solidarity, with Irma González, daughter of René González, and Dr. Aleida Guevara. Mon. Sept. 29. 7:30 p.m. *OISE auditorium, 252 Bloor St. W. Tel: (416) 533-7971.*

\$80,000 Party-Building Fund July 12–October 15: Week 10 of 13			
	Goal	Paid	%
Twin Cities	4,300	3,465	81%
Utah	1,100	750	68%
Seattle	6,000	3,410	57%
Houston	3,500	1,940	55%
Newark	3,500	1,875	54%
Miami	1,800	925	51%
NE Pennsylvania	2,000	950	48%
Los Angeles	7,500	3,520	47%
New York	10,000	4,531	45%
Detroit	2,500	1,125	45%
Western Colorado	2,700	1,135	42%
Tampa	1,800	750	42%
Birmingham	1,400	530	38%
Washington, D.C.	2,700	990	37%
Pittsburgh	3,600	1,230	34%
Atlanta	5,200	1,739	33%
Cleveland	1,000	285	29%
San Francisco	8,000	2,150	27%
Boston	2,800	575	21%
Des Moines	1,450	270	19%
Chicago	4,200	775	18%
Omaha	1,300	90	7%
Philadelphia	3,200	150	5%
Other		1,361	
Total	81,550	34,521	43%
Goal/Should be	80,000	61,535	77%

Cuban militant in U.S. prison answers anti-Cuba smears

The following is a letter by René González, one of five Cuban militants serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges brought by the U.S. government. The other four are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and Antonio Guerrero.

González sent the letter below to Joanne Landy and the *Progressive* magazine on July 15. In his letter, the Cuban revolutionary responds to a “Statement Protesting Repression in Cuba” by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (CPD) cosigned by Landy, Thomas Harrison, and Jennifer Scarlott—the three co-directors of the CPD. The *Progressive* published the statement along with an appeal to professors, writers, and others to join the group in its campaign denouncing the Cuban government for alleged repressive measures. Well-known social democrat Stanley Arronowitz, self-described anarchist Noam Chomsky, historian Howard Zinn, and prominent African-American academic Cornel West were among the many individuals who lent their names to this anti-Cuba campaign. The statement appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, and various web sites, in addition to the *Progressive*.

This campaign was launched in March and April after the Cuban government arrested and convicted 75 individuals for receiving funds from and collaborating with U.S. government officials in Cuba to advance Washington’s economic war on Cuba. At about the same period, three ringleaders of a hijacking of a passenger ferry in Havana were arrested, tried, convicted, and executed in Cuba. Washington used these incidents to launch a campaign of slanders and threats against the Cuban Revolution. A number of liberal critics of U.S. foreign policy, like those mentioned above, joined the big-business chorus denouncing Havana.

The Cuban Five, as they are known, were carrying out an internationalist mission to gather information on ultrarightist organizations with a record of violent attacks on Cuba carried out from U.S. soil with Washington’s complicity. They were arrested by FBI agents in 1998. Each was charged with “conspiracy to commit espionage” and “conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent.” Hernández was also charged with “conspiracy to commit murder.” They were convicted in a federal court in Miami in June 2001, given sentences from 15 years in prison to a double life term, and locked up in five federal prisons spread out across the country.

On February 28 the five men were thrown into solitary confinement—“the hole”—after an order by the Justice Department charging that the extensive solidarity they had received in the form of correspondence and the few visitors they were allowed made them a “national security risk.” An international campaign of protests was launched against this unsuccessful attempt by Washington to break them. They were released from the hole a month later.

On July 8, the San-Francisco based National Committee to Free the Five issued an appeal for protest letters to be sent to U.S. authorities demanding that visas be granted to Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, to be able to enter the United States and visit their husbands in prison. The two have been denied entry into the U.S. repeatedly. Letters demanding that visas be granted to Pérez and Salanueva can be sent to Secretary of State Colin Powell, 2201 C St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20520, tel: (202) 647-4000, fax: (202) 261-8577; Homeland Security Director Thomas Ridge, Washington, DC 20528; and Attorney General John Ashcroft, 950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001, tel: (202) 353-1555, e-mail: askdoj@usdoj.gov

Amitabh Pal, managing editor of the *Progressive*, informed the *Militant* Sep-



Cuban revolutionary René González

tember 19 that his magazine has received González’s reply and “we’re considering whether to publish it.”



BY RENÉ GONZÁLEZ

Dear Ms. Joanne Landy:
Being a Cuban revolutionary all my life, having fought in Angola against the South African invasion and being, at the present time, incarcerated in a U.S. federal prison for protecting the Cuban people from the terrorist actions supported, encouraged, and silenced by the United States government, I hope that—if being progressive is

Jailed Native American leader Leonard Peltier salutes Cuba on 50th anniversary of Moncada

Printed below is a letter that American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier sent to Cuban president Fidel Castro and the people of Cuba in August, marking the 50th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada barracks on July 26, 1953—the opening act of the Cuban Revolution.

Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota, has spent the last 27 years in prison on frame-up charges of killing two FBI agents in a shoot-out at the Pine Ridge Native American reservation in 1975.

Peltier became involved in the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the early 1970s. He went to Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to assist local people under attack by goons organized by the Pine Ridge Tribal Council headed by Dick Wilson. With covert backing from the FBI, Wilson was carrying out a campaign of violence, including beatings and murder, against those in opposition to his policies. During this time the reservation had a higher ratio of FBI agents to citizens than any other area in the country. Despite this no murders or beatings were ever investigated.

AIM had been the target of federal authorities for years, including under the FBI’s Counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO), which grew out of the government’s attempts to disrupt the labor movement prior to World War II.

On June 26, 1975, shooting broke out between two FBI agents in unmarked cars and local residents, some of whom were members of AIM. The two agents and one Native man were killed. Three people went to trial for the deaths of the agents, one of whom was Leonard Peltier. No investigation of the Native man’s death took place. Two of those who went to trial were found not guilty on grounds of self-defense.

Peltier had previously been identified as an AIM leader by the FBI. Fearing that he had no possibility of a fair trial, he fled to Canada. Peltier was later arrested and extradited in response to affidavits manufactured by the FBI that the government now concedes were false and fabricated. He was tried in a different district from the first trial, and by a judge handpicked by the FBI. Peltier was found guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced to two consecutive life terms.

According to the final decision of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, Peltier’s trial and previous appeals had been riddled with FBI misconduct and judicial impropriety, including coercion of witnesses, perjury, fabrication of evidence, and the suppression of exculpatory evidence that could have proved his innocence. Nevertheless, all the appeals of his conviction and sentence were turned down.

In 1993 Peltier filed a petition for commutation of his sentence with the Department

of Justice. Supporters of Peltier sought a presidential pardon from former U.S. president William Clinton before he left office. Some 500 FBI agents and their families protested outside the White House in 2000 demanding Peltier’s request be turned down. Clinton denied him clemency.

On September 19, Peltier’s attorneys asked the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals to grant him a parole hearing he has sought since 1986. The Parole Commission had said Peltier must wait until December 2008 for such a hearing, a decision upheld last year by a federal court in Kansas. Peltier appealed to the 10th Circuit. The appeals court took the request under advisement. More than 200 supporters of Peltier’s fight gathered outside the courthouse after the hearing, beating drums, and carrying AIM banners and signs demanding: “Free Peltier!”

Message of solidarity to Fidel Castro, the people of Cuba, and the Revolution

BY LEONARD PELTIER

My honorable brothers and sisters of Cuba,

During the many years of my unjustified imprisonment, His Excellency President Fidel Castro, the Revolution, and the great Cuban people have kindly offered me almost three decades of solidarity and have maintained their commitment with my struggle for freedom. However, I continue unjustly serving two consecutive life sentences in a U.S. penitentiary simply for opposing my people’s exploitation and oppression.

This year sees the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the assaults on the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes in Bayamo, undertaken by the great Cuban revolutionary forces headed by His Excellency President Fidel Castro.

The 26th of July, 1953, marked one of the most significant acts of resistance to imperialism in history and the first step that led to the defeat of the Batista dictatorship supported by the United States. My people, the indigenous people of the United States, have confronted a similar imperialism for more than 500 years and have fought against it. This imperialist aggression has been responsible for the death of our ancestors, the rape of our sisters, and the plunder of our land. Today, more than ever, we are obliged to continue fighting to preserve our free determination and solidarity.

I should like to take this opportunity to say that I reiterate my solidarity with His Excellency President Fidel Castro, with the Revolution, and with my Cuban brothers and sisters. I call for an end to all foreign campaigns of subversion and aggression against the Cuban government and people.

still to fight for a better world—I might be entitled to the benefit of being considered a progressive person.

So when I opened a magazine called precisely *The Progressive* and read an ad by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy requesting signatures in order to condemn Cuba for its alleged “repression of dissidents,” I was, at best, in disbelief.

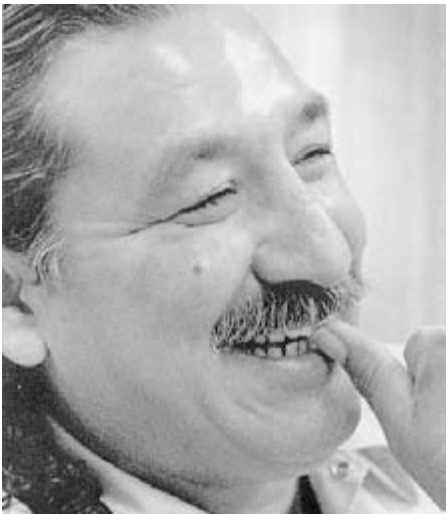
I can’t imagine that somebody can consider himself a progressive person and then take at its word the endemic slandering and lies of the U.S. media with regard to Cuba. It would only take a little bit of intellectual honesty and some research to discover that the money to pay “dissidents” is appropriated, overtly and openly, by the U.S. authorities to be distributed through entities like NED and USAID among whomever on the island decides to make a living as a dissident.

Who gives any moral authority to the U.S. government to create a paid opposition in Cuba? What international principle of law applies to this behavior? Since when is it the role of a U.S. diplomat to tour the island organizing the “opposition” and giving out money?

Anyone who, in their own country, receives money from a foreign power to undermine their government is considered a traitor, be it in Cuba or in any other nation of the world, including the United States.

These so-called “dissidents” have—contrary to what appears in the ad—all of the

Continued on page 10



Native American leader Leonard Peltier

The new “war on terrorism” headed by the United States has created a smokescreen in order to commit illegal acts of aggression and deeds ostensibly ignoring international law.

The Republic of Cuba has the right to defend and preserve its national sovereignty in the face of all forms of imperialist aggression and terrorism. Finally, I call on the government of the United States to immediately release my five heroic brothers who remain unjustly incarcerated for attempting to halt acts of terrorism organized from Miami against their country and their people. I promise constant solidarity with my brothers and sisters of Cuba and humbly ask them to continue supporting the struggle for achieving my release.

*Ever Onward to Victory!
In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
Leonard Peltier*

How you can help Leonard Peltier’s fight for freedom:

- To obtain information on Peltier’s case and upcoming activities related to his fight for freedom, contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee at Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044, or call (785) 842-5774. On the Internet visit www.freepeltier.org
- You can write to Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048-1000. Peltier can receive letters, postal money orders, soft-cover books, and photographs.
- Write to the Parole Board demanding Peltier’s immediate release; letters should be addressed to United States Parole Commission, Air World Center, Suite 220, 10920 Ambassador Dr., Kansas City, MO 64153.

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Nelson Blackstock

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Socialists join Bay Area immigrant rights rally

Continued from front page
Freedom Ride.

The young socialist campaigners, marching next to contingents of roofers and other unionists, joined in the lively chants demanding rights for immigrant workers. Their signs identified them as supporters of the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California, Joel Britton.

The action was marked by the partici-

pation of several large union contingents, including the Laborers International Union and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2, which has been involved in a series of union organizing drives and contract fights at area hotels. Also marching were contingents from community and immigrant rights groups.

Democratic governor Gray Davis and a number of other capitalist politicians spoke, sounding a chorus of “No to the recall.” Davis expressed sympathy for immigrant workers “who toil under the hot sun to put food on our table.”

When asked, however, he declined to express a position on the goal of the Freedom Ride—legalizing the status of undocumented workers, saying it was a “federal issue.”

The Socialist Workers campaigners joined others in protesting factory raids and deportations by immigration cops. They celebrated the success of the struggles by workers that recently led the state government to pass a law reversing restrictions on undocumented workers’ access to a driver’s license. And they championed the demand of the march that the government guarantee legal protections to all undocumented workers.

At the rally in front of City Hall, demonstrators were drawn to a two-table display of revolutionary literature by a colorful banner urging workers and youth to “Campaign with Young Socialists for Joel Britton for Governor, Deborah Liatos for Mayor, Ryan Scott for District Attorney.”

Ryan Scott, Socialist Workers candidate for district attorney in San Francisco and a spokesperson for Young Socialists for Britton, met a contingent of 15 students from California State University in Monterey, where Scott had previously attended school. Five among the group were from the campus chapter of the Chicano student



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Arrin Hawkins (center, speaking into mike) campaigns with Young Socialists for Britton as part of September 20 immigrant rights kick-off march, San Francisco.

group MEChA and said they were excited about having Joel Britton come to speak on their campus September 24. A professor at the campus had already invited Britton to speak there.

Nattely Gutierrez, a leader of the Monterey campus MEChA chapter, said she was angered about Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante’s attempts to distance himself from his past membership in MEChA. Gutierrez said she appreciated the Socialist Workers campaign’s defense of the Chicano organization and Britton’s activity in support of the Chicano struggle. She invited Britton to address the MEChA chapter while he is in Monterey.

Five of the youth from CSU Monterey signed up to find out more about campaigning with the Young Socialists for Britton.

One member of the Service Employees International Union stopped by the campaign table and expressed his support for Davis and his opposition to the recall, but he also bought a copy of *Teamster Rebellion* by SWP leader Farrell Dobbs and agreed to get back to the socialist campaigners to discuss what he read.

A student from San Francisco State University who stopped by the campaign table picked up the *Militant* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, and left her name to be contacted about helping set up speaking engagements for the socialist candidates.

By the end of the day, rally participants had bought 25 copies of the *Militant*, 6 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*, and \$50 worth of Pathfinder books.

SWP takes ‘not voting’ stance on Proposition 54

The following statement was released September 23 by Joel Britton, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California, to Good Politics Radio, an Internet site through which audio messages can be recorded and heard.

Hello. I’m Joel Britton, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of California. I’m on the special recall election ballot as “Joel Britton—Independent, Retired Meat Packer.”

A long-time trade unionist, Black rights and antiwar activist, I serve on the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

I have been asked whether I support or oppose Proposition 54, the proposed amendment to the California constitution that is on the recall election ballot.

According to the Official Voter Information Guide Proposition 54 is supposed to “prohibit state and local governments from using race, ethnicity, color or national origin to classify current or prospective students, contractors or employees in public education, contracting, or employment operations.”

I am opposed to both the “Vote Yes on 54” and the “Vote No on 54” campaigns being waged and take a “Not voting” position.

Ward Connerly, the conservative Republican who heads the “Vote Yes” campaign cynically claims that if Proposition 54 receives a majority of ballots cast it will help create a “color-blind” society. This, from a well-known opponent of affirmative action measures to redress current-day inequalities and discrimination against working people who are Black, especially.

Without a fight to end such inequalities and discriminatory practices, working people will be unable to wage united struggle against the wealthy families who rule this country through their twin Democratic and Republican parties.

As we face a revolutionary workers movement that can fight for a workers and farmers government that will put an end to capitalism—which breeds racist oppression and discrimination of all types—a “color-blind” society will then become possible.

This is not what Connerly and Co. have in mind.

Those campaigning for a “No” vote on Proposition 54 include Democratic governor Gray Davis, his Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamante, Republican candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the mayors of Los Angeles and San Francisco, many trade union officials, and leaders of health-care and other organizations. They all falsely claim that unless this measure is defeated, it will be impossible to fight racist discrimination in housing, education, medical care, and employment.

We can lead a fight against racist discrimination without promoting reliance on government collection of “racial” statistics. The civil rights fighters of the 1950s and 1960s—part of a mass proletarian struggle that brought down the Jim Crow system of statutory segregation throughout the South—didn’t need “racial” data from governmental bodies to convince people that something had to be done. What’s more, as Malcolm X taught us, it is the government that was responsible for maintaining racist oppression in the South and in the North. That is still true today.

Los Angeles police chief William Bratton and other top police officials in the state have come out against Proposition 54, saying that the measure would hurt their efforts to stop “racial profiling” and “protect against hate crimes.” These pronouncements take the fakery to a higher level. The purpose of police is to mete out punishment, to keep workers in line, to make an example of you if you come from the wrong class—even more so if you happen to be the wrong color or the wrong nationality. It is worth remembering that far more working people are executed by a policeman’s bullet, chokehold, or hog-tying than by lethal injection or electrocution, even with the unrelenting climb in state-sanctioned murders since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment in 1976.

The logic of the “Vote No” on Prop 54 forces is to rely on governmental bodies,

instead of relying on ourselves and our own capacities, of organizing ourselves in struggles independent of them.

Liberal “Vote No” campaigners falsely claim that passage of Prop 54 would have a “devastating impact” on civil rights and would “roll back 40 years of hard-won civil rights gains.” But to roll back the gains of the civil rights movement would take a massive counterrevolutionary movement. And that is simply not on the agenda. The Supreme Court ruling this past summer upholding affirmative action in university admissions registered this fact.

Vote “Yes” to recall Governor Davis and then vote Socialist Workers—for “Joel Britton, Independent, Retired Meat Packer.”

Visit www.themilitant.com for more information on the Socialist Workers Party campaign. To make a much-needed financial contribution, make out a check to Socialist Workers Campaign Committee and send it to 4229 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90011. To volunteer to help campaign, call (323) 233-9372.

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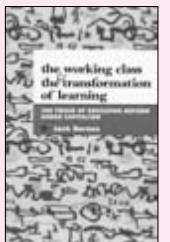
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Cuban Revolution champions Palestinian struggle

Below are excerpts from “I speak on behalf of the children of the world who do not even have a piece of bread,” a speech Cuban president Fidel Castro gave at the United Nations General Assembly Oct. 12, 1979. The full text appears in *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ against Cuba Doesn’t End*, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for September. The book contains speeches to the UN by Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara, another central leader of the Cuban Revolution. Castro addressed the UN in his capacity as president of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, which had held its Sixth Summit the previous month in Havana. The summit took place in the wake of tumultuous events, including the toppling of the Shah of Iran by a mass revolutionary uprising; the triumph of



Palestinians march in the West Bank, 2002. “Unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab territories,” is required for Mideast peace, Castro said.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

the revolution in Grenada under the leadership of Maurice Bishop; and the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza by Nicaraguan workers and peasants, led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front. It is copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

Mr. President, there can be no doubt that the problem of the Middle East has become one of the situations of greatest

concern in today’s world. The Sixth Summit Conference examined it in its twofold dimension.

On the one hand the conference reaffirmed that Israel’s determination to continue its policy of aggression, expansionism, and colonial settlement in the occupied territories—with the support of the United States—constitutes a serious threat to world peace and security. At the same time the conference examined the problem from the standpoint of the rights of the Arab countries and of the Palestinian question.

For the Nonaligned countries the Palestinian question is the very crux of the problem of the Middle East. These two problems form an integral whole and neither can be settled in isolation from the other.

No just peace can be established in the region unless it is based on the total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab territories, as well as the return to the Palestinian people of all their occupied territories and the restoration of their inalienable national rights, including the right to return to their homeland, to self-determination, and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in accordance with Resolution 3236 of the General Assembly.¹

This means that all measures taken by

Israel in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories—including the establishment of colonies or settlements on Palestinian land or other Arab territories, whose immediate dismantlement is a prerequisite for a solution of the problem—are illegal, null, and void.

As I stated in my address to the Sixth Summit:

We are not fanatics. The revolutionary movement was always educated in hatred of racial discrimination and pogroms of any kind. From the bottom of our hearts, we repudiate the merciless persecution and genocide that the Nazis once unleashed on the Jews. But there is nothing in recent history that parallels it more than the dispossession, persecution, and genocide that imperialism and the Zionists are currently practicing against the Palestinian people.

Pushed off their lands, expelled from their country, scattered throughout the world, persecuted and murdered, the heroic Palestinians are a moving example of selflessness and patriotism, living symbols of the greatest crime of our era.² [Applause]

No one should be surprised that the conference, for reasons stemming not from any political prejudice, but rather from an objective analysis of the facts, was obliged to point out the role of U.S. policy in the

region. The U.S. government has aligned itself with Israel, supported it, and has worked to attain partial solutions favorable to Zionist aims and to guarantee the fruits of Israel’s aggression at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs and the entire Arab nation. By so doing it has played a major role in preventing the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The facts, and only the facts, led the conference to condemn U.S. policies and maneuvers in that region.

When the heads of state or government arrived at a consensus condemning the Camp David agreement and the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of March 1979,³ their formulations had been preceded by long hours of detailed study and fruitful exchanges. This allowed the conference to consider those treaties not only as a total abandonment of the cause of the Arab countries, but also as an act of complicity with the continued occupation of Arab territories.

These words are harsh, but they are true and just.

The Egyptian people are not the ones who were judged by the Movement of Non-aligned Countries. The Egyptian people command the respect of each and every one of our countries, and enjoy the solidarity of all our peoples. The same voices that were raised to denounce the Camp David agreements and the Egyptian-Israeli treaty praised Gamal Abdel Nasser, a founder of the Movement and an upholder of the fighting traditions of the Arab nation....

¹UN General Assembly Resolution 3236, approved November 22, 1974, reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence, and sovereignty.

²The text of Castro’s keynote address to the Sixth Summit conference of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries is contained in *Fidel Castro Speeches: Cuba’s Internationalist Foreign Policy 1975–80* (New York: Pathfinder, 1981), pp. 162–79.

³Following Cairo’s defeat in the 1973 war with Tel Aviv, accords between Egyptian president Anwar al Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin were signed at the U.S. presidential resort at Camp David, Maryland, in September 1978. Under terms of a subsequent peace treaty, signed in Washington in March 1979, the Egyptian government extended formal diplomatic recognition to Israel.

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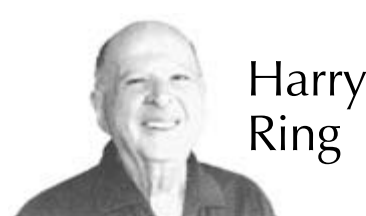
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BBC asks a question—This past July 26, Cuba celebrated the anniversary of the 1953 rebel as-



Harry Ring

sault on the Moncada barracks that kicked off the guerilla and urban underground struggles that climaxed in the 1959 overthrow of the Batista regime. This July 25, in Havana, a BBC reporter asked

Enrique Oltuski, who had been a leader of the July 26 Movement in Havana, if things were now any different.

Venceremos—Oltuski to BBC: “It’s many times better than it used to be. Perfect? No. We don’t claim that we have reached a perfect society. We are a bunch of crazy Cubans who believe that a better world can be built. We have dedicated our lives to this, and now we are training our young generation to continue our work.”

Haunted for crimes?—“SHELBYVILLE, Kentucky—Stumped by mysterious sights and sounds in their headquarters, who

did the Shelbyville police department call? Ghost hunters. A team from Louisville plans to seek logical explanations for unexplained knocks, jiggling doors and other phenomena in the 19th-century brick building”—News item.

Virtually perfect—Underfunding of pensions could exceed \$80 billion; U.S. finds the viability of the agency that insures plans for 44 million Americans is at risk”—Headline, *Los Angeles Times*.

Oops—“Scientists at Johns Hopkins University, who last year published a controversial report suggesting that a single evening’s use of the illicit drug Ecstasy could

cause permanent brain damage and Parkinson Disease are retracting their research in its entirety, saying the drug used for their experiment wasn’t Ecstasy at all”—News item.

DVD—Short of musicians for military funerals, the Pentagon has approved a push-button bugle that plays taps by itself as the operator holds it to his lips.

Which reminds us—A time back, GIs had it that military music was to music as military justice was to justice.

Don’t splatter it – The Pentagon spent some 15 hours burning

Sarin, a lethal nerve gas, in a new incinerator. They had hoped to burn a stockpile of 800 gallons in less than a day, but 270 gallons remain unfinished at Anniston, Alabama. Getting burned will be postponed while they “fine-tune” the incinerator. A single drop of Sarin on a person’s skin can be fatal.

They can’t do everything—Washington has asked the UN for a delay on its agreement to scrap less than a half of its declared inventory of 31,000 tons of mustard gas, Sarin, and other killer chemicals. For assorted environmental concerns and incinerator problems, the Pentagon now wants a delay until 2007, not the initial 2004.

‘Gay rights strengthen Cuban Revolution’

Director of Cuban sex education institute discusses changing attitudes, need for further steps

Below is an interview with Mariela Castro Espín that appeared in the May 23 edition of *Alma Mater*, the journal of the University of Havana. Castro is the director of the Cuban National Institute for Sex Education. The interview was published under the title, “Cuban Society and Homosexuality.” Translation and subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY EDUARDO JIMÉNEZ GARCÍA

More relaxed. Not more tolerant. Achieving dignity and respect for the rights of Cuban homosexuals is no easy task. Yet it hardly seems humane to wait another century for some sort of “natural evolution” to bring about justice. The full emancipation of gays and lesbians in Cuba also entails promoting and achieving changes in the popular conceptions of a society that does not yet accept homosexuality, despite the fact it is more relaxed than before about the existence of this “phenomenon.” In an interview with *Alma Mater*, Mariela Castro Espín, director of the National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), expressed her belief that “we are now poised at the most opportune moment for homosexuals to gain more space and representation in Cuban society.”

Question: Do you believe that the ‘90s ushered in an era of greater social tolerance with respect to homosexuality in Cuba?

Answer: Yes, I believe so, that people are a little more relaxed about a homosexual presence, both in public and in the privacy of the family, but only a little bit relaxed, not more tolerant. We have much more work to do in our society for this “relaxation” to mean real respect toward sexual diversity. Sexuality is more complex than what science has been able to establish, and what we are able to imagine. That is why we must be very careful about the decisions taken in this respect.

I do not have statistics or other kinds of scientific data to demonstrate that there is more tolerance, because there are no studies on this specific subject in our country. Yet, I am able to observe this phenomenon as a professional and as an individual. I do believe that since the 1990s there has been a greater acceptance of the presence of homosexuals by some portion of the population and public institutions. That does not mean that the contradiction has been resolved for all individuals at all levels of society.

In terms of our society as a whole, I think we are at a good moment to implement policies that are more explicit about the defense of the rights of homosexuals, so that we are better prepared to confront any manifestation of discrimination on account of sexual orientation.

By the 1970s, reforms that were made to the Penal Code excluded the classification of homosexuals as a criminal; any word that discriminated against homosexuals was modified. However, that is not enough because I think our laws should better reflect the respect that homosexuals merit.

Greater and more professional work is needed at the microsocial level, because what this is about is trying to change perceptions, modifying popular conceptions within society. That is why I identify this very humanistic attempt to achieve greater respect for the rights of homosexuals with the Battle of Ideas that is being waged in



Poster for 1993 Cuban film *Strawberry and Chocolate* by director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. The movie uses satire to criticize bias against gays in Cuba. The film’s popularity in Cuba registered changing attitudes on this question. Noting this, Mariela Castro calls for “policies that are more explicit in defense of the rights of homosexuals.”

our society today. I believe this battle, in the field of culture and politics, should include such a necessity, because it would mean a cultural, social, and political strengthening of the Revolution.

Q: Is that a proposal?

A: Yes. It is a proposal I am making, at appropriate opportunities, from my position of responsibility as the director of the National Center for Sex Education, with the aim of achieving this type of analysis. And I assure you it has reached receptive ears. My suggestion is in no way removed or distant from the spirit of the Revolution, or from the entire process that has brought about this call to a Battle of Ideas. It would be wonderful to be able to spark a deep-going discussion on this subject among various groups, so that Cuban society could develop a healthier culture of sexuality, one that is fairer, that helps to overcome the erroneous beliefs and prejudices of our ancestors with regard to sexual orientation. Something like this would put the Revolution even more in line with its humanist ethics; because the Cuban Revolution has been made with the participation of all Cuban men and women who have identified themselves with the conquests and dreams of this social effort. Among all these participants are also people of various sexual orientations. Thus, it would not be fair to trample on the dignity of homosexuals because of some ancestral taboos. That is why I believe this to be a fundamental task, in which we have much more work to do.

Constitution and sexual orientation

Q: How do you think our laws should better reflect respect for the rights of homosexuals?

A: The Constitution of the Republic pro-

pects all people, regardless of their race, sex, age. And, obviously this protection includes homosexuals, albeit not explicitly (when something like that is made explicit, it is a recognition that there is a need to avoid any type of discrimination, such as racial or against women). In my modest opinion, some day, when plans are made to revise the Constitution, I believe it should explicitly include sexual orientation, in the same way it includes race, gender, and other considerations. I don’t consider this to be an urgent matter, but I do believe we should be clearer about this in our laws, more evident, not only as a protection of these people from discrimination in public institutions, but also within the family, because it is often there that a homosexual is first insulted or rejected.

To be rejected by one’s own family group is one of the most destructive experiences for one’s personality, and even more so when the condition that caused the rejection—that is, sexual orientation—was not a matter of choice.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



October 6, 1978

A major step toward the conclusion of a separate treaty between Israel and Egypt was taken September 28 when the Israeli Knesset (parliament) approved the Camp David summit accords by more than four to one.

During his opening speech to the Knesset September 25, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin could not refrain from boasting that as soon as a treaty with Egypt was concluded, his government would resume building new settlements on the occupied West Bank and would expand existing ones. Begin further promised that there “will be no plebiscite” in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, “and there is and will not be under any conditions or in any circumstances a Palestinian state.”

During an earlier interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Begin cynically noted the “possibility we won’t find an agreement” on the issue of sovereignty over the West Bank.

“Then the result will be local autonomy for the Palestinians and our soldiers will be there in Judea and Samaria.”

This is the formula for continued occupation and oppression that is being palmed off by [U.S. president James] Carter and the big-business media as the road to peace.



October 5, 1953

NEW YORK—The kingdom of International Longshoremen’s Union Boss Joseph Ryan looked in a bad way this week as the American Federation of Labor, the state government, the courts and Eisenhower moved in to break the stronghold of Ryan and his henchmen over the longshoremen here and impose their own domination.

After turning a pious face away from the stench of extortion, murder and just plain shakedown of some two decades, the AFL high chiefs looked into the ILA affairs and, under pressure of unsavory publicity, expelled the ILA from the AFL.

The Ryan gang had their difficulties with the ship owners too. The AFL move came in the midst of the union’s contract negotiations and was undoubtedly prompted by the desire to prevent the ILA from getting a legal contract.

Accordingly, for the first time in the memory of longshoremen here, the Ryan gang called a strike against the ship owners who have refused the demands of the union.

The New York longshoremen will not have the kind of union they need and want until they take over and run things on the waterfront themselves.

Defend the rights of immigrants

There is growing recognition among working people that the struggles for the rights of immigrants are a necessary part of strengthening our class in face of the employers’ assault on our jobs, wages, conditions, and social gains. The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride is an indication of that understanding and of the spreading mood of working-class resistance today.

The United States has been transformed by the biggest wave of immigration in its history—4.5 million immigrants arrived in the 1970s, 5.7 million in the 1980s, 11.3 million in the 1990s, and 2 million just in the last two years. Today an estimated 8 million workers do not have legal papers. Far from wanting to keep them out, the employers have drawn immigrants to this country in order to create a superexploited layer of our class and to try to keep us divided.

The government has beefed up the immigration police and stepped up workplace raids and the militarization of the borders. Almost 2 million workers were detained on the Southwest border last year. Since 2001, one million “no match” letters have been sent warning bosses to crack down on workers without proper Social Security cards. Even while posing as “friends of immigrants,” Democrats and Republi-

cans have backed the deportations. Pitting U.S.-born against foreign-born, “legal” against “illegal,” and even longer-term immigrants against new arrivals, they have fueled the demagogic lie that undocumented workers are a source of crime, unemployment, and other social ills caused by capitalism.

In resisting the bosses’ assault, many working people are concluding that we must join together, regardless of nationality or legal status, in a common fight. The influx of fellow workers born abroad has strengthened the working class. Workers from other countries bring their class-struggle experiences and culture with them, breaking down divisions among our ranks, and broadening our horizons. A case in point is the successful struggle by immigrant workers in California for the right to a driver’s license, which has helped push back government probes to impose a national ID card on all working people. The strike today by coal miners—mostly Mexican-born—at a Kingston lignite mine in Utah underscores the place of immigrant workers in the struggles today to organize or defend our unions.

Stop the factory raids and deportations! No secret detentions or trials! End the “no match” letters! For the right to a driver’s license! Legal status for all immigrants now!

Cuban hijacker gets 20 years in jail

Continued from front page

grenades later turned out to be fake.

The plane had to land in Havana for refueling. During the 15-hour layover, Cuban and U.S. officials, including President Fidel Castro and U.S. Interests Section chief James Cason, “unsuccessfully warned Wilson about the penalties for air piracy,” said the September 20 *Miami Herald*. After Wilson released 21 passengers and refused to give up, Cuban authorities allowed the plane to take off for Florida.

Two U.S. Navy jets escorted the craft to Key West, where Wilson was arrested. At his four-day trial there in July, the jury deliberated for one hour before pronouncing him guilty.

Earlier in September U.S. prosecutors expanded charges against six other hijackers who seized a Cubana Airlines DC-3 passenger plane during its Isle of Youth-Havana flight on March 19. U.S. authorities arrested the six Cubans after the plane landed in Key West, but refused to extradite them or return the plane as the Cuban government had demanded. The prosecution added counts of interfering with a flight crew and conspiracy to the original charge of air piracy. Earlier, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and FBI agents had traveled to Cuba to investigate the case.

These incidents were among a string of seven hijackings of Cuban planes and vessels between August 2002 and April of this year. They have been fueled to a large degree by Washington’s policies towards Cuba, which include restricting the number of visas granted by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana to Cubans who apply to emigrate,

while encouraging Cubans to cross the Florida straits by any means. The latter is codified in the Cuban Adjustment Act, approved by U.S. Congress in 1966. This law encourages people to leave Cuba for the United States by providing virtually automatic asylum to any Cuban who lands on Florida’s shores, regardless of any crimes they may have committed to get there.

On April 11, after a speedy trial, Cuban authorities convicted and executed three ringleaders of the hijacking of a passenger ferry in Havana nine days earlier. No more successful hijackings have taken place since then.

Washington used these executions to orchestrate a campaign of slanders and threats against the revolutionary government. It also used the earlier arrests and convictions of 75 opponents of the Cuban Revolution found guilty and imprisoned for collaborating with and getting funds from U.S. officials in Cuba to advance the U.S. rulers’ economic war on the Caribbean nation.

As the Cuban government held a firm stance in defending the country’s sovereignty, however, U.S. authorities began to prosecute some of the Cuban hijackers. According to a September 19 Associated Press report, Washington also fulfilled its promised quota this year for granting 20,000 visas to Cubans who apply to emigrate. It had slowed to a trickle between October 2002 and April of this year. During that period, the U.S. Interests Section in Havana had issued only 700 such visas. Rafael Dausá, director of the Cuban foreign ministry’s North America division, said in a statement that the news was “a positive element for relations on migration issues between Cuba and the United States.”

René González replies to smears

Continued from Page 6

rights to express their opinions in Cuba. All they have to do is to stand up at a nomination meeting and explain to their neighbors that they want to take the country back to 1959, return the Cuban land to the United Fruit Company, recall the terrorists that now live in Miami to the island and give them their properties back, sell the country to the transnationals and become themselves the political class that will take care of all those people’s petty interests. If their neighbors agree with them, they will be nominated without having to spend a dollar.

But if they find themselves in front of a revolutionary constituency—and their neighbors are committed to their country and support the government of the people, for the people, and by the people; and having fought and died for their society, don’t want to betray the memory of the patriots who have given their lives for the sovereignty and independence of Cuba—no “dissident” will be nominated nor will he obtain any vote.

And if they don’t deserve the confidence of their people, they don’t have the right to go to the American embassy—the last place I would think of as a haven for democracy—to find a source of sovereignty that only lies in Cubans.

Cuba, for more than 40 years, has faced a state of hostility and war that has led to more than 3,000 deaths and more than 2,000 injured on account of terrorist and armed actions carried out by traitors paid, trained, and supplied by the U.S. government. Those mercenaries were dealt with through the legal system. They weren’t arbitrarily declared “enemy” or “illegal” combatants, or disposed of through a drone-launched rocket so that Fidel could pose to the cameras declaring them “no longer a problem.” Nor were they subjected to secret military tribunals, nor were their families’ homes demolished by the Cuban military.

They were given sentences according to their involvement in their terrorist activities instead of the irrational punishment accorded here to the Puerto Rican patriots, just for their affiliation to a given organization, or the vindictive treatment given to me and my co-defendants for protecting Cuba from those mercenaries who now,

with their money and connections to the U.S. administration, sponsor schemes like the one of the “dissidents” or encourage illegal immigration from Cuba in order to justify the aggressive policy against Cuba.

The Cuban people have had no other option than to take their losses and to keep building the socialist society that so many have fought for, leaving it to history to settle questions of justice and relying on extreme patience and enormous courage.

I don’t know how many real progressive people are adhering to this campaign against Cuba. Things here are so relative that somebody can be labeled as liberal just for eating a hamburger with the left hand. And I’ve grown used to see some on TV advertised as leftist just because they are a little to the left of George Wallace.

But I assume there must be some genuine progressive people among them; people who really care about human rights and who honestly believe in justice, misguided by a perverse media which leaves them without any other reference when it comes to knowing what happens around the world.... I’ve always had the greatest respect for honest Americans who, overcoming the immense power of the most sophisticated machinery of deception ever designed, have been able to look beyond all of that to have a view of world events that pays homage to this country. It takes a lot of intelligence, curiosity, courage, and, above all, a lot of sensitivity.

I want to appeal to that sensitivity and, with all due respect, invite you to think of this: It was one thing to be a Roman citizen, with all privileges accorded to full citizenship, discussing democracy and liberty on the senate or on the streets of Rome; and another thing, completely different, to be fighting for that democracy and that liberty, in the field, against all odds, under the siege of Pompeii legions, defending your very life together with Spartacus.

Very truly yours,
René González
Federal Correctional Institution
Edgefield, South Carolina

cc: *The Progressive*

Is French capitalism to blame for 15,000 deaths in heat wave?

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Two readers objected to an article in the September 22 issue, headlined, “French capitalism kills 12,000 during heat wave, Paris blames ‘mother nature,’” which reported the massive death toll in France during early August.

Before taking up the main questions they raise, let’s first clear up one issue raised by Stefan Metzeler in this week’s letters column. “France was the ONLY country where the elderly died in such great numbers,” he writes. But the Italian government, for one, admitted September 11 that at least 4,175 more people older than 65 died there than in the same period a year ago. Other governments reported increased death rates, too.

REPLY TO A READER

In disagreeing with the statement that capitalism is to blame for the death count, which had risen to 15,000 by September 9, Metzeler and Gene Montalvo, whose letter was published last week, repeat the fallacy that the French government and economic system are “socialist.” Montalvo writes, “I fail to see how capitalism is responsible for a socialist government’s response to heat deaths.” Metzeler states this week, “France is BY FAR the most collectivist, socialist, and centralized country in all of Europe.”

How does this square with the facts? Today’s so-called “socialist” French government is a conservative coalition led by the Gaullists. The Gaullists have been the dominant big-business party in France for decades.

For their part, despite their names, the Socialist and Communist parties have nothing to do with socialism or communism. The SP is a social democratic party and the CP is a Stalinist organization. Both follow a course of trying to reform or patch up capitalism and administering the capitalist state, not of organizing a revolutionary movement of working people to take power out of the hands of the billionaire ruling families and establish a government of workers and farmers.

For nine decades, since they helped drag workers and farmers into World War I as cannon fodder for the imperialist rulers in France, SP leaders have acted to defend the interests at home and abroad of big business. In the 1930s, by heading up a Popular Front government that included representatives of the CP and capitalist parties, they helped the capitalists derail a massive working-class upsurge and block workers and farmers from contending for power.

Through their struggles over the decades, working people in France have extracted concessions from the bosses, from the reduction of working hours to vacation pay, pensions, free health services, and other social rights. But the capitalist families—the owners of Michelin, Crédit Lyonnais, and the like—remain the ruling class and use the state to protect their interests, waging an offensive to erode these gains.

Over the past year we have been hearing shriller denunciations of the French government among big-business circles in the United States and other imperialist countries—from the United Kingdom to Switzerland.

This is for two reasons. One is the hatred of bosses everywhere for the example set by working people in France in their resistance to the attacks by the bosses and the government. In their view, Paris needs to push harder to roll back pensions, raise the retirement age, and weaken unions.

Sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry

The second—and main—reason is the sharpening rivalry between imperialist powers over markets and natural resources around the globe. The anti-French rhetoric goes along with efforts by Washington to shove Paris aside in the ongoing dispute over control of the Mideast, Africa, and other regions.

Scoffing at “socialist France,” Montalvo extols the virtues of capitalism in the United States. Government and private agencies “act rapidly to assist the elderly in dealing with heat dangers,” he claims.

What is the situation facing the elderly in the United States? The figures on hunger among retired people suggest that they should not expect timely and generous action from state or churches if a heat wave should hit next summer. One in four senior citizens suffered from malnutrition by the early 1990s, early in the current crisis. A December 2002 report commissioned by city mayors said that requests for food assistance by the elderly had increased by 19 percent over the previous 12 months. Authorities should prepare for “the coming senior bubble and the predictable widespread hunger among aging, working-poor baby boomers who have inadequate retirement plans,” it said.

“The capitalist does not care about the first thirteen years of workers’ lives,” Jack Barnes observes in *Capitalism’s World Disorder*, “then he cares about our ability to work hard for the next fifty years; then he hopes we die quickly. That coarse attitude is what the rulers try to get layers of the working population to accept as well.”

That is the essence of the bosses’ attitude toward what they consider the “non-productive” members of the toiling classes. It underscores why we need to follow the example of workers and farmers in Russia in 1917, and Cuba in 1959, and forge a powerful movement with a revolutionary leadership to overthrow the capitalist system. That will open the way to the first steps in the construction of socialism on a worldwide basis.

‘I won’t start WWII for you’

British general told Wesley Clark in Kosova in 1999

BY PATRICK O’NEILL
AND SAM MANUEL

Former army general and NATO commander Wesley Clark—the man who four years ago ordered British troops to speed to Pristina airport in advance of Russian forces during the Kosova war, only to be rebuffed by a less trigger-happy British subordinate—entered the race for the Democratic Party presidential nomination September 17. He quickly emerged as the front-runner among the 10 Democratic candidates, and has received unofficial backing from former president William Clinton and other prominent figures.

Clark and his supporters campaign on his military record, as well as on his liberal positions on abortion and other social questions. They point in particular to his record as a military officer in Yugoslavia.

In 1995 Clark was top military adviser to the White House negotiators as they imposed the Dayton accords, which set up the U.S.-led NATO occupation of Bosnia, after U.S. and British planes carried out 3,000 air attacks against Serbian forces between February 1994 and September 1995. The offensive and accords that followed reinforced Washington’s dominant position over the imperialist powers in Europe.

Three and a half years later, as NATO commander, Clark oversaw the 78-day U.S. and British bombing war on Serbia and Kosova. Yugoslavia’s working people were the main targets of NATO’s assault. The U.S. Air Force, backed by its British counterpart, bombed out factories, hous-

ing, bridges, communications centers, oil depots, and hospitals, in addition to military installations.

After the war, Kosova was carved up among the military forces of five NATO imperialist powers—France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. By 2001, the occupying forces amounted to 42,500 troops.

Finding itself frozen out of this postwar carve-up, Moscow, which had backed the assault and successfully pressured the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic to capitulate, dispatched 200 troops from Bosnia to Kosova’s Pristina airport. Clark “immediately ordered 500 British and French paratroopers to be put on standby to occupy the airport,” reported the BBC in August 2000, in an account of a documentary film about the incident.

Clark’s order was blocked by Gen. Michael Jackson, the commander of the British forces. “I’m not going to start the Third World War for you,” he told Clark during a “heated exchange.”

“Confront them,” said Clark, in another account carried by the August 20, 1999, *Guardian*. “Not unless you’re prepared to see lots of Russian bodies,” Jackson replied.

As the standoff unfolded, Moscow prepared to fly in thousands of reinforcements. “We had battalions of paratroopers ready to leave within two hours,” said Russian general Leonid Ivashev. Clark then directed U.S. admiral James Ellis, the head of NATO’s southern command, to order helicopters,

along with British tanks and armored cars, onto the runway to prevent the Russian transport planes from landing. “Ellis replied that the British General Jackson would oppose such a move,” reported the *Guardian*.

Clinton’s White House gave Clark the “brush-off” when he complained about the British generals’ actions, which had been endorsed by the British government, said the British daily. Clark had earlier advocated the use of U.S. ground troops and attack helicopters in the 1999 assault—a move opposed by Clinton.

In the end, the Hungarian government, under pressure from Washington, refused to allow the Russian cargo planes to overfly its territory. Clark agreed to provide supplies to the Russian paratroopers stranded at the airport. Meanwhile, Russian and NATO officials cut a deal in which 3,600 Russian troops would function as part of the NATO occupation, under their own officers but without the separate zone that Moscow had pushed for.

Clark was cashiered in July 1999, the month following the Pristina crisis. According to Clark, Clinton subsequently told him that “I had nothing to do with” the early retirement.

Clinton welcomed Clark’s candidacy, referring to the general and Senator Hillary Clinton as the “two stars” of the Democratic



NATO commander Wesley Clark at Tirana airport, Albania, May 4, 1999, after visiting NATO forces involved in bombing of Yugoslavia.

Party. Other party stalwarts also expressed enthusiasm, emphasizing Clark’s military and “national security” credentials. New York congressman Charles Rangel said that Clark is “Teflon to the question of being a patriot.”

Like several other Democratic Party candidates, Clark has criticized the present government’s conduct of the Iraq occupation. “The Bush administration has thus far refused to engage our allies through NATO,” he wrote disapprovingly in a column in the September *Washington Monthly*.

On September 18 Clark told reporters that despite being “conflicted” he “probably would have voted for” the Congressional resolution that authorized the invasion of Iraq. Referring to fellow candidate Howard Dean, he said, “I think he’s right. That in retrospect we should never have gone in there. But on the other hand, he wasn’t inside the bubble of those who were exposed to the information.”

According to the *New York Times*, Clark also that he would “probably oppose” President Bush’s request for \$87 million to finance the postwar occupation, although “he could see circumstances in which he might support sending even more money into the country.”

Washington aids Tel Aviv’s plans to remove Arafat

Continued from front page

Washington’s approval.

“That’s why we are now stalled,” Bush added, referring to the U.S.- brokered “road map for peace” in the Middle East, which he had signed earlier in Aqaba, Jordan, along with Abbas and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon. The plan is another attempt to stifle the Palestinian national liberation struggle. It promises a Palestinian state in 2005 on a patchwork of land in the occupied territories. In exchange, it demands that the Palestinian Authority clamp down on those organizing suicide bombings and other attacks against Israeli targets and put together a leadership to Washington’s liking.

Promoting this drive by the U.S. rulers, Bush continued, “Hopefully, at some point in time, a leadership of the Palestinian Authority will emerge which will then commit itself 100 percent to fighting terror.”

U.S. ambassador to the UN John Negroponte said that the Security Council resolution lacked a “robust condemnation” of the Palestinian groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades—all on Washington’s “terrorist” list.

A September 19 emergency session of the UN General Assembly passed a resolution similar to the one Washington had vetoed in the Security Council. Only the governments of the United States, Israel,

Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands voted against the proposal, which passed with 133 votes in favor and 15 abstentions.

The next day, more than 1,000 Palestinians turned out in the West Bank cities of Hebron and Bethlehem to protest the Israeli threats against Arafat. At the same time, thousands of Israelis marched to the defense ministry to protest Tel Aviv’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The Israeli cabinet had announced September 11 that it would “act to remove” Arafat. Israeli vice prime minister Ehud Olmert told Israeli radio, “The question is: How are we going to do it? Expulsion is certainly one of the options, and killing is also one of the options.” A day later, Israeli foreign minister Silvan Shalom said that killing Arafat was “not the official policy of the Israeli government.”

Ahmed Qurie, the new Palestinian prime minister, called Bush’s charges against Arafat “regrettable and harmful.” Tel Aviv insists that the Palestinian Authority crack down on Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades. In response, Qurie and other Palestinian officials called for a ceasefire, which Tel Aviv rejected. Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz, among those who favor deporting Arafat, said Qurie could win Tel Aviv’s collaboration only by going after Hamas and other groups.

On September 18, 13 Palestinians were wounded, following a firefight between PA security forces and Hamas militants. Palestinian officials accused Hamas of burning down a police station, attacking it with grenades, and kidnapping a high-ranking PA security official. A statement from the Palestinian interior ministry said seven members of Hamas had been arrested. The ministry is headed by Muhammad Dahlan, whom Abbas appointed before his resignation. Hamas accused Dahlan of provoking a fight to undermine efforts by Qurie to form a new cabinet, which may include a Hamas supporter.

In recent weeks, Tel Aviv has stepped up its efforts to kill Hamas leaders. On September 16, Israeli tanks surrounded the West Bank home of Majid Abu Dosh, killing Dosh as he attempted to leave. As is customary, the Israeli military then demolished Dosh’s home with bulldozers. The Israeli army conducted its largest raid into the Gaza Strip September 18, killing Hamas member Jihad Abu Shwairah. The West Bank city of Jenin was also put under a curfew.

Over the last month, Israeli forces have killed 13 members of Hamas and at least six civilians in Tel Aviv’s campaign to destroy the group, including a failed attempt September 6 to murder Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

In 'New International' no. 7

Opening Guns of World War III
Washington's Assault on Iraq

By Jack Barnes

The devastation of Iraq in the 1990–91 Gulf War did not lead to the dawn of a new world order. It sounded the opening guns of sharpening conflicts and class battles that will decide whether the horrors of World War III are inflicted on humanity or a road is open by working people to a socialist future of international human solidarity. **\$12.00**

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— LETTERS —

California campaign

After many years absence, due to reactionary campaign laws, it’s simply fantastic to have a real alternative for workers, seniors, and students on the California ballot. The capitalist class is certain to attempt to shore up this “recall loophole” from the 20th century.

The Britton for Governor campaign is on the side of all students, I am sure, but it would be useful to spell out to some degree the socialist position on college fees, incredible student debt, and cutbacks at every grade level throughout the state.

I am a transit worker of 27 years and often come into contact with students of all ages—ever increasing fees and cutbacks are a hot topic. I believe students today are every bit as capable as we were in the 70s in opposing imperialist

Wars and capitalist plunder, including on the campuses. But a boost from a genuine socialist campaign is sorely needed.

*Rick Trujillo,
San Jose, California*

Liberia

Enclosed find a \$35 donation. I would appreciate a little data on the history of ship registry in Liberia, and its connection with the current events. And why Charles Taylor has fallen from favor with the big-business henchmen that originally placed him in power.

*Horace Kerr
Denver, Colorado*

Imperialism

I am an electrician and have been a union man for years. I find your web site interesting, but I notice you use the term “imperialist”

quite frequently.

In order that I might better understand the articles, please let me know what *you* mean when you use this term. Do you use it as a general term, or does it have a specific meaning?

*Ken Berg
by e-mail*

French socialism?

I’ve come across your explanation of the more than 11,000 heat deaths in France and would like to comment. Being a Swiss citizen from the French speaking area of Switzerland, I’ve followed the issue closely and I know French politics extremely well.

The heat wave this summer was universal all over Europe, including Spain, Italy, Germany, and, of course, Switzerland. We’ve had temperatures of over 41.5° Celsius,

at the very least as hot as in France, if not even hotter.

Strangely, France was the ONLY country where the elderly died in such great numbers during this heat wave.

How is France different from its neighboring countries? Simple, plain, and obvious: France is BY FAR the most collectivist, socialist, and centralized country in all of Europe! Government controls pretty much all aspects of society and over 60 percent of the total economy.

Your title of “French capitalism kills 12,000 during heat wave” can at best be considered ironic, since “French capitalism” is practically an oxymoron.

The only “capitalism” to be found in France is STATE capitalism, which is of course the exact inverse of true capitalism, as

still found in Switzerland or the U.S.A.

In France, you can see more homeless than in the U.S.A. by now. Violence also has surpassed U.S. rates.

Many young French people dream of emigrating because of the miserable economic outlook in their own country. I’m personally assisting several to immigrate to Switzerland.

*Stefan Metzeler
by e-mail*

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.

Swedish voters reject adopting euro

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—By a margin of 56 percent to 42 percent voters in Sweden rejected a proposal to adopt the euro as the nation’s currency in place of the krona in a September 14 referendum. More than 81 percent of those eligible participated in the vote, a higher figure than in the 2002 elections for parliament.

Not even the murder of pro-euro foreign minister Anna Lindh a few days before the referendum produced a large enough number of sympathy yes votes for integrating Sweden more fully into the European Monetary Union (EMU).

Most employers and the big-business media, as well as a majority of members of parliament, campaigned for a yes vote. Sweden was “gripped by a political campaign whose scale and one-sidedness is without precedent in this Nordic country,” said the British *Financial Times*.

A small minority of employers and bourgeois politicians did campaign for a no vote. Stockholm had initially been reluctant to join the European Union (EU), and, together with the governments of Denmark and the United Kingdom, refused to adopt its common currency, thus keeping one door open to more collaboration with Washington. “Germany and France have big problems,” noted one Swedish capitalist after the vote, referring to the leading powers in the EU. “Are we going to suffer for that?”

As the euro gained strength vis-a-vis the dollar, the rulers in Stockholm began to shift their position. A congress of the Social Democratic Party, the dominant political force in Swedish politics for the last 70 years, adopted a position in favor of the euro in 2000.

End of Cold War weakened Stockholm

Half of the members of the Social Democratic Party, however, voted against the euro, as did 65 percent of members of the union federation LO, traditionally dominated by the Social Democrats.

“The end of the ‘Cold War’ has affected Swedish imperialism,” explained Anita Östling, speaking for the Communist League at a Militant Labor Forum in Gothenburg September 20. “Before that, Swedish imperialism could maneuver between the stronger imperialist countries and the workers states in eastern Europe, presenting an image of itself as ‘neutral.’ This is no longer possible. Besides, there are no suitors offering collaboration that will benefit the Swedish rulers. This makes Swedish imperialism weaker than ever.”

Östling described how the “weapons inspectors,” Stockholm’s preferred method of subjugating and controlling Iraq and its oil riches, had been run over as Washington and London went to war against Baghdad. Then, as Prime Minister Göran Persson was most intensively campaigning for Sweden to join the euro, Berlin and Paris declared they would not abide by the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, an agreement

among EMU members to limit inflation and budget deficits in order to maintain the euro as a stable currency.

“Another effect of the end of the Cold War, as well as the initial stages of economic depression, is the weakening of social democracy,” added Östling. “We did not see the apparatus of the Social Democratic Party enter work places like a locomotive to convince workers how to vote. That monolith too is weaker.”

“The labor movement was split and Social Democratic leader Göran Persson failed to lead it,” complained Lars Lejonborg, leader of the People’s Party Liberals. He blamed the no vote victory on “myths promoted by the Social Democrats that ‘Sweden is best,’ ‘we have nothing to learn from others,’ ‘we are best on our own.’” Other bourgeois party leaders like Alf Svensson of the Christian Democrats and Bo Lundgren of the Moderate Rally conservative party proposed that the Social Democratic government end its collaboration with the Left Party and Green Party environmentalists, who had campaigned for a no vote, in order to work more closely with other bourgeois political forces.

Employers demand compensation

Immediately after the referendum, representatives of employers’ organization and businessmen demanded compensation for the weaker competitive position they said they would face because of the no vote. Jakob Wallenberg, of the dominant Wallenberg family, hoped that the “yes side” would continue to work together “to make

Sweden more competitive. That means more education, higher productivity in industry, and increased incentives for private ownership.”

In his “Declaration of Government” on September 16, given by the prime minister at the traditional opening of parliament in the fall, Göran Persson promised to adopt “forceful actions that will strengthen Swedish companies, trade and growth.” He said he would revise tax laws to the benefit of big business and offered “a broad collaboration” to opposition parties, trade unions, and employers.

Anders Jonsson, columnist in the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, cautioned the prime minister against making promises in his declaration to “maintain resources for education and health care. The citizens can read almost every day about municipal governments [in charge of health care] facing big deficits and schools that must cut budgets. Reality across the country seems to correspond poorly to what is being said from the rostrum of parliament.”

Reactions by imperialist rivals

The result of the referendum on the euro is but one sign of increased difficulties for the European Union as it enters its first recession since the adoption of the common currency for 12 of its 15 members. Berlin, Paris, and Rome, with the three largest economies in the EU, are not complying with the budget rules initiated by the rulers in Germany and France in 1997, thus shifting their economic problems onto their smaller rivals. This drew complaints from

representatives of smaller capitalist powers at the meeting of EU finance ministers in Stresa, Italy, on September 13–14. With the German and French rulers projecting a third and fourth consecutive year of budget deficits respectively larger than the 3 percent limit under EU rules, “who can you trust in the future development of Europe?” said the governor of the Dutch central bank.

With a planned expansion bringing in 10 new members next year, Europe, writes Alan Cowell in the *New York Times*, “could soon be perceived as falling into three castes,” with a majority of the new members in eastern Europe having to “make wrenching economic adjustments” to comply with the demands in the Growth and Stability Pact; the three countries still outside the common currency; and the 12 nations presently using the euro, led by Germany and France.

This development was welcomed by the *New York Post* on September 18. An editorial in the conservative daily said the no vote in Sweden would “help slow the evolution of the European Union from a free-trade pact into a single French-dominated European superstate, designed to challenge American power and protect European statism,” which is where “Europe’s Francophile elites are bent on taking the E.U.” From the point of view of the editors of the *Post*, “anything that upsets the Franco-German agenda of creating a Europe run for the benefit of Paris and Berlin—and to America’s detriment—is a positive development.”

Scotland: 2,000 demand closure of Dungavel immigration jail at union-sponsored rally

BY PAMELA HOLMES

STRATHAVEN, Lanarkshire—Men, women, and children waved down to demonstrators from the windows of Dungavel Detention Centre September 6. The 2,000 protesters had assembled to demand the closure of this prison, in which asylum seekers are detained before being deported.

The unprecedented level of participation by immigrant workers strengthened the action, called by the Scottish Trade Union Congress to mark the second anniversary of the center. The rally won broad backing from trade unions, political parties, and religious and welfare organizations, and was about 10 times the size of a protest this time a year ago. The Glasgow Refugee Action Group, the newly formed Scottish African Refugee Community Association, and other immigrant rights organizations brought about one-third of the participants.

Ten double-decker buses carrying more than 600 people from Glasgow wound their way down the narrow country lanes to reach the prison’s rural site. More than 400 people had attended a public meeting the previous night in Glasgow to protest against the detention of children at Dungavel. At one point, several hundred protesters maintained a barrage of blows against the perimeter fence, chanting, “Scotland’s shame; Shut it down!”

Militant reporters spoke with immigrant workers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kurdistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Senegal. Many spoke of their battles to gain the right to live and work in this country and carried documents showing what stage they were at in the long drawn-out legal process. Also present were small groups of more established immigrant workers from the Indian subcontinent.

“It’s good to be free again,” Mercy Ikolo told the crowd. Ikolo, who is from Cameroon, has been living in Ireland for more than a year. She was returning to Dublin August 17 after visiting friends in Scotland when she and her Irish-born daughter were detained by immigration authorities at the Scottish port of Stranraer and sent



Militant/Hugh Robertson

Chanting “Shut it down!” protesters gathered at the Dungavel immigration jail.

to Dungavel. Mothers cannot feed their children outside of the center’s set meal times, she said—whether or not they have eaten. Every movement is monitored, she said, and noted the difficulty in getting access to attorneys.

Glasgow Refugee Action Group representative Mohammed Naveen Asif called on participants to continue organizing, while Aamer Anwar, who acts as lawyer for many of the detainees, urged protesters to turn up to fill the court each time a case is heard.

As we waited to board the buses back to Glasgow, a group of young Asian women chanted, “One, two, three, four, we don’t want Dungavel no more; Five, six, seven, eight, we don’t want no racist hate!”

In the days leading up to the demonstration, newspapers carried a number of stories about conditions inside Dungavel, focusing on the imprisonment of children and help-

ing show how arbitrary and unlimited the detentions often are. One report told the story of Fatima Jailana Muse from Somalia. Despite her husband having indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom, Muse is in Dungavel with her two daughters. Her jailers cut off her allowance of £3.50 (£1 = \$1.58) after she took a Weetabix biscuit to her room to feed her baby, who was unable to eat at the set time. In spite of the growing controversy, and criticism by the Scottish National Party opposition, the first minister of the executive of the Scottish parliament, Jack McConnell of the Labour Party, has refused to take a stand. “Asylum and immigration are reserved to the UK government,” said a spokesman. “The Executive does not interfere in policies reserved to Westminster and by the same token they would not interfere in issues that are devolved” to the Scottish parliament.

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