

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Small fishermen protest limits that threaten their livelihood

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Textile workers in N. Carolina win union

BY MANUEL MARTÍNEZ

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina — “This is one company that did not want a union, that would do anything to resist the union. Beating them is real history,” declared Marlin Rice, who has worked at the Fieldcrest Cannon textile mill complex here for four years.

The Fieldcrest Cannon workers voted in favor of joining the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) June 22–23. Of the 5,100 eligible voters,
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Build August 5–7 Active Workers Conference

BY CINDY JAQUITH

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — “Between now and the end of July, socialists throughout the South are going back systematically to deliver personal invitations to and help bring vanguard workers, farmers, and young people to the Active Workers Conference in Ohio — visiting catfish workers in Belzoni, Steelworkers on strike against Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, farmers in Georgia, and others we’ve joined in struggle,” said Laura Garza. “We are organizing caravans for the trip.”

A member of the Steelworkers in Houston, Texas, Garza was chairing the concluding panel of a regional session of the socialist summer school here.

The panel featured a firsthand report on the recent textile union victory in
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Shipyard strikers rally support

BY MARY MARTIN AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

RICHMOND, Virginia — Some 1,000 striking shipyard workers, organized by United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888, brought their picket lines to the state capital here June 25 outside the annual shareholders meeting of Newport News Shipbuilding. The unionists carried signs saying, “Torpedo injustice,” blew whistles to help make their presence known, and chanted “8888 close the gates,” and “It’s contract time.” The picket line, which circled the block, was disciplined and spirited and a powerful display of the unionists’ determination after nearly three months on strike to win a decent contract. A day before, some 500 members of Local 8888, which represents the yard’s 9,200 hourly production and maintenance employees, held an expanded picket line outside the shipyard gates to mobilize support for the Richmond trip. “Unions have got to stick together,” stated
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U.S. out of Vieques!

50,000 protest U.S. military in Puerto Rico

BY RON RICHARDS

CEIBA, Puerto Rico — In a sea of Puerto Rican flags, 50,000 people marched here July 4 to demand the U.S. Navy leave the island of Vieques. The protesters rallied in front of the main gate of Roosevelt Roads Naval Base, many of them chanting “Criminal, criminal, the Navy is criminal!”

The demonstration, initiated by pro-independence groups, attracted an unprecedented spectrum of political forces.

Vieques, located about 10 miles east of the main island of Puerto Rico, has a population of 9,300. At the beginning of World War II, the U.S. Navy took over two-thirds of the island and has remained there ever since, with devastating effects on the livelihoods of the residents, many of whom are fishermen. The U.S. military uses the western end to store ammunition and the eastern end as a bombing range. Successive generations of Vieques residents have fought stubbornly to get the Navy off of their island, acquiring the image among many Puerto Ricans of a brave David going up against the U.S. Navy’s Goliath.

Protests sparked by fatal bombing

The renewed groundswell of protests against the U.S. military in Vieques was precipitated when a U.S. Navy warplane dropped two bombs off course and killed David Sanes, a Vieques resident employed by the Navy as a security guard. Repeated demonstrations have taken place since April both in Vieques and on the main island. Anti-Navy protesters, including some of the top leaders of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), have been camped out on the restricted area of the bombing range since the end of April.

The deep outrage among working people in Puerto Rico over the U.S. military’s trampling of Vieques, galvanized by the death of Sanes, marks a resurgence of nationalist sentiment that was evident last year in the widespread working-class support for the telephone workers strike. That battle, opposing the event-
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Some 50,000 people rallied in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, against U.S. military base in Vieques.

Protesters demand: ‘Free José Solís’

BY BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO — José Solís Jordán, a longtime advocate of Puerto Rican independence, was sentenced here July 7 to 51 months in prison by Federal Judge Blanche Manning on frame-up “terrorism” charges. He is the most recent of 17 Puerto Rican political prisoners currently in U.S. jails because of their involvement in the fight for Puerto Rico’s independence from

U.S. colonial rule.

Solís was convicted March 12 on fabricated charges of setting a bomb outside a military recruitment center in Chicago in 1992, based on the testimony of an FBI provocateur and three FBI agents.

The political activist and University of Puerto Rico professor could have served a
 Continued on Page 6

Rightists are pushed back in N. Ireland

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

PORTADOWN, Northern Ireland — “United we stand — Garvaghy Rd. 1999” read the victory T-shirts printed up and worn by residents here over the July 3–4 weekend. For the second year running the annual parade by the anti-Catholic and rightist Orange Order had been prevented from passing through the Garvaghy Road area of this town on the first Sunday in July. Every year the Orange Order and similar organizations stage about 4,000 parades in the six Irish counties that London holds as Northern Ireland. In recent years local residents in nationalist communities have mobilized against the intimidatory demonstrations. “This year 269 of the 4,000 have been contested,” Garvaghy Road resident Eilish Creaney told the *Militant*.

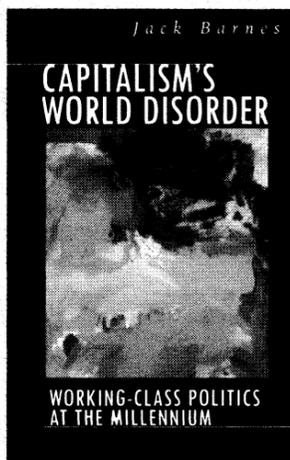
The Portadown parade was rerouted this year after a ruling by the government-established parades commission. The few thousand Orange Order members circled the estate, rallied at Drumcree church, and then returned along the same route. Garvaghy Road Residents’ Coalition (GRR) leader Brendan Mac Cionnaith told the *Militant* that the outcome reflected the broader battle about the future of the Six Counties. “What we have here is Northern Ireland writ small. Over that period the local community and its organization have
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FROM PATHFINDER

CAPITALISM’S WORLD DISORDER: Working-class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

“Signs of renewed defensive action are all around us — more numerous strike actions reflecting the tenacity and resistance of the embattled ranks; a noticeable weight of Black leadership in labor battles and struggles of working farmers; an upswing in the Puerto Rican independence movement; more actions in defense of immigrants’ rights. Such developments prepare the strengthening of working-class leadership in these struggles and increase the potential of the unions to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interests of its complete emancipation.” \$23.95



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Kurdish leader faces execution

A Turkish court sentenced Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan to death June 29. Ocalan's arrest in February sparked angry outpourings by Kurds around the world. He had been forced out of exile in Syria last October after Ankara threatened the Damascus regime with military action for harboring him there.

For decades the Kurdish people have resisted attempts by the governments in Turkey and other countries to suppress their language and culture. The Turkish government denies Kurds the right to read, write, or be educated in their own language. The PKK has been waging an armed struggle against the government in southeastern Turkey since 1984. Kurds comprise 12 percent of Turkey's population of 65 million people. Some 20-30 million Kurds are divided between southeastern Turkey, northeastern Syria, northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and southern Armenia.

Indian jets bomb Kashmir rebels

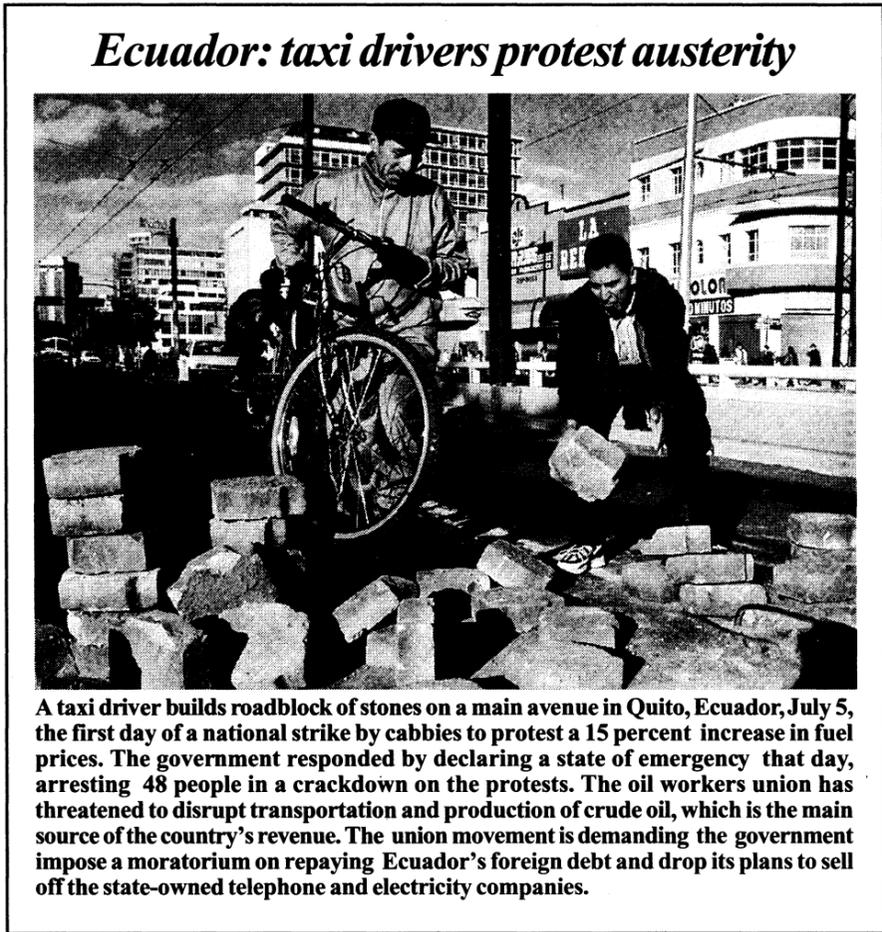
In a fourth night of air strikes, Indian warplanes pounded Kashmiri guerrillas based in the Himalayan mountains July 1. Washington, London, and other imperialist powers have lent tacit support for these assaults by New Delhi, which claims the fighters are Pakistani troops and Afghan mercenaries.

The Muslim majority in the region has waged a decades-long struggle for self-determination. More than 20,000 people have been killed in the region since 1989.

Ever since India and Pakistan won their independence from London in 1947, the governments of the two countries — formed as a result of British colonialism's divide-and-rule tactics — have clashed over control of Kashmir. India, which controls two-thirds of the region, shares a 2,000-mile border with Pakistan. The governments in Pakistan and India have fought three wars since 1947, and in 1990 teetered on the edge of a nuclear confrontation following increasing protests in Kashmir.

Industrial output sinks in Japan

Japan's industrial production dropped to the lowest level in five years in May and shrank about 1.2 percent in the country's first fiscal quarter, which ended June 30. Japanese capitalism has been in a deflationary crisis through-



Ecuador: taxi drivers protest austerity

A taxi driver builds roadblock of stones on a main avenue in Quito, Ecuador, July 5, the first day of a national strike by cabbies to protest a 15 percent increase in fuel prices. The government responded by declaring a state of emergency that day, arresting 48 people in a crackdown on the protests. The oil workers union has threatened to disrupt transportation and production of crude oil, which is the main source of the country's revenue. The union movement is demanding the government impose a moratorium on repaying Ecuador's foreign debt and drop its plans to sell off the state-owned telephone and electricity companies.

out the 1990s. The Tokyo stock market, the Nikkei, collapsed from 40,000 at the end of 1989 to below 14,000 in August and September 1998. As of June 25, the Nikkei was reported at 17,437. In 1989 Japanese shares in dollar terms accounted for 45 percent of total world stock prices; by mid-1998 the figure had slumped to about 10 percent.

Also in May, the number of unemployed workers soared by 410,000 bringing the overall jobless total to 3.34 million people, a post-World War II record. "Japan will begin 2000 at least 5% poorer than it ended 1996," said an article in the *Economist*. "For ordinary people of Japan, the pain can only get more acute."

Mozambique workers end strike

Striking workers at a cement factory in Matola, Mozambique, went back to work June 28 after winning a 30 percent wage increase. Workers walked off the job June 18 after demanding a 50 percent pay hike, better working conditions, and the dismissal of a racist manager. Bosses at the Cementos de Mocambique company said the strike caused them a loss estimated at \$1.72 million.

Currency drops in Colombia

Facing its worst economic recession in decades, the Colombian government devalued the country's currency June 28 by about 12 percent relative to the U.S. dollar. This was the second devaluation of the peso by the regime of President Andrés Pastrana. Imperialist investors have been pressing the Colombian government and capitalists to pay up on the country's foreign debt and sell off two electric utilities, ISA and Isagen. The sale would bring in more than \$1 billion into the Colombian government's coffers.

U.S. troops leave Panama base

U.S. military forces handed over control of Fort Sherman, its last base on Panama's Caribbean coast, to the Panamanian government June 30. Washington has imposed its military domination on the Panamanian people since 1903, when U.S. marines landed in Colón in order to

build the Panama Canal under U.S. control. A U.S. colonial enclave was established in the Canal Zone that controlled the political and economic life of Panama for decades.

Under pressures from working-class struggles in Panama and international solidarity, U.S. President James Carter was forced to sign historic treaties with Panamanian leader Gen. Omar Torrijos in 1977, promising to relinquish Washington's control of the Panama Canal by the year 2000. Other U.S. military bases scheduled to return to Panama's control this year are Fort Kobbe, the Clayton Base, and Howard Air Force Base. The Panamanian government is pressing Washington to clear out its military waste, including large amounts of unexploded military shells from several firing ranges.

Boeing, Airbus: price war looms

Highlighting their competition, The Boeing Company announced a deal to purchase 17 of its rival Airbus Industrie's wide-body jets from Singapore Airlines in order to sell Boeing 777s to the airline. John Leahy, senior vice president and commercial director of Airbus, warned of a possible price war and declared, "We're preparing our counterattack at the present time."

Boeing and Airbus, the world's two largest aircraft producers, have battled each other for decades to win market share. The competition for orders has driven down commercial aircraft prices 20 percent in the past two years, squeezing the companies' profit margins. Last year Airbus won a major order from British Airways for the first time, prompting bitter complaints from its chief competitor. In 1997 Boeing bosses took a loss for the first time in 50 years as Airbus grabbed 42 percent of the commercial aircraft market. Meanwhile, McDonnell Douglas was taken over by Boeing.

Farmers face glut crisis

While farmers in the United States could harvest a record 3 billion bushels of soybeans this fall, they also may receive the lowest prices since the 1970s. A grain glut is estimated for soybeans, corn, and wheat. In the first quarter of 1999 the price index for farm commodities fell 5 percent from last year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, net farm income dropped by an estimated 14 percent between 1996 and 1998.

Bill restricts young women's access to abortion

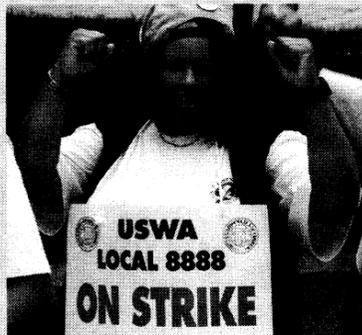
The U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill June 30 that would make it a federal crime to travel with a woman under 18 to another state to get an abortion in order to circumvent a parental-notification law in her home state. More than 20 states have laws requiring youths under age 18 to tell their parents before having an abortion. On June 7 Texas Gov. George Bush signed a parental-notification bill into law and New Jersey Gov. Christine Whitman took similar action three weeks later.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Support striking shipyard workers

The strike by Steelworkers in Newport News, Virginia, reflects the rising combativity and consciousness among working people in the United States and around the world. The 'Militant' explains the high stakes in this important labor battle and why workers and farmers should actively support their struggle. Don't miss a single issue!



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Louisiana: striking Steelworkers win union support at rally to demand a contract

BY TONY DUTROW

GRAMERCY, Louisiana — State troopers lining U.S. Highway 61 looked on as 200 Steelworkers and their supporters converged on Kaiser Aluminum's main gate here June 27. The few guards on duty glowered at the orderly protest by unionists massed outside the company property line. Shouts of "One day longer" and "Negotiate or liquidate" followed a brief rally at the gate.

One truck rumbled up to the gate, the crowd parted, and the driver was allowed to pass through after 45 seconds. A local court injunction allows pickets to stop each vehicle going in or out for that amount of time. The same injunction allows for mass pickets at the gate, though only a lone picket may walk in front of a vehicle. Three thousand members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in Washington State, Ohio, and Louisiana have been fighting for a contract with Kaiser Aluminum since they hit the picket lines in October. In January Kaiser locked out the workers after they offered to return to work and has refused to negotiate on its demands for steep job cuts, gutting of seniority rights, and minuscule pay raises despite hefty givebacks over the years in wages and pensions.

As the Kaiser workers set up for the rally, a caravan of strikers and supporters joined them, including a busload of 40 members of USWA Local 303L on strike at Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi. "I think if everybody stands together and strikes together, we'll be stronger than we've ever been," commented Nathaniel Tenner from USWA Local 303L. "Everyone out here today makes you feel that much stronger." The Natchez workers were forced on strike last September after Titan Tire boss Maurice Taylor bought the plant, formerly Fidelity Tire, and demanded deep concessions from the local. They joined Titan workers in Des Moines, Iowa, who have been on strike since May 1998.

A carload of supporters from Texas included two refinery workers who have been locked out at Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena for three and a half years. Two women from the USWA Local 2122 women's committee traveled from the US Steel Fairfield works near Birmingham, Alabama. Among the workers from Louisiana who came were teachers from the area, returning the solidarity they have received over the years from the Kaiser local during their strikes. Four workers from the Newark, Ohio, Kaiser local traveled here to be part of the event.

After the action at the gate, everyone caravanned back to the St. James Boat Club for a rally and Jambalaya dinner, prepared by the Steelworkers, a Cajun and Creole specialty in this region. Several hundred Steelworkers, their supporters, and family



Militant/Kevin Dwire

Unionists rally May 24 to support locked-out Kaiser workers in Heath, Ohio.

members packed the hall.

"We need these kind of events to keep up our spirits," said Roy Blank, a machinist with nine years at the Gramercy plant who volunteered that day to work as a food server. "When you're walking the picket line you don't get to see everyone in one place.... If you don't do things like this — they [the company] think we went away."

A busload of Avondale shipyard workers joined the meeting carrying their banner "Justice for Avondale" into the hall. David Walker, a welder with 15 years at the shipyard, told the *Militant*, "We are the Rodney Dangerfield of the shipyard workers. We get no respect." He was referring to the fact that Avondale is at the bottom pay scale of all the Navy yards. Walker talked about their

six-year effort to get union recognition. Workers voted to join the union in 1993. Since then "the Navy paid Avondale \$5 million to cover legal fees to fight our union," Walker said. The exposure of this recently in the New Orleans press prompted a recent protest in behalf of Avondale workers.

The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reported that 200 ministers filed a petition in behalf of the Metal Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. The Religious Leaders for Justice at Avondale called upon the secretary of the Navy to investigate unsafe working conditions in the yard and antilabor practices by Avondale industries, and urged the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to reject Avondale Industries's challenge of the 1993 vote.

Meanwhile, on July 2 the *Times-Picayune* reported that OSHA has cited Avondale Industries for failing to keep proper reports on workers' injuries and illness for a four-year period, 1995-98. In the first phase of this investigation in April, Avondale was hit with 60 citations and fined \$537,000. For workers at Avondale this is a life or death question. In addition to a high injury rate, 34 workers have died in the yard since 1974.

Gregory Bridges, a leader of the organizing drive at the shipyard, gave greetings and solidarity to the Kaiser workers. "It's the people themselves, like you, who are the most important. Support from our union officials and others is important, but we have to stick together in our struggle," Bridges said.

Dave Locklin gave greetings from Spokane, Washington, Locals 329 and 338. Pointing to the Avondale workers in the rear, he asked everyone to support their fight. "If we last one day longer, we will crumble the company. The fight is not just in our plant, but throughout the country," Locklin said. "Justice for Kaiser, Justice for Titan Tire, Justice for Crown, Justice for Avondale!"

Other speakers at the St. James Boat Club rally included representatives from Kaiser locals in Newark, Ohio, Tacoma, Washington, and Gramercy; the Natchez, Mississippi, Titan Tire local; John Bourg, Louisiana State AFL-CIO president; Jon Youngdahl, USWA staff organizer; and Dave Hymel, St. James Parish president.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported June 28 that among five major aluminum producers, Alcoa may be the only one to show increase in profits over the last year. Kaiser Aluminum, it notes, will post the largest loss, 23 cents a share, versus 21 cent increase the previous year. "Kaiser has been hurt by a strike at some of its plants, as well as lower aluminum prices," the article explains.

Tony Dutrow is a member of International Brotherhood of Electronic Workers Local 716 in Houston.

Quebec: 47,500 nurses defy back-to-work order

BY JOANNE WALLADOR

MONTREAL — Some 47,500 nurses across Quebec, members of the Quebec Federation of Nurses (FIIQ) have been on strike since June 26. They are defying Law 160, passed in the 1980s, which denies them the right to strike. This law has provisions for hefty fines and the loss of two days of wages per day of strike.

The nurses can also lose a year of seniority for each day on strike, a provision the government has not yet put in motion. The government was ultimately forced to restore the lost seniority.

The nurses' strike symbol is a lemon with all of the juice squeezed out of it, to signify that they cannot make any more concessions. Nancy Coté at Notre Dame Hospital said that with all the cutbacks they have so much work, "You feel like exploding, you don't even have time to get a drink of water."

On July 2 the government passed a special law ordering the nurses back to work, which imposed more fines and provisions that attack time off for union affairs. In arguing for adoption of the law, Prime Minister Lucien Bouchard said, "disorder and illegal strikes are contagious."

As the parliament was debating this law, thousands of nurses demonstrated outside the Parliament Buildings in Québec City and elsewhere to show their determination to defy this law.

The Parti Quebecois government claims the strike is only about money, arguing all other issues have been settled. It is trying to undermine the widespread popularity of the strike by saying it can't cut income taxes if it gives in to the nurses' wage demands, and that it will not give more than 5 percent over three years.

The nurses' fact sheet explains that all questions have not been settled, and that wage demands of 15 percent over three years are justified. Entry level nurses in Quebec are the lowest paid in Canada, earning Can\$30,340 (US\$44,660) a year. Top-level nurses in Quebec earn Can\$23.30 an hour, \$5 less than nurses in Ontario.

In the wake of major cuts in health care

and hospital closures, the nurses are demanding their work load be reduced and more full time, permanent posts be created. The government has already agreed to convert nurses' overtime hours into new jobs every two years. It is estimated that 1,000 posts would be created by this measure alone.

Every day the daily newspapers report how many operations have supposedly been postponed because of the strike and interview a patient who the strike is inconveniencing. But whole departments have remained on duty to provide essential services, such as emergency and intensive care. In their fact sheet, the nurses' union explain it is the cuts in health-care budgets and hospital closures imposed by the Parti Quebecois government that is responsible for the long lists of patients waiting for surgery and treatment. The Order of Quebec Nurses points out the nurses are acting to improve the health system. On many picket lines patients in wheelchairs can be seen supporting the nurses.

The nurses' determination is stiffened by the fact that they went back to work after a special law in 1989. "We made a concession in 1989 and we got nothing. It was an error," said Jean François Bissonette, a nurse

at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital.

The FIIQ has received support from the Montreal municipal workers, whose leaders went to jail for union activity; Bell telephone operators recently on strike to defend their jobs; the Quebec Women's Federation; the Teachers Alliance of Montreal; and Nurses Associations in Alberta, Ontario, and Newfoundland. The three major union federations in Québec have denounced the special law.

Meanwhile, nurses in Saskatchewan who defied a back-to-work law for 10 days in April won a 13.5 percent wage increase over three years. This was not as much as they were demanding, but higher than the 7 percent the government there was offering.

Bissonette explained the government "is using us to set an example." He was referring to the 400,000 other public sector workers who's contracts will be negotiated in the fall.

The 2,900 ambulance drivers organized by the Confederation of National Trade Unions has voted to go out on strike as of July 14. Nine hundred pharmacists working in hospitals and other health care centers have submitted their resignations to support their demand for a 17 percent wage increase.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

LEON TROTSKY

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BY KARL MARX

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Kaiser plant in Louisiana explodes

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

HOUSTON — A massive explosion ripped apart a section of the Kaiser Aluminum plant in Gramercy, Louisiana, at 5:10 a.m. July 5. As many as 21 workers were injured, at least four with serious burns. The plant, where members of the United Steelworkers of America are locked out, was being run by scabs and supervisors.

The facility processes bauxite to make alumina, a primary product in the production of aluminum. The explosion leveled a section of the plant where bauxite is first processed. It produced a large plume of bauxite, caustic sodium hydroxide, and other chemicals, which drifted over nearby communities, prompting authorities to tell residents to stay indoors and close their windows for nearly seven hours. Houses in the area were shaken and many windows broken. More than 100 residents were treated for chemical exposure at hospitals and released.

There is no word yet on the causes of the blast.

YS reaches out to workers, fighters in struggle

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. Email: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY HEATHERWOOD

Four socialist workers, including a member of the Young Socialists, from Minnesota and Iowa traveled to the Sioux City, Iowa, area recently, where there is a large IBP pork and beef processing plant.

We went to build solidarity with the strike by Teamsters in Washington against IBP and to meet with two UFCW-meatpackers we met there a little over a month ago. When we arrived in Sioux City, we went to a Wal-Mart shopping center in nearby South Sioux City, Nebraska, a few miles from the big IBP plant in Dakota City, Nebraska.

We sold 15 *Militants*, 3 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* (PM), and a subscription to *PM* there. People who bought the papers were very interested in the strike in Washington and several others bought the paper because of its coverage on the fight for Puerto Rican independence. We learned by talking with work-

ers there that the contract at the Dakota City plant expires on August 8.

We then went to one of the plant gates at the IBP plant. We taped two signs to our car, one in English and one in Spanish that read, "Read the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial*. Support workers strike against IBP in Washington." We sold out of our *Militants* — 23 more copies and 14 more *PMs*, as well as one subscription to each the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Many of the workers we met already knew about the strike in Washington, but several did not. A number wanted more information about the fight, particularly since their own contract expires soon. Negotiations are going on now in Dakota City. One worker told us that they want a \$2 per hour increase, not the \$1.50 the bosses have offered over a four-year contract.

Following our visit to the plant gate, we went to the home of two IBP workers we met on a previous trip and spent a couple of hours talking with them about the upcoming contract, the case of Puerto Rican independence fighter José Solís and the fight for the Caribbean island's independence, as well as the Active Workers Conference. One of the work-

ers will be attending the July 7 demonstration in Des Moines to demand freedom for Solís and both are interested in being part of a caravan to the Active Workers Conference (see ad on page 7).

BY RYAN KELLY

PINE RIDGE, South Dakota — More than 500 people marched two miles across the Nebraska border into Whiteclay, Nebraska, on June 26, to protest the killings of Wilson Black Elk Jr., 40, and Ronald Hard Heart, 39.

The two bodies of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation residents were found on June 8 in a field just off the road that connects the reservation with the Nebraska border town.

The march was led by American Indian Movement (AIM) leaders Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, and Russell Means — who previously led a demonstration here in 1972 to protest the racist killing of a Native American, Raymond Yellow Thunder, by three white men. In 1973, AIM led an action that occupied the nearby village of Wounded Knee for 71 days.

Thomas Poor Bear, who is the Sergeant of Arms for the Oglala Lakota Tribal Council

and a half-brother of Black Elk, explained to Nebraska, "It's the not knowing, that is fueling rumors and stirring old accusations on the Pine Ridge reservation."

Poor Bear said, "There are a lot of white extremists around the border towns."

Harold Salway, tribal president said, "A number of people have been found in recent years in circumstances similar to those of Black Elk and Hard Heart."

The pressure from the community and existing tension has forced Sheridan County Sheriff, the county where Whiteclay is located, Terry Robbins, to publicly deny that he or any of his deputies had anything to do with the deaths.

Junior Stricker, a 22-year-old meatpacker from Gering, Nebraska, marched "for the people. Cops are always harassing Native Americans. They're the same in Sioux City — where I used to live — and everywhere," he said.

Kelly Roy, president of the Native American Student Organization at the University of Colorado in Denver, told the *Militant* why she came with a van load of people to the march. "We are here because we want all this to end, we want the killings to stop," she said.

The reservation is in Shannon County, one of the poorest in the nation. "A white man killed an Indian," said Rick Whitedress, an unemployed worker who is Lakota Indian from Kyle, South Dakota. "The government is responsible for us not having jobs. That's why we're here; to fight the oppression."

Ultrarightist kills two people in Illinois, Indiana

BY JOHN STUDER

CHICAGO — A three-day racist shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana over the July 4 weekend left Ricky Byrdsong, a former Northwestern University basketball coach who was African-American, and Won-Joon Yoon, a south Korean student at Indiana University in Bloomington, dead. Nine others were wounded in four other attacks. All the shootings were done from a passing car.

The wounded victims included six Orthodox Jews shot in Chicago; a Black pastor in Decatur, Illinois; another African-American crossing the street in the Illinois capital, Springfield; and a graduate student at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, of Taiwanese descent.

Authorities charge that the shootings were committed by Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, a 21-year-old ultrarightist, who reportedly shot himself while struggling with police when caught in downstate Illinois

July 5.

Smith was a member of the World Church of the Creator, an ultra-right, racist group whose credo is "Rahowa," which stands for "racial holy war," aimed at expelling all Blacks, Latinos, and Jews from the United States. Smith, from a middle-class suburban family, was proclaimed the "creator of the year" for the racist and anti-Semitic group in 1998 because he distributed the most ultraright propaganda and recruited the most members.

Last November, 500 people marched in Bloomington, Indiana, where Smith was in college, to protest his racist activities.

In the weeks before the shooting spree, Smith had purchased two handguns from an unlicensed gun dealer in Pekin, Illinois, outside Peoria.

The guns were found in his car when he died. Local and national political figures have promoted the need to pass new laws restricting political rights under the name of banning "hate crimes" and restricting access to guns.

Party-Building Fund brings over \$97,300

BY ESTELLE DEBATES

NEW YORK — Supporters of the Socialist Workers 1999 Party-Building Fund collected \$97,332 — far surpassing the projected goal of raising \$75,000! Late contributions from around the country continued to arrive after the June 15 deadline and even after the final figures were put together for the chart.

The contributions of hundreds of people — workers, farmers, and youth — help cover expenses as the Socialist Workers Party responds to the political changes in the world and the rise of resistance among workers and farmers fighting the employers and their governments in the United States and other countries. Several individuals sent notes with their contributions expressing their

appreciation of initiatives like the *Militant* reporting team to Yugoslavia in April and May.

Over the past months socialist workers have also stepped up activity in the United States by getting out to struggles as they unfold. Teams continue to fan across the country — from North Carolina to South Dakota — to join these fights, to be a part of deepening solidarity, and to exchange ideas and experiences. Participants in these teams have been inviting fighting workers and farmers to be a part of an Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, August 5-7.

Contributors to the fund are encouraged to join one of the caravans to Ohio that are being organized throughout the country. To do so, contact SWP organizing centers listed on page 8.

City	Goal	Received	%
Philadelphia	50	127	254%
Chicago	500	826	165%
Seattle	250	268	107%
San Francisco	1000	1000	100%
Salt Lake City	100	100	100%
Pittsburgh	315	315	100%
Des Moines	160	160	100%
Twin Cities	400	299	75%
Atlanta	300	182	61%
Santa Cruz	300	134	45%
Los Angeles	1000	415	42%
Boston	200	60	30%
New York	1000	200	20%
Southern Minnesota	150		0%
Detroit	200		0%
Houston	100		0%
Newark	200		0%
Springfield, IL	75		0%
Washington, D.C.	200		0%
Other		500	
Total	6,500	4586	51%
Goal	9,000		

City	Goal	Collected	%
Los Angeles	6,000	10,017	167%
Boston	3,000	4,095	137%
Washington, D.C.	4,200	5,370	128%
Houston	5,000	5,875	118%
Birmingham	2,250	2,510	112%
San Francisco	9,000	10,110	112%
Miami	3,000	3,200	107%
Detroit	5,500	5,866	107%
Newark	6,500	6,625	102%
Seattle	7,000	7,096	101%
Atlanta	3,400	3,400	100%
Des Moines	2,600	2,582	99%
Illinois	6,000	5,935	99%
Pittsburgh	3,250	3,205	99%
Cleveland	3,000	2,826	94%
Minnesota	5,500	5,161	94%
New York	10,000	9,339	93%
Philadelphia	3,000	2,715	91%
Other		1,405	
Total	88,200	97,332	110%
Goal	75,000		

M A Y 1 - J U N E 2 7							
	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Canada							
Vancouver*	30	27	90%	3	1	15	12
Montreal	20	12	60%	10	4	30	13
Toronto*	35	21	60%	5	3	25	15
Canada total	85	60	71%	18	8	70	40
Sweden*	16	11	69%	8	9	8	11
United States							
Atlanta	28	29	104%	7	8	16	9
Miami	35	35	100%	15	12	20	22
Los Angeles	65	64	98%	30	34	40	41
Houston	35	32	91%	15	7	20	5
So. Minnesota	8	6	75%	5	9	3	1
Birmingham, AL	35	26	74%	5	3	10	1
Pittsburgh	30	22	73%	5	4	20	0
San Francisco	90	64	71%	40	34	40	41
Des Moines*	40	26	65%	40	43	20	10
Seattle	45	29	64%	15	11	15	4
Chicago	50	31	62%	15	8	30	8
Washington, D.C.	50	30	60%	15	11	30	11
Philadelphia	32	19	59%	6	4	15	0
Detroit	35	19	54%	8	8	15	11
New York	120	54	45%	50	38	75	39
Newark, NJ	125	53	42%	50	32	60	34
Cleveland	40	16	40%	8	8	10	3
Boston	35	10	29%	15	8	25	17
Twin Cities, MN	50	12	24%	12	13	15	3
Central Illinois	20	4	20%	4	0	7	2
U.S. total	968	581	60%	360	295	486	262
Australia	14	8	57%	3	0	12	2
United Kingdom							
London	35	24	69%	8	4	30	11
Manchester	24	8	33%	2	0	14	8
UK total	59	32	54%	10	4	44	19
New Zealand							
Christchurch	16	10	63%	1	0	6	1
Auckland	30	13	43%	1	0	5	0
N.Z. total	46	23	50%	2	0	11	1
Iceland	8	3	38%			2	0
France	5	0	0%	3	1	25	10
Int'l totals	1201	718	65%	404	317	658	345
Goal/Should be	1100	1100	100%	350	350	600	600
*raised goal							

Building Active Workers Conference

Continued from front page

North Carolina and was among the highlights of the three-day event here. Nearly 50 workers and youth from Atlanta, Birmingham, and Houston gathered July 3-5 to study politics, exchange experiences in the class struggle, and concretize plans for building the August 5-7 Active Workers Conference at Oberlin, Ohio, sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists (see ad on page 7).

Speaking on the July 4 panel, YS member Manuel Martínez described how workers at six Fieldcrest Cannon mills in Kannapolis, North Carolina, voted to join the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). "This is a historic victory for our class," Martínez said, "coming after a couple decades of struggle" (see front-page article).

Martínez is a student at the University of California in Santa Cruz. He moved to Atlanta after the end of the spring semester to take part in the socialist summer school there. He had just returned from Kannapolis along with other *Militant* reporters.

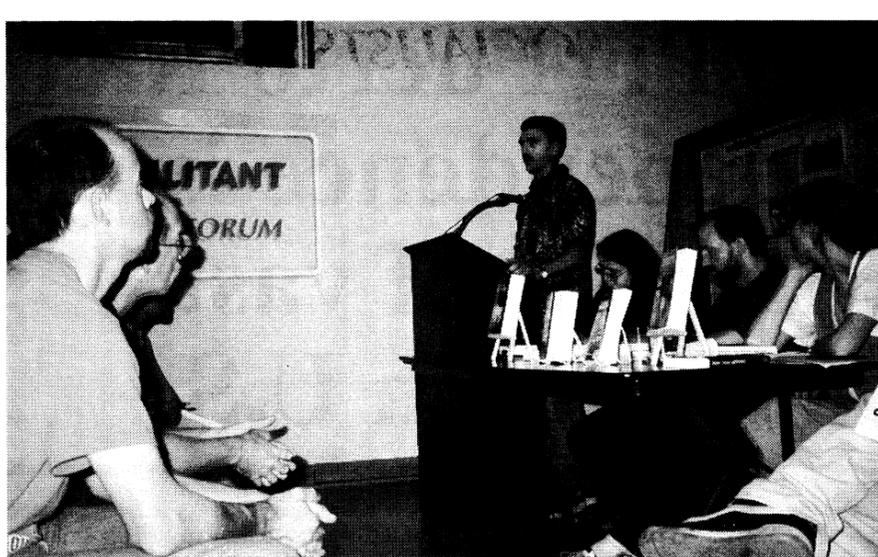
Young workers made a difference in the vote at Fieldcrest Cannon, Martínez said. "Young people are more susceptible to change. There are many workers in their late teens and early 20s in those mills." He also pointed to the increasing numbers and growing positive influence of immigrant workers. A larger percentage of the workforce in Kannapolis is now made up of toilers from

Mexico, Central America, and several Asian countries. Several textile workers originally from Mexico told *Militant* reporters they applied lessons they learned from union battles in Mexico to the Kannapolis struggle.

This is a confirmation of the assessment of the communist movement on immigration, Martínez said. He pointed to a section from the chapter "So Far from God, So Close to Orange Country" of the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. "Communist workers welcome the internationalization of our class," that section says. "Crumbling borders weaken the employer-fostered competition between workers of different nationalities and widen the cultural scope and world view of the working class.... Workers recently arrived from 'beyond the border' will make up a large and growing percentage of the cadres and leadership of the revolutionary party in every imperialist country."

Two classes on *Capitalism's World Disorder*, including one on "So Far from God," were held earlier that day.

Martínez and two socialist workers from Atlanta also visited Continental Tire strikers in Charlotte, near Kannapolis. "Morale on the picket lines was better because of the UNITE victory at Fieldcrest Cannon," Martínez said. "We joined Continental Steelworkers waving pink slips at scabs crossing the picket line." In Gainesville, Georgia, on their way to Atlanta, the socialists met a number of



Militant/Stephen Bloodworth

Robert Busch, who is active in a UAW organizing drive in Alabama, takes the floor during socialist summer school weekend in Birmingham.

Mexican construction workers involved in a battle for union recognition. Mike Italic, who works in a UNITE-organized distribution center in Atlanta, and Jeanne FitzMaurice, a sewing machine operator at a union shop in Centerville, Alabama, also spoke on the panel.

SWP and YS members are organizing another team to southern textile towns July 12-17. They will sell the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Capitalism's World Disorder* at factory gates and working-class neighborhoods and get out the word about the Active Workers Conference. Those interested in participating can contact the Atlanta SWP and Young Socialists.

During the discussion, Robert Busch, another worker involved in

a union organizing drive, spoke about the effort to win a majority to sign up with the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the nonunion Mercedes plant in Vance, Alabama. The company has upped line speed from 135 to 190 cars per shift, resulting in a big jump in injuries. Workers there have no sick days and are subject to a great deal of forced overtime.

Union support is strongest on the assembly line, Busch said, while organizers of the anti-union campaign are concentrated in maintenance.

Continued on Page 10

Read, sell 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Since April 1, socialist workers have sold more than 1,200 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, including 339 copies to co-workers in the industrial unions and other workers involved in labor struggles. Socialist rail workers made an extra effort over the last week of the campaign, selling at least one copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to co-workers in each local area, surpassing the national quota they had taken of 80 copies.

Although the final total falls short of the goals adopted — 1,500 copies overall and 500 through the unions — the response confirms what the preface to the book notes, "There is a new mood and growing confidence among clusters of vanguard workers and farmers from one end of the country to the other.... Everywhere we begin to see others like ourselves, working people who are thinking and acting in a similar way, resisting, refusing to be beaten... reading and studying and discussing with each other as we look for answers to explain how

the wretched world in which we live came to be, how it was imposed on us, and how we can overturn it and build something new."

"Here in Houston, members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Union (PACE) were able to surpass our goal of 15 by selling 20 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*," reported Barbara Graham.

"We were able to get the book both into the hands of co-workers on the job and workers involved in labor battles at Crown Central Petroleum and at Kaiser Aluminum. Members of PACE in Houston were a part of teams that traveled to Gramercy, Louisiana, to give solidarity to the locked-out Steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum. We were fortunate too, that the Kaiser workers held a couple of successful rallies here in Houston in front of Kaiser's major stockholder Charles Hurwitz's office. The thing that was pretty common about all those who got the book was that they were either involved in a fight or are looking for a way to fight because they're in a situation where the bosses are demanding more concessions.

"We are now organizing to follow up with our co-workers, see what they think about what they've read, and continue the discussion," she added.

In Des Moines, a big majority of the books — 25 out of 33 — were sold in the unions. Joe Swanson, a member of the United Auto Workers, sold six copies on the job at Emco Specialties. Three of these were to co-workers who are also strikers — members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 who walked out at Titan Tire in May 1998. Swanson says that he and one of these workers have pooled their money to buy a Laotian-English dictionary to help as they work through the book together.

Twelve copies were sold by supporters who work at packinghouses in Marshalltown and Perry, Iowa, and seven members of the USWA at the Bridgestone/Firestone tire plant bought the book.

The Des Moines branch of the Socialist Workers Party is launching a social-

ist summer school that will draw heavily on the politics of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other material to begin discussion with workers and youth interested in attending the Active Workers Conference in August.

CAMPAIGN TO SELL 'Capitalism's World Disorder' April 1 - June 27

Country	Goal	Sold	%
Canada			
Montreal	7	16	229%
Vancouver	21	33	157%
Toronto	50	58	116%
Canada Total	78	107	137%
New Zealand			
Auckland	20	25	125%
Christchurch	14	13	93%
N.Z. Total	34	38	112%
Iceland	4	4	100%
United Kingdom			
London	41	39	95%
Manchester	17	12	71%
UK Total	58	51	88%
Sweden	6	5	83%
United States			
Atlanta	40	48	120%
San Francisco	136	144	106%
Los Angeles	82	83	101%
Washington, D.C.	60	60	100%
Pittsburgh	40	34	85%
Philadelphia	50	38	76%
Detroit	78	59	76%
Miami	45	34	76%
Houston	70	52	74%
Boston	50	36	72%
Birmingham	60	43	72%
Seattle	50	34	68%
New York	120	70	58%
Des Moines	55	32	58%
Twin Cities, MN	50	27	54%
Chicago	75	39	52%
Cleveland	60	29	48%
C. Illinois	17	8	47%
Newark	150	68	45%
S. Minnesota	14	2	14%
U.S. Total	1302	940	72%
Australia	20	11	55%
International total	1546	1209	81%
Total goal/should be	1500	1500	100%

MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE In the unions							
	Militant		% Sold	PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Canada							
IAM*	6	6	100%			4	1
USWA	7	3	43%	1	1	6	0
UNITE	4	0	0%	1	1	6	0
Canada total	17	9	53%	2	2	16	1
United States							
USWA	35	24	69%	4	4	20	1
IAM	57	30	53%	12	4	20	9
UTU	50	25	50%	5	4	20	11
UAW	40	19	48%	4	1	15	3
UFCW	35	14	40%	25	59	20	12
UNITE	15	6	40%	20	10	12	9
PACE (Houston)	7	1	14%	1	0	3	0
U.S. total	239	119	50%	71	82	110	45
Australia							
MUA	2	1	50%			1	0
AMWU	3	1	33%			2	0
Australia total	5	2	40%			3	0
New Zealand							
EU	3	1	33%				
MWU	2	0	0%				
SFWU	2	0	0%				
N.Z. total	7	1	14%				
raised goal*							

CAMPAIGN TO SELL 'Capitalism's World Disorder' IN THE UNIONS			
	Goals	Sold	%
New Zealand			
EU	2	3	150%
Total	2	3	150%
Canada			
IAM	7	9	129%
USWA	7	5	71%
UFCW	3	0	0%
UNITE	3	0	0%
Canada total	20	14	70%
United States			
PACE (Houston)	15	20	133%
UTU	80	84	105%
UAW	75	58	77%
IAM	110	73	66%
USWA	80	49	61%
UFCW	80	34	43%
UNITE	70	21	30%
Total	510	339	66%
Should be	500	500	100%
United Kingdom			
AEEU	2	2	100%
RMT	4	2	50%
TGWU	7	3	43%
Total	11	7	64%
Australia			
AMWU	5	2	40%
MUA	4	0	0%
Total	9	2	22%

AEEU—Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU—Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW—Canadian Auto Workers Union; EU—Engineers Union; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; IAM—International Association of Machinists; PACE—Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers; RMT—National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; SFWU—Service & Food Workers Union; TGWU—Transport and General Workers Union; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union

SWP: 'Puerto Rico independence is in interests of vast majority in U.S.'

The following statement was presented July 6 by Martin Koppel, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. He was among more than 20 individuals and representatives of organizations who testified at the committee's hearings on the colonial status of Puerto Rico. Subheadings have been added by the *Militant*.

Distinguished Chairman and Honored Committee Members:

Less than three months ago U.S. warplanes, which use the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for target practice, killed one of its residents, David Sanes, during bombing exercises. The July 4 mobilization of 50,000 people in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, in response to this killing, demanding the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques, puts the spotlight on the fundamental reality facing the Puerto Rican people: the fact that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony, and the devastating consequences of U.S. domination for the people of this Latin American nation.

Independence is in the interests not only of the Puerto Rican people, but of the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States. For workers and farmers here, the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence is not simply a matter of elementary human solidarity. As long as Puerto Rico is under Washington's colonial boot, as it has been for the past century, the fighting capacity and solidarity of the working-class movement in the United States will be weakened.

We face the same exploiters

Working people in the United States and the Puerto Rican people face the same exploiters, whose headquarters is in Washington. A successful struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico will deal a powerful blow to our common enemy. It will show that it is possible to stand up to the most brutal capitalist class in the world and break its domination.

The economic crisis of world capitalism is leading increasing numbers of workers and farmers in the United States to resist the employers' offensive on our wages and on social and political rights. We are seeing a

new willingness to struggle from one end of the country to the other: in the strike by shipyard workers in Virginia, the recent unionization victory by textile workers in North Carolina, struggles by small farmers to prevent foreclosures of their land by banks and wealthy landowners, and protests against police brutalization of working people, from New York to California.

The same economic crisis is fueling working-class struggles in Puerto Rico, from the strike by refinery workers in Yabucoa to the participation of unionists in protests against the U.S. Navy in Vieques. The general strike last year by half a million workers has given working people there a greater confidence in their power and a sense of their leading role in the fight for national sovereignty.

With 2.7 million living in the United States, Puerto Ricans are an important component of the working class in this country. They are subjected to systematic racist discrimination, as are Blacks, Chicanos, and other oppressed nationalities and national minorities. U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico reinforces racism and every reactionary force in U.S. society — from government attacks on affirmative action to "America First" chauvinism against immigrants.

Colonial rule of Puerto Rico gives the U.S. government a freer hand to attack the democratic rights of those in the United States who struggle in defense of our livelihoods. Forms of repression employed against unionists and independence advocates in Puerto Rico — including the use of grand jury "investigations" to frame up working-class fighters — have often been used against working people here. Such methods will be used more often in the months and years to come, as working people resist the bosses' efforts to make us pay the consequences of sharpening international capitalist rivalry.

Puerto Rican political prisoners

Mr. Chairman,
Tomorrow, Wednesday, July 7, José Solís Jordán, an advocate of Puerto Rico's independence, is being sentenced by a U.S. court in Chicago on fabricated "terrorism" charges, based in large part on the false testimony of an FBI informer and three FBI agents. I will have the honor of joining with others that day in a demonstration in down-



Militant/Martin Koppel
July 7 picket line outside Federal Building in New York City demands release of José Solís, sentenced that day on frame-up charges, and other imprisoned *independentistas*.

town New York — one of many at federal buildings across the United States — to demand the release of José Solís.

Sixteen other Puerto Rican patriots are behind bars in U.S. prisons because of their ideas and their actions on behalf of independence. Among the longest-held political prisoners in the world today, some of them are serving sentences of 98 and 105 years. We call on U.S. president William Clinton to free all 17 Puerto Rican political prisoners immediately, with no conditions.

Spokespeople for U.S. big business cover up their colonial rule of Puerto Rico, labeling it a "commonwealth," to camouflage the true nature of imperialism. Puerto Rico, covered with U.S. military bases, has historically been used as a launching pad for assaults on other countries, from Cuba to Panama — as the fishermen of Vieques have often testified. Puerto Rican youth have been cannon fodder in all imperialist wars of this century, from World War I to Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and now the Balkans. Many pilots of U.S. planes that rained terror on the people of Yugoslavia practiced their bombing in Vieques. Every aspect of this foreign policy harms the interests of working people in the United States.

In recent months, workers and farmers in the United States are beginning to experience what the people of Puerto Rico have known and lived with for a century, as U.S. army and navy forces conduct military exercises in their own communities. Under the banner "Operation Urban Warrior," the U.S. armed forces have organized mock invasions — from Oakland, California, to Chester, Pennsylvania. In May the U.S. Army conducted so-called counterterrorism operations in working-class neighborhoods of Camden, New Jersey — two hours from where I live — with soldiers storming vacant public housing buildings, detonating bombs, spray-

ing live gunfire, and flying helicopters.

In a related development, Washington is moving toward establishing for the first time a continental military command for North America, also in the name of combating "terrorists." In fact, these steps are part of a pattern of measures aimed at curbing the rights of workers and farmers — longer jail sentences, higher numbers of executions, and police violence against striking workers.

Example of Cuban revolution

Mr. Chairman,

The socialist road taken by the workers and peasants of Cuba is the only one that has proven capable of leading to genuine independence and dignity. The difference between this road and the prospects under U.S. colonial rule was brought into sharp relief by the social catastrophe sparked by the hurricanes that swept the Caribbean and Central America last year. The U.S. government is responsible for the fact that today — nine months after Hurricane Georges battered Puerto Rico — hundreds of working people there are still living in shelters. In contrast, Cuba has mobilized its modest resources not only to protect the lives and livelihood of the Cuban people, but to offer selfless aid to the affected countries in Central America and the Caribbean, including hundreds of volunteer doctors and health-care workers.

The fate of Puerto Rico and that of Cuba are inseparably linked, as they always have been. Today the example of revolutionary Cuba continues to point the road forward for Puerto Rico and for working people worldwide. Forty years ago the Cuban people made a revolution, threw off U.S. domination, and won political and economic independence. Since then they have defended their sovereignty in face of relentless U.S. aggression. Following its tradition of internationalist solidarity, Cuba has steadfastly championed Puerto Rico's right to self-determination.

In summation, Mr. Chairman, the condemnation by this committee of Washington's colonial rule of Puerto Rico will serve the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States and those fighting everywhere for national self-determination and the future of humanity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of this committee, for the opportunity to present these views before you here today.

Protests against frame-up of Solís

Continued from front page
possible sentence of eight years. He has already served almost four months in prison, which is supposed to be subtracted from the 51-month sentence.

One hundred supporters of Solís filled the courtroom and the hall outside the court to protest the frame-up and sentence. Picket lines demanding the release of Solís were held in front of federal buildings in a number of cities around the country, as well as a protest in San Juan by 60 Solís supporters.

Addressing the judge, defense attorney Jed Stone, declared: "You are presiding over the sentencing of an innocent man — a man who did not conspire and did not plant bombs."

Solís then addressed the courtroom. He said the judge's ruling would be directed not only against him and his family, as well as his students, but against the people of Puerto Rico. "Today, as this sentence is imposed," he said, "we hope that one day justice will be realized by the people of Puerto Rico."

After the sentencing, supporters of Solís and family members gathered in the lobby of the court building to protest. Several held aloft Puerto Rican flags.

Martha Gonzales-Simonet, Solís's wife, pointed out that when he was arrested in November 1997, FBI agents failed in their

attempt to get Solís to testify against other Puerto Rican activists. She said the attack on her husband was in response to his "refusal to collaborate with the witch-hunt being carried out by the government against the Puerto Rican community."

Also there to express support were students and former students of Solís from DePaul University, where he was a professor of education from 1992-95, along with Puerto Rican community activists and others.

Marcos Vilar, representing the National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, urged participation in the campaign to free all Puerto Rican political prisoners, including Solís. Further events on behalf of the political prisoners will be held in Washington, D.C., in late July, including a July 24 march.

An appeal of the decision is planned. More information on the campaign in defense of José Solís Jordán can be obtained from: Committee in Solidarity with José Solís Jordán, P.O. Box 577826, Chicago, IL 60657; tel.: (312) 409-0801.

BY ROSE ANA BERBEO
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK — Sixty people picketed

the Federal Building here July 7 to demand the release of José Solís.

Among Solís's supporters at the picket line were several leaders of the independence movement in Puerto Rico who had testified the day before at the United Na-

Continued on Page 7

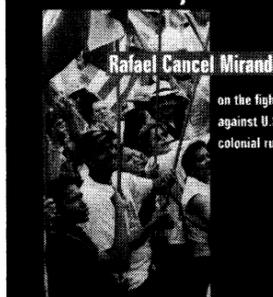
FROM PATHFINDER

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity Rafael Cancel Miranda

"Our people are becoming aware of their own strength, which is what the colonial powers fear," explains Puerto Rican independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda. In two interviews, Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. \$3.00

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Puerto Rico
independence is
a necessity



Textile union victory

Continued from front page

2,270 voted for the union and 2,102 against. This historic victory comes after 25 years of unionizing efforts at this complex, which was bought by Pillowtex in 1997.

North Carolina's textile industry is the largest in the United States. The vote for the union marks an important win for the labor movement and registers a shift in workers' attitudes.

At the plant gate outside of the mill, David Johnson, 42, who has worked here 17 years, said, "I voted for the union and I'm glad we finally won. It's time for a change, a change for the better."

There are 166,800 textile workers employed in North Carolina. Only 4.2 percent of workers in the state are unionized, the lowest level in the country. The national average is 14 percent of the workforce.

Some workers at the mills said they weren't surprised by the union victory. Ricky Gray, 35, with three years at Pillowtex, said, "I knew the union would win. Young workers made the difference. Young people are more susceptible to change. They want to make a change."

There has also been a substantial change in the composition of the workforce throughout the last decade. There are now sizable numbers of Asian, Mexican, and Central American workers at the mills, which previously employed overwhelmingly U.S.-born workers, Black and white.

Alfredo Pérez, a worker from Mexico, noted this as one of the reasons for the union victory. "Some brought their experiences from other countries. Others said they would vote union because they had nothing to lose," he said. Pérez described his experiences with a farm union in Mexico and how helpful it was to have a union.

Falling wages and speedup

Workers at the mill of all nationalities cited worsening working conditions as reasons for voting for the union — a decrease in wages, speedup, harassment by supervisors, and broken promises and company lies.

Arnold Murdock, who has worked 18 years at the mill, explained, "The work loads were increasing, putting more and more work on the people. Workers who were for the union in the last vote came out for the union again."

Rodney Haskins, a 19-year-old worker with two years at the mill said, "Last time they lied to us about selling the company. That's why a lot of people voted union."

Previous unionizing drives and elections have taken place in 1974, 1985, 1991, and 1997. Federal regulators found that in both the 1991 and 1997 elections the company intimidated union supporters.

Pearly Flowe, an order coordinator and 22-year veteran of drives to organize the mill, told the *Militant* that in the recent election, "at least one temp worker that I know of was distributing the 'vote-no' T-shirt inside the plant and getting paid \$8 an hour for it."

Alfredo and Armando Pérez, brothers who both work at the mill, spoke to the *Militant* about the union victory and politics.

Alfredo, 39, has nine years at Fieldcrest

Cannon. He noted there were very few immigrant workers in the early '90s. But since 1996, there has been an influx of immigrants. He described the intimidation by the bosses who threatened to deport workers if they voted for the union in the 1991 elections.

In the 1997 elections, the company promised workers a 35-cent hourly pay raise if they voted the union down. The union was defeated and when Pillowtex bought the company later that year, the raise was taken away, new machinery brought in, and workers laid off.

In addition, under new work rules, if some workers on a job don't meet production quotas, none of the other workers on that job get paid piece rate premiums.

Alfredo also noted that monthly health insurance premiums doubled and pay went down. In addition to the premiums, "Now we pay \$10 for each doctor's visit, before we paid nothing," he added.

Armando described the speedup in production and the high quotas workers must meet under piece-rate wages. Both recall being constantly reprimanded by supervisors for not meeting the high production quotas when working as sewers.

Armando also described the company's antiunion propaganda, which included distribution of "vote-no" T-shirts and an anti-union video mailed to each worker. Vicente, a pipefitter at another factory and friend of the Pérez brothers, added, "That is the usual company propaganda. I know instinctively that a union is needed from my experience in a steel mill in Mexico City."

Company tries to stall recognition

Currently, 285 additional ballots are being challenged — 228 by UNITE, 57 by the NLRB, and none by the company. According to a UNITE flier, the ballots the union is challenging were cast by supervisors, industrial engineers, secretaries, computer technicians, and head instructors, all of whom voted. Another 63 ballots are "unknowns" — people who voted but were not identified by the company as working in the plant.

Chuck Hansen Jr., CEO of Pillowtex, the current corporate owner of Fieldcrest Cannon, claimed the challenged ballots will eventually swing the vote against the union. The union will not be recognized until all the challenged ballots are resolved and the election is certified by the NLRB.

The victory in Kannapolis is having a positive effect on other workers in North Carolina. At the Continental General Tire picket lines in Charlotte, the victory



Militant

Militant reporters interview workers at plant gate at Fieldcrest Cannon (now Pillowtex) in Kannapolis, North Carolina. Workers there had just won UNITE union recognition.

won by the textile workers was a topic of discussion.

Striker Robert Cousar, who has worked at the tire company for 31 years stated, "Winning that election was one of the best things that could ever happen for the people of that town. It means a better life, a better future, especially for the younger generation. It will make the older people feel better too."

Steelworker Walter Anderson, with 27 years at the plant, said his father worked all his life at a J.P. Stevens textile plant in Bessemer City, North Carolina. "I'm very glad that they finally got some justice in Kannapolis," Anderson said. "They need the union."

A day after the UNITE victory, the NLRB ruled June 24 the nine-month strike at Continental General Tire is the result of unfair

labor practices and the company violated labor law.

A union newsletter reported a two-hour walkout by 800 rubber workers at Continental's tire plant in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, also occurred that day.

In response to the ruling, strikers waved "pink slips" at scabs during the 7:00 p.m. shift change. Taunting the scabs, strikers shouted "Are you sure you'll keep that job?"

Referring to the Kannapolis textile workers' fight, striker Robert Cousar drew on his experiences in the Continental Tire strike. "They won because it was a 'do-or-die' situation — like our strike. When you are willing to sacrifice, that's when you win."

Mike Italie and Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

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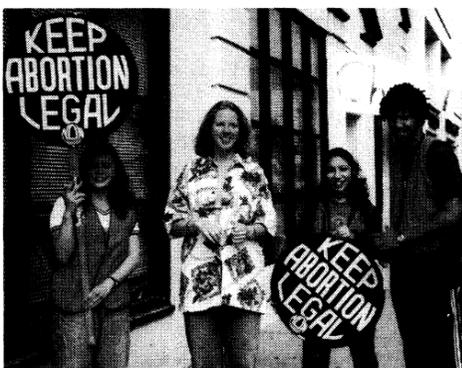


Militant/Scott Breen

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For more information, see page 8

Puerto Rico rallies

Continued from Page 6

tions decolonization hearings on Puerto Rico, including Jorge Farinacci of the Socialist Front, Marisol Corretjer of the Nationalist Party, and Ismael Guadalupe Ortiz of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. The committee has spearheaded the fight against the U.S. Navy's presence on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

Guadalupe said the fight to remove the U.S. military and the campaign to free Solís and the other Puerto Rican political prisoners "are intertwined — both are part of the struggle for the sovereignty of Puerto Rico against U.S. domination. José Solís's only crime is fighting for the independence of his country." Among the demonstrators were members of the Vieques Support Campaign in New York.

Frank Velgara, a leader of ProLIBERTAD, one of the organizations sponsoring the picket line, said, "This is the time to increase public pressure locally and nationally to demand the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners."

In Miami, a dozen supporters for Solís picketed the Federal Building. The protest was called by the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba. Also participating were members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community (ATC), and Socialist Workers Party. A statement was read from the Orlando chapter of the Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners.

Ron Richards in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Ernie Mailhot in Miami contributed to this article.

Ireland, Garvaghy Rd.

Continued from front page

been strengthened. Last year we were entering a period of the unknown. Everything was very tense. This year we appear less concerned because we know that in the last 12 months the Orange Order have thrown everything at us and they haven't progressed one inch down that road."

Mac Cionnaith emphasized that the Orange Order had come through this weakened. "Just look at the numbers. The media reports that they got 3,000-4,000 people this year's march. That's an accurate figure. Last year they were talking about 25,000! That tells the story in and of itself. Most Orangemen know this is a lost cause."

Rightist forces are weakened

Through promoting sectarian division, the Orange Order has been a pillar of British rule in Ireland. But along with the broader forces of Unionism — those who support the "union" of Northern Ireland with the United Kingdom — it is being seriously divided and weakened. The British rulers can no longer rest upon them in the old way. In the negotiations over implementation of the Good Friday Agreement over five days just prior to the Drumcree events, David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, rejected a deal put forward by the British prime minister and Irish premire. Speaking on BBC's Newsnight program, however, the editor of the influential Unionist daily paper *News Letter* argued in favor of the deal.

Mac Cionnaith said the Drumcree events closely connected with this broader picture. "The real battle in Portadown is a battle between the anti-Agreement camp and the government. Last year [Portadown Orange Order district master] Harold Gracey said that this is not about Garvaghy Road but about bringing down the Good Friday Agreement."

So, not surprisingly, Unionist and Orange divisions emerged over Drumcree. This time Gracey threatened, "If you don't keep it peaceful I will walk away from this." Presbyterian moderator Dr. John Lockington called on churchgoers, specifically naming the Orange Order, to stay at their place of worship, and not go to the parade. Orange Order grand master Robert Saulters wrote to all lodges in the Six Counties sanctioning local protests but calling for calm, urging them to stay away from Drumcree, and not to erect roadblocks. When dissident marchers broke these instructions during the nights of July 4 and 5, they found themselves battling against the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the pro-British police force, who fired 14 plastic bullets against the rioters.

Following the weekend's events at Drumcree, the parades commission announced it had decided to block the intended Apprentice Boys parade marching down the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast. Lower Ormeau Concerned Community (LOCC) leader Gerard Rice was on the Garvaghy Road for the July 4 events. "What's happened today shows our strength," he said in an interview with these reporters. "And it reflects a war weariness within the Orange community. Everyone is saying the Orange Lodge should talk to the residents, but they refuse to do so. It shows that what Drumcree is about is not religious freedom but sectarianism." Rice said that LOCC had been able to force the Apprentice Boys into negotiations, though in the event that group followed the Orange Order's lead. "We've also been able to organize community activity. It shows we're confident," he added.

As July 12 approaches, community activity throughout Belfast has intensified. About a

dozen residents meetings have already been held in small constituencies across the city. A meeting in Clonard in the Lower Falls area of West Belfast, called by the local Sinn Fein councilor gathered about 160 people.

Role of British army, RUC cops

Following the parades commission decision to reroute the Drumcree parade, the security forces mounted a major operation to build obstacles to marchers seeking to defy the order. The British Army ploughed up the fields between Drumcree church and the Garvaghy Road, dug a 40 foot trench filled with water, deployed razor and barbed wire to prevent loyalists breaching the security force lines. Helicopters were actively deploying troops. Portadown Orange spokesman David Jones called the operation "disgusting and provocative."

The military also shipped in two water cannons from Belgium, though one Garvaghy Road resident questioned whether they would be used against Orange Order people. "I suspect we'd find them aimed at us as we went into action to defend ourselves," he said.

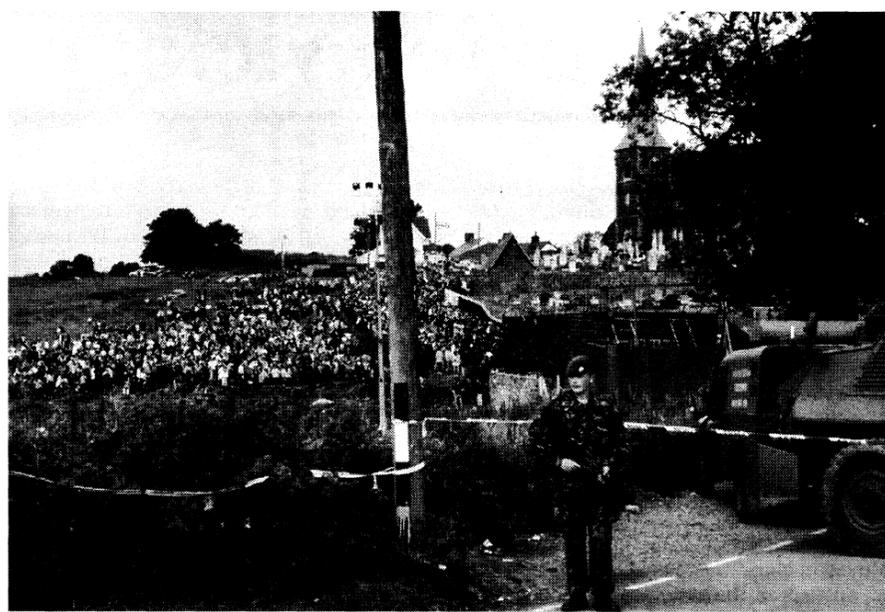
The GRRC has been actively opposing sectarian marches since 1995. In 1995, '96 and '97, the British government forced the way open for the parades to go down the road, after standoffs between massed loyalists and nationalists determined to prevent the parade. In 1997, units of the RUC, backed up by the British Army, ran riot through the area as they "cleared the road."

"The first we knew about it," said Mac Cionnaith, "was when 2,500 troops descended on this community, saturated the area, enforced a curfew, and at 7:00 a.m., the secretary of state announces the decision is to let the march go ahead." Ever since last year's march was rerouted, residents have been living in what they describe as a state of siege. More than 170 marches and rallies supporting the Orange Order have been held, and nationalists and their homes and businesses attacked. Ten people have been murdered in connection with Drumcree.

"If you look at what the community here has done, it is amazing," Sinn Fein assembly member for the area Dara O'Hagan told *Militant* reporters. "A small nationalist enclave has taken on all the institutions of the Unionist state."

Residents describe daily harassment

Everyone in the area has their own story on how the harassment has affected them. Passing through the cemetery we stopped to talk with Mairead, her mother and her children. They preferred not to give their full names. Mairead's mother explained how they came to live in Garvaghy Road. "We used to live in Brownstown. Then 26 years ago we started to get threats. Then eggs were thrown. Then, after



Militant

British Army, with rightists in background, occupy Garvaghy Road in Northern Ireland.

a week away on holiday, we returned to find UDA painted on the house and on our car." The UDA, or Ulster Defense Association, is a loyalist terror group. "The police told us to leave immediately and we were rapidly re-housed. That's how most people came to live here."

Stephen McCann, 12, Chris McDonald, 14, and Stephen Rafferty, 15, told of their regular harassment by the RUC. "We'll walk up the road and they'll stop and question us. On our return the same RUC men will stop and question us again! It happens all the time," said McDonald. "We can't go swimming in the local pool because we get harassed," added McCann. "They know we're Catholics because different schools play each other at football," explained Rafferty.

"We're in here to the end, because we have nothing to lose," stated Eilish Creaney. "There are parades three or four times a week and on Sundays — sometimes more — and you never know when the RUC has been letting them through, that's how they attack houses in places like Craigwell Avenue. You have to plan everything, even when you do your shopping, for times when it's safer to go to town. Most nationalists work outside Portadown. The two main factories in Portadown are Ulster Carpet Mills and Denny's meat pie factory. The entrance to Denny's used to be on Obins Street, which is on the nationalist side, but they changed it to the other side of the factory, which is in a loyalist area. The overwhelming majority of the workers in both factories are Protestant. And, of course, unemployment is much worse for Catholics." Catholics constitute 32 percent of the population of Portadown, but account for 43 percent of the unemployed and 50 percent of the long-term unemployed.

As this year's Orange march approached Drumcree Hill, around 500 residents gathered outside St. John's Catholic church, where an

RUC/British Army barricade blocked the road. In the 14 minutes the parade took to pass by, they stood in dignified silence, refusing to react and give security forces an opening to intervene as marchers sought to taunt them, calling out, "Where's Rosemary?" Rosemary Nelson, a civil rights lawyer who represented the Garvaghy Road residents, was murdered by a loyalist death squad earlier this year. One of the U.S. observers had been attacked and badly hurt by marchers the night of July 3.

More than 100 observers came over from the United States, Canada, and Britain. Others came in solidarity from Ballymun, a working-class area of Dublin, and elsewhere in the Irish Republic; other parts of Northern Ireland; Spain; Belgium; and Italy. The community organized accommodation and food in their homes and in the local community center. GRRC stewards patrolled the area at night and at potential flash points. Two hundred locals attended the launch of a book, written by a number of Garvaghy residents, *Garvaghy: A Community Under Siege*.

Alex Sothern, a 20-year-old student from London, was part of the delegation organized by the Friends of the Garvaghy Road in London. He was inspired by what he saw in Portadown to extend his stay. "I wanted to come to show support for the community, to show them that they're not alone," he said. "Every single English civilian should come here to understand what's going on. They won't find out from the BBC. You have to stand up and defend these people and tell the truth, and I shall do that."

Caroline Bellamy and Jonathan Silberman are members of the Transport and General Workers Union in London. Kathie Fitzgerald, a member of the United Transportation Union in New Jersey, contributed to this article.

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— MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

FLORIDA

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The Crisis Facing Working Farmers and Their Fight for Land. Speaker: Bill Kalman, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., July 17. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Program: 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54 Street. Translation into Spanish and French. Suggested donation: dinner \$6; program \$4. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

BRITAIN

London

Scotland and the Breakup of the United Kingdom. Speaker: Representative from the Communist League. Fri., July 16. 7 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.

Newport News strike

Continued from front page

Tom Dooley, a striking steelworker who has worked as a pipefitter for 16 years at the yard. "We need to pull together and have more workers' rallies. We are trying to make it better for the future. We are not just fighting for ourselves. We are fighting for the guys who are retiring. They are at the end of the line. The company's going to break us or we are going to break them. And all the other companies are watching."

Steelworkers boarded 25 buses to make the hour-long trip from Newport News to Richmond. The stockholders had scheduled their meeting at the ornate Jefferson Hotel in downtown Richmond. At the last minute, however, hotel management, hoping to avoid all the publicity that the planned steelworkers protest would generate, canceled the meeting room contract. Shipyard officials convened at the Jefferson Hotel and then moved their proceedings to the Riverside Plaza a couple miles away. The steelworkers responded with mass picket lines at both sites followed by a rally in a nearby city park. Among those speaking at the rally was James Ricks, who worked at Newport News Shipbuilding for 42 years. He told rally participants that since he retired from the yard in 1982 his pension has stayed at \$204 a month. "I haven't received a one cent increase since I retired. I'm with the union all the way. It's the best thing we ever did when we got the union in," he said. Others addressing the rally included Leo Girard, secretary-treasurer of the USWA; Arnold Outlaw, president of Local 8888; and Catho-

lic bishop Walter Sullivan. A delegation of steelworkers who have shares of stock attended the meeting to press their demands for a substantial wage and pension increase. The union is demanding a \$3.70 raise over three years and boosting of pension benefits after 30 years from the current average of \$500 a month to \$900. The company's "final offer" was pensions at \$589 a month and \$1.50 in raises over 47 months, plus a pay-for-performance package that could add up to another dollar for some of the workers. Nothing was resolved at the shareholders meeting. On July 1, a federal mediator contacted the union to arrange a meeting in Washington, D.C., in an effort to once again restart talks. The two sides sat down at the bargaining table with the mediator on July 7.

"The way it looks now, it will be Labor Day before we make a move," stated striker Raymond Kirk. "We've just begun to fight. And we're going to build a bond back up with those who went in to work and then came back out. When people cross the picket line, the company puts them on any job in there. If they can't do the job they get fired."

Among those marching in Richmond was Sharon Blöse, a member of the International Association of Machinists who took the day off work at the Siemens Automotive plant in Newport News. She is married to a striking shipyard worker. "We have a lot of camaraderie between our unions. A lot of families have relatives in the strike," she said. "We have posters up all over the plant showing what the next activities are to support the shipyard workers. We've done a car wash to



Militant/Salm Kolis

Some 1,000 Newport News shipyard strikers rally in Richmond, Virginia, June 25.

raise money and now we are on a canned goods drive. We can't let the company show up our union when someone else is in trouble."

The Steelworkers' fight has won support from other unionists in the area. Darrell Brown, a maintenance mechanic at Smithfield Packing in nearby Smithfield, Virginia, pointed out, "I've been on strike before and I support them. It's all about what is right. The companies aren't in busi-

ness to give you what you are worth. They have people hired to get every advantage from you and to get the best and the most out of you. This makes the working-class people fall short. If you get people supporting you, it's a different story."

Mary Martin is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Brian Williams is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

New rules threaten livelihood of small fishermen

BY TED LEONARD

PLYMOUTH, Massachusetts — "It made me sick to my stomach," Jerry Grillo, 49, a Gloucester fisherman, told the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) at its monthly meeting May 26. He explained how, in order to comply with federal regulations, he recently had to throw overboard thousands of pounds of cod snared in one hour. Under current regulations he has to throw them back in the sea, where they will die, or he will face a penalty.

Earlier this spring the council had recommended emergency regulations that set the catch limit for cod at 200 pounds per day in the Gulf of Maine, which stretches from Cape Cod to Maine. The U.S. Commerce Department approved the measures.

"It's morally wrong," another fisherman told the meeting. He explained that in a few weeks he will begin to fish for flounder. An indirect product of catching his limit of 1,000 pounds of flounder will be catching 2,000 pounds of cod. He too, under the current regulations, will have to throw them back in the sea or face a penalty. "You have us destroying the stock we protected for the last three years," he told the council.

Another fisherman asked the council, "How can you legally destroy fish?"

Two days before the meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued an emergency edict that on May 28, fishermen would be limited to catching 30 pounds, or about three cod a day. In 1998 the trip limit (the amount you can catch in one day) for cod was 400 pounds and in 1997 it was 1,000 pounds.

In response to this new attack on their livelihood, some 150 fishermen crowded the NEFMC meeting, determined to be heard. Since January inshore fishermen — those who fish near the coast — in the Gulf of Maine have faced regulations that not only reduced their trip limits but also closed areas of the gulf to cod fishing and in some cases to all fishing.

The regulations hurt the small fishermen the hardest. David Marciano, a fisherman from Gloucester, demanded of one of the council members, Barbara Stevenson, what right she had to make these decisions. "You own four million-dollar boats," he declared.

Another fisherman suggested to the council, "We should send half of you home without paychecks and see how you survive," so they could feel what the regulations mean to small fishermen.

The emergency regulations were based on a study done last fall by the NMFS scientific center that said the cod stock in the Gulf of Maine was on the verge of collapsing. For

more than six hours, one fisherman after another disputed that claim. Paul Vitale from Gloucester, pointed to what he called "my favorite chart" in the council's recently released "Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan." It showed more than twice as much cod was landed in 1998 compared to what the council projected in its "target total allowable catch."

"Where did the fish come from?" Vitale asked.

Paul Cohan, a leader of the Gulf of Maine Fishermen's Alliance, explained to the *Boston Herald*, "If the fishermen thought there was this level of crisis with this species we would abide by these regulations, no problem. But they are 180 degrees off what we are seeing out there on the water."

Other fishermen pointed out they had

caught in four weeks one-third of the year's "total allowable catch" set by the NMFS in the Gulf of Maine. In fact the emergency edict of 30 pounds a day was triggered because of the record amount caught.

The lawyer for the NEFMC told the council they could not rescind the edict. The only thing they could do was request an emergency action by U.S. Secretary of Commerce William Daley. At the end of the day, the council reversed itself completely and voted 9 to 8 to adopt a motion requesting "emergency action to increase the daily cod trip limit to 700 pounds per day." Daley has 30 days to decide on the request.

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 311 in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

July 26, 1974

BALTIMORE — The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has been conducting a drive to enlist the great unorganized majority of public employees into the ranks of the union.

The one completely reactionary aspect of this otherwise positive campaign has been the recruitment of cops and prison guards into AFSCME.

The recent Baltimore strike offered the spectacle, unique in labor history, of members of one union local being clubbed, arrested, fingerprinted, and thrown in jail by members of another local of the same union!

On the occasion of the New York City cop "strike" in January 1971, a *Militant* editorial explained that cops "are not part of the labor movement." The *Militant* wrote: "The duty of cops is to take orders from their capitalist masters, which means breaking strikes, smashing demonstrations, and beating Black, Puerto Rican, and Chicano heads. The New York cops are not asking for an end to these duties. That would mean an end to their jobs. Rather they are asking for more money to compensate them for carrying out these actions..."

"Cops are not like rank-and-file GIs who are forced into the Army. There is no law that says a person must be a cop. They will willingly choose to be cops. They ask to serve as armed protectors of the ruling class and rapidly become corrupted."

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

July 25, 1949

The steel strike scheduled to begin on July 16 was suddenly called off by Philip Murray, President of the CIO United Steel Workers, after Benjamin F. Fairless, head of the U.S. Steel Corporation, and the officials of the other basic steel companies accepted Truman's proposal for a 60-day "cooling off" period.

The Truman plan calls for an extension of the present union agreements for 60 days. Truman, at the same time, named a three man Fact Finding Board which is to hold hearings on the union demands and make nonbinding recommendations within 45 days. The steel corporations have already taken pains to make clear that "there is to be no moral or legal obligation to accept any recommendation which the board may make."

Meanwhile, the spotlight has turned on to the auto union which is engaged in negotiations with the Ford Motor Company on its fourth round economic demands. The recent Milwaukee convention of the UAW has authorized the levying of a special strike assessment, in the event that Ford is closed down, which would raise about 8 million dollars. In addition to its economic demands, the convention adopted a resolution introduced by the delegates of Ford River Rouge Local 600 forbidding the inclusion of any so-called company security clauses in the next contract, under which the Ford management instituted its brutal speedup.

Pennsylvania dairy farmers respond to proposed price drop

BY CANDACE WAGNER

LANCASTER, Pennsylvania — Fifteen dairy farmers listened in growing disbelief as a representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) explained the proposed overhaul of the 60-year-old federal wholesale milk pricing system at a June 3 meeting here.

In a presentation complete with charts and graphs, the USDA representative calmly explained that with the proposed changes guaranteed milk prices will decline substantially in the Lancaster area.

As he described the complicated monthly procedure for calculating the minimum milk price, an Amish farmer spoke up. "Couldn't you put something in there for the farmer?" Daniel Dienner asked. Dienner has a herd of 45 cattle in Gap, Pennsylvania.

"This is going to devastate us," another farmer exclaimed.

The USDA representative explained that while prices would decline in this area because of the large number of farmers, they would rise in other areas of the country. "It will all even out, you see." The changes are designed to direct milk flow toward mar-

kets where fewer farms exist, he said.

The new program will go into effect October 1, if approved in a referendum of farm cooperatives and some individual farmers.

The meeting was one of many being held in areas across the United States covered by federal dairy pricing regulations.

At an earlier meeting in Woodstown, New Jersey, a farmer demanded, "Tell me one other business in this so-called market system where the owner can't set a price of production to cover his costs."

The USDA representative responded, "A lot of you are going to fail."

After the Lancaster meeting, Dienner and other Amish farmers spoke with *Militant* reporters. "Why are there so few farmers here out of the 1,500 that will be affected in this area?" the reporters asked.

"I think most feel that it wouldn't make any difference if they came," Dienner answered. "After listening to this guy I might agree."

Pete Seidman and John Staggs contributed to this article.

Oppose more gun control laws

Liberal politicians and other capitalist political figures are using the recent killings by ultrarightist gunman Benjamin Smith in Illinois to press for more "hate crime" laws and restrictions on firearms. This, they claim, is the only answer to such assaults. But so-called hate crime legislation and gun control laws are not neutral measures — they have a class bias. Not only do they have nothing to do with advancing the interests of our class, but they will sooner or later be used by the ruling employer class against workers and farmers, especially those who fight against the bosses' attacks on our living standards and rights.

The ruling class and its government try to take advantage of investigations into bombings and violent shootings — fanning emotions and stirring panic — in order to erode hard-won rights, from the presumption of innocence, to protection from illegal search and seizure, to freedom of association without infiltration by police informers and agent provocateurs. They use instances such as the racist shootings in Illinois and the killing of 15 people at a Colorado high school in April to attempt to justify longer jail terms, the death penalty, and other efforts to keep our class in check.

In face of rightist violence, working people should not turn to the employers' government to limit access to firearms. The mandatory "background checks" for criminal records — pushed especially by liberal politicians — give the cops and courts greater powers to pry into workers' affairs. For many workers, a criminal record can include arrests and jail terms for strike-related and class-struggle fights, such as the locked-out Kaiser Aluminum worker in

Heath, Ohio, who was recently roughed up and arrested by cops while doing picket duty.

The political polarization reflected in violent attacks by ultrarightists is bred by capitalism in decay. The lynching of James Byrd Jr. in Texas last year; the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian, who provided abortion services in New York; and the racist shooting spree in Illinois were actions by right-wing elements who one day will be used by the capitalist bosses against strikers on picket lines and other working people as the capitalist crisis deepens, and working people begin to engage in battles to defend our living standards and our unions.

Armed attacks on working people — by rightists or cops — cannot be halted through pacifist means, much less by disarming workers and farmers. They will have to be defeated by collective working-class action in self-defense.

The working-class vanguard that is beginning to emerge in struggle cannot today defeat the incipient fascist and other ultrarightist forces bred by capitalism under current conditions. The Pathfinder book *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes explains, "The workers movement will begin to deal devastating blows to the fascists only as experience is gained in real class combat, as picket squads are transformed into defense organizations, as we take the moral high ground in defense of all workers' rights, and as a mass communist party is forged in revolutionary struggle."

Such battles are coming, and the working class will have its chance. Working people should oppose every attempt by the capitalist government to restrict democratic rights — including the constitutional right to bear arms.

Support Quebec nurses strike

The following statement was issued July 6 by the Communist League in Canada.

The labor movement across Canada must transform the huge sympathy for the 47,500 embattled Quebec nurses into visible actions in the streets. We must call for repeal of laws 160 and 72 and the granting of the nurses' just demands.

The ruling class in Canada is squarely behind the government of the Parti Quebecois. Through their attacks on our social services, the capitalists and their governments hope to demoralize the working class by making us accept unequal access to health care and education. By deepening social inequalities, they hope to undermine solidarity among working people and have us fight among ourselves for the crumbs off their tables.

The Quebec nurses' strike is the most recent in a class battle being fought across Canada. Nurses in Alberta and Newfoundland mobilized this year. In Saskatchewan nurses, for 10 days, defied back-to-work legislation imposed by a New Democratic Party (NDP) government, a social-democratic party with links to the trade unions.

The ruling class was hoping to undermine popular support for the nurses' strike by presenting it as one for higher wages that is a threat to working peoples' health and an obstacle to lowering taxes. They have imposed stiff fines and made other threats in an effort to intimidate the nurses, to no avail.

The nurses are not backing down. Support among workers is growing. This is one more illustration of increasing workers' resistance. The Quebec nurses' battle is a rallying point not only for other nurses and public sector workers but for workers across the country who oppose the cuts in

social services, for those who refuse to accept women's second-class status, and for all Quebecois who defend the social services they fought for and won as part of their struggle against national oppression.

Workers sense that what is at stake here is far more than money. They defend what they have come to see as rights for all: access to quality health care; to quality education; to a minimum lifetime guaranteed income through unemployment benefits, social welfare, and pensions. Elementary human solidarity — the refusal to sacrifice human beings at the altar of the capitalists' search for profits — is what is behind workers' sympathy for the nurses' strike.

The Quebec nurses' battle is an opening for workers in Quebec to begin discussing the need for their unions to break away from their decade-long support for the Parti Quebecois, a capitalist party, and to build their own party. Support for the PQ has been justified by the Quebec labor officialdom on the basis that the PQ has "defended" the rights of the oppressed Quebecois nation. But it is the PQ that is today dismantling some of the central gains made by hard-fought struggles against Quebec's national oppression — including the right to unionize and strike.

Such a step toward acting independently in defense of the interests of all working people can only reinforce the position of the workers in the rest of the country who look for ways of fighting anti-working-class policies of the union-based NDP and joining in common action with their brothers and sisters in Quebec. This course would strengthen all our unions against the bosses' deepening attacks and the growing crisis of their worldwide capitalist system of exploitation and oppression.

Active Workers Conference

Continued from Page 5

nance and other skilled trades. The majority of the workers are in their 20s and 30s. One third of the workforce of 1,200 have signed UAW cards so far. Dozens have joined the organizing committee, including a number of former coal miners with experience in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). During a struggle like this, the need for a revolutionary party becomes more apparent, Busch said later.

A YS member in Birmingham spoke from the panel about the fighting traditions and important example UMWA miners have set over the past decades for the working class, using the recently reissued Pathfinder pamphlet *Coal Miners on Strike*. He also explained how a number of young workers are joining experienced miners and others in the area who are attending classes to get certification to work in the mines. Discussion about the UMWA and its record of militant struggle is frequent at the four-day mining class.

"Building fractions of socialist workers in coal, garment and textile, and meatpacking is at the center of the activity of the YS and SWP this summer," he said.

Young Socialists who have moved to Birmingham to attend the socialist summer school participate in weekly sales of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books and pamphlets at mine portals. The Atlanta and Birmingham SWP and Young Socialists are organizing joint portal sales in the region every other week. YS and party members are also

planning follow-up trips to Auburn and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where a number of college and high school students have bought copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and may be interested in the Active Workers Conference.

The weekend was kicked off with a Militant Labor Forum by Argiris Malapanis, a member of the SWP National Committee who recently traveled to the Balkans as part of a *Militant* reporting team during the U.S.-led war against Yugoslavia.

Malapanis pointed to the rise in labor resistance in the United States since 1997 — as well as the renewed fight for Puerto Rican independence and actions by women in industry — and the efforts of socialist workers to fuse themselves with such struggles, transforming themselves in the process and maximizing the chances to recruit vanguard workers and youth to the proletarian party today. "Building the upcoming conference in Ohio," Malapanis said, "is a continuation of what began with the Active Workers Conference in Pittsburgh a year ago. The Active Workers Conference in August will be Pittsburgh II."

The three-day event concluded with a July 5 barbecue. More than \$400 was raised — through a special collection and meals — to help finance the caravans to the Ohio gathering.

Argiris Malapanis contributed to this article.

Protesters in Puerto Rico: U.S. Navy out

Continued from front page

ally successful efforts of the Puerto Rican government to sell the state-owned phone company to the U.S. company GTE, culminated in a general strike of half a million workers, July 7-8, 1998.

The protest was organized by the ad hoc coalition All Puerto Rico is with Vieques. The coalition was initiated by pro-independence forces, which have gained moral authority among Puerto Ricans well beyond their ranks because of their efforts at the forefront of this 50-year-long battle.

The public storm over Vieques sparked a crisis in the colonial government headed by Gov. Pedro Rosselló and his pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP). At this point it has become difficult for politicians from either of the two colonial parties — the PNP and the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party (PPD) — to take a public stance other than calling for the withdrawal of the U.S. Navy from Vieques.

A commission appointed by Rosselló in response to the controversy issued a report June 25 that calls for the U.S. Navy to leave Vieques. Rosselló adopted the conclusions of the commission, which was headed by Puerto Rican secretary of state Norma Burgos.

Seeking to head off deeper anger, capitalist politicians of all stripes decided to jump on the bandwagon and endorsed the July 4 demonstration in Ceiba, including Rosselló himself. PPD vice president Aníbal Acevedo attended, as did Democratic congressman Luis Gutiérrez from Chicago.

Caravan of fishermen

The heroes of the day, however, were the residents of Vieques. Carlos "Prieto" Ventura, president of the Association of Fishermen of the South, commanded a group of fishermen from Vieques, who were joined by fishermen from all over Puerto Rico. The caravan of 45 boats, with Puerto Rican and Vieques flags of all sizes flapping in the wind, cruised through the waters near the U.S. base at Roosevelt Roads and arrived in formation at the Ceiba docks, where the fishermen were greeted by dozens of supporters. They then marched into the crowd.

At the rally, Ismael Guadalupe, a well-known pro-independence activist in Vieques and spokesperson of the Committee for the Development and Rescue of Vieques, placed a basket of ammunition in front of a sign that read: "U.S. Navy Property — Authorized Personnel Only." The shells had been collected over the last several months in the restricted area of the target range.

Guadalupe declared, "We want to return to them what is theirs. With this, we are symbolically beginning the collection of bullets to indicate that the time has come for the Navy to leave Vieques."

Report details effects of Navy presence

The report of the governor's special commission on Vieques confirms facts that residents of the island have been explaining for years. Vieques has the highest mortality rate of any municipality in Puerto Rico — 10.8 deaths per 1,000 residents compared to 7.7 for Puerto Rico as a whole. The infant mortality rate in Vieques is 24.5 per 1,000 live births versus 13.4 for the other 77 municipalities. Between 1985 and 1989, the cancer rate in Vieques was 26.9 percent higher than the rest of Puerto Rico.

After earlier denials, U.S. officials recently admitted the Navy fired uranium-tipped shells in Vieques. They claimed it was "by mistake."

The commission report documents the fact that the U.S. Navy has not lived up to a 1983 agreement — signed by U.S. military officials during an earlier upsurge in protests over Vieques — that committed it to creating jobs. Vieques has an official poverty rate of 73.3 percent compared to 58.9 percent on the main island. *Viequesenses* have finished high school at a rate of 35.4 percent and only 6.7 percent have graduated from college. The comparable figures for the rest of Puerto Rico are 49.7 and 14.3 percent, respectively.

Pro-independence, environmental, and other groups have said they will press for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces not only from Vieques but from all of Puerto Rico.

Ron Richards is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

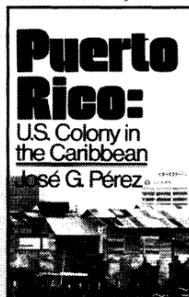
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José G. Pérez

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Striking sugar workers defend union in New York

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about

from Domino's other refineries in Baltimore and New Orleans.

Workers said they viewed Tate & Lyle, which has shut two other Domino Sugar plants in Boston and Philadelphia, as being on a union-busting drive. Tate & Lyle locked out 760 corn-processing workers at A.E. Staley in Decatur, Illinois, in 1993

ON THE PICKET LINE

and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

BROOKLYN, New York — After working without a contract since Oct. 2, 1998, some 280 workers organized by International Longshoremen's Association Local 1814 struck the Domino Sugar refinery in Brooklyn June 15. Another 30 workers at the plant, organized by two other unions, are honoring the picket lines.

"This is not just about wages, it's about jobs," said Charles Milan, a packaging mechanic and shop steward with 35 years at the plant. "They want to do what they did to Silverton refinery workers in England. They want to do us what they did to the Staley workers."

Domino, which is owned by British company Tate & Lyle PLC, plans to shut down the filter house where raw sugar is processed, cutting 100 jobs, Milan said.

The company also proposes to eliminate three holidays; put in a no-strike clause; install staggered work weeks, which means straight time pay for weekend work; get rid of guaranteed hours per year; have unlimited contracting-out of work; and have the ability to reopen the contract at any time. The bosses are also pressing to introduce part-time workers at lower pay, combine jobs to eliminate more positions, and attack seniority rights.

The average seniority at the plant is about 20 years. The average wage is around \$15, topping out at \$18. Since December, the company has drastically cut the hours of many production workers. Some worked massive overtime the year before, from two or three shifts a week, workers said.

Production is still going on, but instead of 100 trucks of sugar going out a day, workers report only 10-12 vehicles leave the plant. Those trucks, driven by nonunion drivers, are escorted by private security goons with cameras. Some drivers have taken aim at the picket lines, pickets said.

The scabs inside the plant are bosses both from the local plant and

during contract negotiations. A number of Domino workers said they remembered the lockout and had participated in solidarity activities.

Workers in Brooklyn have been through two other strikes in recent years — one in 1989 that lasted three months and one in 1992-93 that lasted more than five months.

About 150 workers held an expanded picketline on June 21. The strikers are asking people to boycott Domino Sugar.

Iowa paperworkers strike against Georgia-Pacific

FORT DODGE, Iowa — At midnight June 19, production workers at Georgia-Pacific's gypsum wall-board plant near here walked out on strike.

The 76 members of Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers (PACE) Local 7-0503 had worked under an extended contract since June 1 while negotiations continued. The last offer from the company was rejected June 19 by a vote of 42-28.

Three of the main issues, according to pickets, are the retiree health plan, pensions, and getting back all the 10 paid holidays they lost in the last contract six years ago. The company wants more flexibility in making job assignments.

Workers now get only Christmas, New Years, and Thanksgiving off along with two floating holidays and vacation days. On top of that, if their relief doesn't come in, workers can be forced to work up to 16 hours to cover the shift.

Larry Prewitt, with six years in the plant, explained he's been working seven days a week since he started. "We used to have 10 paid holidays off," Prewitt explained, "but the company changed the wording in the last contract and won an arbitration ruling that says as long as we got holiday pay, they could schedule us for work. We want those seven days back."

Pickets knew of one worker who already had 600 hours of overtime for the year, an average of 23 hours per week. When was Prewitt hired, there were 109 workers in the plant. "We put out more now with 30 fewer workers," he said. "The company put in some new equipment, but they forced more overtime on us too."

Militant reporters noticed workers from other companies in the Fort Dodge area stopping by the picket line. One was a young worker from a nonunion flooring contractor. Later, a woman shouted out "United Auto Workers Local 442 is with you" as she drove by. Earlier in the evening, strikers related how a carload from a nearby nonunion wall-board plant also offered their solidarity.

Picketing is organized seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Gypsum has been mined here for decades.

Australia: 400 rally to support sacked miners



Militant/Ron Poulsen

Around 400 coal miners from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) marched and rallied June 22 at the Federal Parliament building in Canberra, Australia. The rally was in support of 125 miners from the Oakdale Colliery who were sacked May 25 when the owner, Advance Coal, suddenly announced the closure of the pit. Advance Coal claims there's no money to pay the miners redundancy (unemployment) entitlements. The miners are demanding a national fund, paid for by a levy per ton of coal mined, be put in place to guarantee entitlements. They are also supporting legislation to set up a fund for all workers.

Georgia-Pacific bought this plant in 1965, but it has been in operation since 1908. This was the first strike in memory of the unionists on the picket line.

Besides the holidays, strikers want a better pension and a retiree health plan. Unionists report that they get \$19 per year of service, and if workers retire before they are eligible for Medicare, the whole pension goes to cover health insurance payments.

The company has proposed increasing the pension by \$1 for each year of the six-year contract, but the strikers don't think this is enough.

Production is being done by bosses from other Georgia-Pacific plants. Strikers didn't think much production was getting done because of the age of the equipment. Prewitt pointed out the small number of tractor trailers in the parking lot. "Normally 60 trucks a day leave here, but we saw only three go out this evening."

PACE workers protest suspension for picketing

NEW CASTLE, Delaware — Thirty members of PACE Local 2-743 held an informational picket at the entrance to the Printpack plant here after working a 12-hour midnight shift May 21.

Looking ahead to the expiration of their current contract at the end of December, the unionists wanted to show the company they are already united in protest against recent contract violations, including the use of temporary personnel and overtime abuses. "It's almost like a prison in here," said union president Matt O'Brien.

Following the picket, the com-

pany suspended union vice-president Pat Taylor for a day after a salaried employee entering the plant said he "felt threatened" when he passed Taylor on the picket line. The local presented taped evidence that these charges are false and is demanding that Taylor receive back pay. O'Brien says a number of union members told him after the picket line that they felt "proud, they'd never seen this done before, that we're standing up for what we want."

PACE members at Printpack also recently organized solidarity with a strike by members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) at the Chloramone Corp. in nearby Delaware City.

Aluminum can workers resist deeper two-tier pay

LAWRENCE, Massachusetts — On an average day, the 135 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) at Crown, Cork, and Seal here produced 4.8 million aluminum cans before they voted overwhelmingly to go on strike last spring. For five weeks, production lines have been silent. Not one member of IAM Local Lodge 1271, which organizes the plant, has crossed the picket line since they walked out May 7.

The Machinists' contract expired April 1, and strikers describe a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude from the company, which presented a contract demanding concessions. The second set of proposals presented to the union was worse, according to pickets. This is the third strike here in the 1990s. The last walkout was for six weeks in 1996.

One key issue is the two-tier pay

scale that was first introduced in the last contract. New employees are paid \$4 an hour below the regular rate and don't reach the base rate for five years. The company now plans to widen the gap to \$6 an hour and extend the catch-up time to six years.

The other main issues are wages and health insurance costs. The company wants to double the annual deductible, introduce co-payments for physical therapy and common preventive exams, and assess monthly premiums of \$75-\$150 for covering family members who have declined coverage through their own jobs.

These concession demands are in stark contrast to the tremendous increase in productivity at this plant. Dan Viewes, a striker with 15 years' seniority, said, "I remember when over 200 of us made 650 cans per minute; now it's 1,000."

Strikers received solidarity visits to the picket line from members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees who work at the Malden Mills textile plant in Lawrence, from a United Farm Workers organizer, and from Teamsters members, one of whom dropped off a donation of bread and stayed to talk for an hour while a *Militant* reporter was there. A sign tied to the fence reads "AFSCME Local 1730 Supports IAM."

Rose Ana Berbeo, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in New York; Tim Mailhot, a member of USWA Local 310, and David Corona in Des Moines, Iowa; Pete Seidman in Philadelphia; and Sarah Ullman, a member of the United Transportation Union in Boston, contributed to this article.

LETTERS

History of Kosova struggle

I was surprised by a reference in the lead editorial ("Defend the Yugoslav federation!") of the June 14 *Militant*. The editorial states, "Following the victory of the anti-fascist struggle, Tito's armies drowned a rebellion by Albanian partisans in blood when they tried to carry out this agreement [to be granted the right to self-determination]." I don't recall reading of this bloodbath before. There is no reference to it in *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*. I think this merits an article or at least a sidebar.

Gary Boyers
Detroit, Michigan

Editors' note: This episode was explained in more detail in the

article "Kosova: roots of fight for national rights" by Natasha Terlexis and Anne Howie in the May 4, 1998 *Militant*. If you don't have the bound volume (available for \$75, including index), you can also look it up on-line at gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:11/pubs/militant

Yugoslavia coverage

I want to take this occasion to highly praise the *Militant* for the central role it has played in politically clarifying the issues around the current murderous NATO war against Yugoslavia. Of especial merit and usefulness are the facts presented by the reporting team.

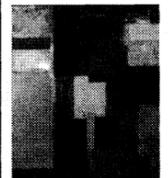
I have closely followed U.S. television reports, including the occasional presentations through CSPAN

of official Yugoslav television.

The contrast between the *Militant's* coverage and that of the so-call free press in the United States is stunning! Also, there is just no substitute for the views and opinions of Yugoslav working people, which come out of the last issues. It is inspiring to know about the resistance by working people, students and others to the nationalists. James Kendrick
Seattle, Washington

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. 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.

JACK BARNES
THE CHANGING FACE OF U.S. POLITICS
Working-class politics and the unions



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Available from bookstores listed on page 8

Union activists in Indonesia say: we have greater confidence to resist

(First in a series)

BY BOB AIKEN
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

JAKARTA — Orange and blue tarpaulins strung over bamboo poles are now home and headquarters to several hundred striking workers in the Depok suburb of Jakarta, outside the PT Arista Latinindo Industrial plant. Banners and flags are hung along the barbed-wire fence between the shelter and the road. One reads, "For workers' rights." Another "Indonesia is rich — why are we suffering?"

The strike involves 600 workers — up from 400 at the start of the action June 15 — among a workforce of 1,500 at PT Arista. The factory makes gloves for medical use for U.S. and European markets, and the workers call their union the Glove Workers Union (SBST). The union's 24-year-old president, Wido Ast, works in the molding department. When *Militant* reporters visited the picket June 26, he told us that the dispute was sparked when unionists participated in a march on May 2, to celebrate international workers' day. The next day 18 workers the company claimed should have worked were suspended, although they had applied for leave, Wido said.

In the weeks that followed the workers "have tried to negotiate," the unionist continued, but the "company has not responded to our demands." A strike was organized from May 18–25. The company has failed to abide by agreements signed on May 6 and 25, and this latest strike has been called to enforce those agreements.

Donations from passing motorists and from people in the neighborhood keep the strikers going. Flags from a couple of other unions are also draped over the fence. "We get a lot of support," commented Mesit Fitriani, the union's general secretary, like many of the pickets a woman in her early 20s. The strikers sleep and do their cooking in the shelter, and the *Militant* reporters were not allowed to leave until we had enjoyed a meal.

The unionists are clearly prepared for a long and hard fight. In their eyes it is their union, formed in March of this year, that is at stake. Nine union activists remain suspended at this time. "By suspending the organizers, they are taking aim at the union," said Wido.

Workers fight to build unions

Workers are fighting to build and defend unions in many workplaces and industries in Indonesia today. This would have been harder, we were told, under the iron-fisted regime of President Suharto, who resigned amid rising protests in May of last year. There are a number of workplace unions and larger federations being formed, with only initial attempts at coordination.

One independent union, the Indonesian Workers Prosperity Union (SBSI), has offices in a number of areas throughout this far-flung and populous country. The SBSI came to prominence during strikes and uprisings in the North Sumatran city of Medan during 1994. The union's national vice president, Didik Hendro, told *Militant* reporters that it has members in 14 different economic sectors, including some in the oil exporting and mining industries.

The SBSI organizes several thousand bus drivers in Jakarta, who carried out an effective strike over wages last year. Johnny Maulana Simbolon, SBSI coordinator for the Jabotabek region and a former driver, said many of these drivers now face an uncertain future as the government refuses to provide the money to maintain the buses. Many are facing layoffs. Already many earn less than Rp100,000 a month (currently about \$14), he said, and some have been forced to return to their villages in the country. Although the ever-present military and police forces have less room to carry out widespread terror against union fighters than under Suharto, they are often deployed on the bosses' side. Setiyono of the Jabotabek Trade Union told



Militant/Bob Aiken

Textile and clothing workers in Majalaya after meeting with *Militant* reporters

us that during the many smaller-scale strikes that occur, the military not infrequently sets up a barracks inside the factory.

In this era of *reformasi*, "If workers want to build a union they face being fired," said Subianto, a worker at the Sinar Baru textile factory, who himself has been sacked for union activity. "Reform" has been the slogan adopted by representatives of practically every class and political tendency since the anti-Suharto protests last year.

Subianto was one of nearly 30 textile workers who welcomed us to their meeting in a workers' boarding house in the Majalaya district, a center of the textile industry just south of the city of Bandung. The meeting room was normally home to four people, two working days and two working nights.

Textile is a large industry in Indonesia. Workers were meeting to discuss their efforts at a number of different plants to reach out and involve other workers in building unions.

The companies see the union as "their enemy," said Yoyoh, a worker at the Iwamatex plant; "only the SPSI is recognized by the companies." The SPSI, or All Indonesia Workers Union, was the only union recognized under Suharto, and it is still a presence in many workplaces. Another young woman, Yani, recounted attempts to win rights to paid maternity and menstruation leave.

Dadang, who works at the Machmur Abadi factory, said that "our union leader was fired" by the company, which employs 300 people producing for the domestic market. "The company asked why anyone with a problem didn't come straight to them instead of organizing a union."

Many of these textile workers receive at least part of their pay in piece rates. Shortly after their union leader was fired in January, explained Dadang, new rules were enforced, under which workers have to buy material they produce if it contains flaws. The cost can be more than a month's wages.

The highest wage at this plant is Rp 70,000 a week (at around Rp7,000 to the U.S. dollar, that's about \$10). The minimum wage, which is set at a different level in each province, stands highest in West Java at Rp7,600 a day, or 230,000 a month.

Higher prices, shrinking wages

Prices for basic foodstuffs and fuel have risen sharply over the last two years. In Bandung, medium quality rice today costs Rp3,200 a kilo, up from less than Rp1,000 before July 1997 when the capitalist crisis hit. Lower-paid workers are often unable to flavor their rice with anything more substantial than soy sauce. Vegetables are affordable, but fruit is very expensive. The price of milk, always expensive for workers, has increased fourfold in price.

sian Observer reported a protest by "2,000 workers of the nation's largest clove cigarette maker PT Gudang Garam ... to demand higher wages."

Cigarette workers strike

The newspaper reported the workers and hundreds of students "gathered in front of the tobacco company's factory in the industrial town of Sidoarjo, near the provincial capital of Surabaya. They demanded the company take back three workers sacked for leading a similar protest on May 11."

Thirteen hundred young workers at PT Mayora Indah snack food company in Jakarta took part in several similarly bold public protests during their two-month strike, which began on April 20. The total workforce in the factory is over 3,000. We met a group of the strikers at a protest in Jakarta against government corruption.

On the first day of their strike, the workers protested outside the factory, and spent the night there. Then when the company refused a settlement proposed by an arbitrator provided by the Ministry of Manpower, they turned their anger on the Ministry.

The "hundreds of protesting female workers," as they were described in the press, occupied the street outside and then moved to the Ministry of Manpower building, staying overnight and arousing the ire of the Minister by washing their clothes there and hanging them out to dry. After another protest, 200 workers were held overnight by the police, who have the legal power to hold people without charges for 24 hours.

Yani, a worker at the plant, told us they were fighting for a wage increase from Rp 250,000 a month to 300,000. They are also demanding an increase in the food allowance from Rp 1,000 a day to 4,000. This food allowance is a common feature of many workers' pay packets now, representing their efforts to stem some of the worst effects of the crisis. Hours of work were also an issue, Yani explained. They demanded extra money for working double shifts, but above all they were calling an end to double shifts altogether. A work week of around 40 hours was seen as fairly standard by many we spoke to.

On June 28 these workers were due to return to work, having established that extra shifts would be voluntary and settling on an agreement for an 18 percent wage increase and a Rp 2,000 daily food allowance. "We want our own union, different from the SPSI," Yani said to us.

At the shelter built by the PT Arista workers, Glove Workers Union president Wido asked the *Militant* reporters to inform workers in Australia and New Zealand about their struggle. One young woman worker bade us farewell by teaching us to say "Selamat Solidaritas" — roughly translated as "long live solidarity."

Bob Aiken is a member of the metal workers union in Sydney.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sat., July 17

All-Unions Rally at Kaiser's Mead plant

Spokane, Washington — 3–7 p.m. Rally for locked-out Kaiser workers. There will be a barbecue afterwards. For more information look up www.uswa329.org

Brandenburg, Kentucky — 5 p.m. Senior Citizens Building, Old State Road. For more information, call Mattie Mack at (502) 422-2838.

Tues., July 20

Kentucky Minority Farmers Annual Meeting

Thurs.–Sun., July 22–25

All Out to Washington, D.C. It's time to bring Puerto Rican Prisoners home!

Washington, D.C.; Nat'l march Sat., July 24 For more information, call: (773) 278-0885 or (212) 927-9065.