

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Capitalism's World Disorder
sold 'where workers point us to'
— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 27, 1999

Miners rally to defend lifetime health benefits

BY JAMES VINCENT

UNIONTOWN, Pennsylvania — In the face of threats to cut their health benefits, thousands of retired coal miners packed meetings throughout the coalfields September 7-14. The meeting here, held September 10 at the Holiday Inn, drew more than 1,500 retired miners from the surrounding coalfields of southwestern Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio. Some miners came with wheelchairs and walkers, others carried oxygen tanks. The size of the meeting overwhelmed the arranged facilities. Retired miners came in chartered buses, vans, and cars. Many sported United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) T-shirts and hats, including from the Pittston strike 10 years ago.

The meetings, sponsored by the UMWA, were launched September 7 in Bessemer, Alabama, to put a spotlight on a looming crisis in the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act (Coal Act), which was sup-

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More than 1,500 retired miners and relatives attended September 10 meeting in Uniontown.

Puerto Rico patriots are greeted with hero's welcome

BY PATTIE THOMPSON
AND CAPPY KIDD

CHICAGO — Hundreds of jubilant supporters gathered in the heart of the Puerto Rican community here September 10 to celebrate the release of 11 Puerto Rican independence fighters and to welcome four of them who came to Chicago after being released from prisons that morning.

"It is definitely very emotional to be in front of you all now after 19 1/2 years in jail!" Ricardo Jiménez told the crowd, which filled the garden of the Pedro Albizu Campos Monument site and overflowed into an adjacent lot.

The appearances of the ex-prisoners were staggered, since these fighters are not supposed to associate with each other under the conditions of their parole. Talks were interspersed with music and dancing over the course of five hours.

Cheers went up, and Puerto Rican flags waved, as each former prisoner was introduced.

Alberto Rodríguez and Alejandrina Torres
Continued on Page 8

Australian gov't prepares to head UN occupation force in East Timor

Union tops organize pro-war rallies across Australia

BY JOANNE KUNIAISKY
AND BOBAIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Under mounting pressure from the world's imperialist powers, Indonesian president B.J. Habibie announced September 12 that his government was ready to accept UN-sponsored international "peace-keeping" forces in East Timor "from friendly nations."

Headed by up to 4,500 Australian troops, the force being assembled is expected to also include soldiers from the semicolonial Asian countries of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand,

and the Philippines. Other imperialist governments agreeing to a role are those of New Zealand, Britain, the United States, Canada, Sweden, France, and Portugal. (See accompanying article on page 7.)

U.S. president William Clinton brushed aside protests by Indonesian army officials of the heavy Australian role in the intervention force. "The truth is the Australians are willing to carry the lion's share of the role," Clinton asserted, and "our people have great confidence in working with them." The Indonesians "should not be able to say who is in or

not in the force," he proclaimed.

East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao welcomed Habibie's announcement, declaring, "It is up to the UN Security Council and the international community to act speedily—there is no time to lose." Gusmao has been staying at the British embassy in Jakarta since his release September 7 after more than six years imprisonment in Indonesia.

On his release, he said, "East Timor is facing a hopeless situation. I appeal to friendly countries to take immediate measures to help

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As we go to press...

Members of United Steelworkers of America Local 850 will be voting September 19 on a tentative settlement in their year-long strike against Continental General Tire in Charlotte, North Carolina.

See article on page 5.

Titan Tire strikers rally in Mississippi

BY FRANKEVANS
AND SUSAN LAMONT

NATCHEZ, Mississippi — "When we used to have a strike, it stayed in your local. But these rallies are going national," said Harold Howard, a striking member of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) from Titan Tire in Des Moines, Iowa. He traveled for a rally in support of fellow Titan strikers here September 11.

More than 300 strikers and supporters from around the South and beyond, including from a Titan plant in Uruguay, gathered at the steelworkers hall in this Mississippi town, one block away from the Titan Tire plant where USWA Local 303 went on strike one year ago to defend their union, working hours, and conditions. "One Year, But We Will Hold Out One Day Longer!" declared the flyers that

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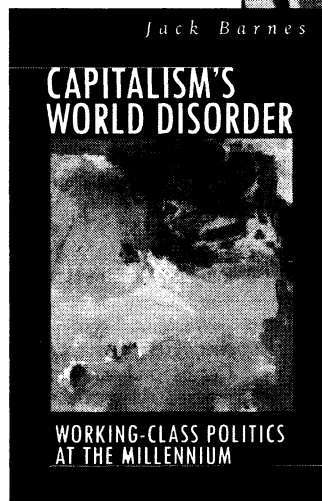
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CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER:
WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

Jack Barnes

"It is often said that great historical crises are only resolved in struggle; that's true. But what is not said as often is that the odds — the probability of victory or of loss — are determined long before these class battles themselves break out. The odds depend on the self-confidence, political clarity, and previous combat experience of the cadres of disciplined proletarian organizations who are already among the fighters in the labor movement, and who know that what they do *beforehand* will be decisive when the working class moves toward revolutionary action."

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Tell the truth about Clinton's Waco massacre — pages 6, 14



Fighting re-ignites in Dagestan

Fighting flared again in Dagestan, two weeks after the Russian military claimed victory over forces fighting for independence in this area, which lies between the Caucasus mountains and the Caspian sea. In the first week of September rebel troops in the west killed 14 Russian soldiers and captured six villages. A September 4 bomb attack on a military complex claimed at least 50 lives. More rebels are reportedly gathering on Dagestan's border with Chechnya, where the Russian army was defeated five years ago in a drive against pro-independence forces.

Air strikes against villages in central Dagestan have boosted support and recruitment for the rebel troops. In response to the latest setbacks suffered by the Russian military, warplanes are also pounding targets along the Dagestan-Chechen border and inside Chechnya. President Boris Yeltsin is being pressed by parliament to explain Moscow's expanding military moves in the region.

Benin farmers occupy land

Twenty farmers in the West African country of Benin were arrested as they took action to recover their land, according to reports in early September. More than 300 armed federal policemen surrounded the town of Ze, near the capital city Cotonou, and fired on the farmers, wounding three.

The protesters are demanding the return of land taken by the government in the 1960s for the production of palm oil. The government said the land would be returned, but the state-owned company managing the plantations announced that it would offer new renewable 50-year leases. "To us this is an attempt to perpetuate our unbridled exploitation," said a farmers' spokesperson, explaining that they have organized an occupation of the land.

Madrid moves Basque prisoners

On September 7 the Spanish government announced plans to move 105 imprisoned supporters of Basque independence to jails closer to their homes. Hundreds of Basque political prisoners are held in Spain and France, whose borders are straddled by the Basque homeland. Some prisoners are held hundreds of miles from their families.

Madrid's statement preceded by one week

Indians demand land back in Chile



"Respect and autonomy" reads the banner held by the indigenous Mapuche people as they hold a protest, reported in September, in front of the presidential palace in Santiago, Chile. The Mapuches demand the return of half the 1.2 million acres of land in southern Chile taken by timber companies for export plantations. Mapuches have occupied land and blocked roads, often facing attack by timber company security guards or Chilean police. More than 400 have been imprisoned this year.

the first anniversary of a cease-fire by the independence group Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA). Last October the Basque nationalist movement reinforced ETA's initiative with street demonstrations protesting the Spanish government's negative response to the cease-fire. In May of this year talks between Basque representatives and Madrid began. Further negotiations were scheduled for August, but ETA withdrew, explaining that Madrid was demanding further concessions.

Israeli court rules torture illegal

Violently shaking detainees, shackling them in contorted positions, and depriving them of sleep are illegal methods of interrogation, stated the Israeli Supreme Court September 6. The court ruled on a petition by civil rights groups against the official methods of "physical force" used by the Shin Bet security service when questioning "terrorism suspects" — that is, those fighting Tel Aviv's denial of the

national rights of the Palestinian people. The decision broke with the past refusal of the court to outlaw torture. But according to the *New York Times*, the judges noted that Israeli courts may choose not to enforce the new ruling in "emergency situations."

French retail chains merge

The two largest French retail chains have merged in a bid to stave off competition from the U.S. giant Wal Mart. The Carrefour and Promodes firms agreed in August to form a new company that will have 9,000 stores in 26 countries and sales of more than \$49 billion.

Mergers in the aluminum, oil, and banking industries are also under way, often accompanied by nationalist rhetoric. When a recent banking merger failed, the French interior minister lamented, "the national interest ... required the largest possible grouping to promote and defend our economic interests in the face of globalization."

Tensions grow over Caspian oil

In a conflict with Washington, a consortium headed by British-based oil giant BP Amoco is threatening to delay work on expanding the pipelines that carry oil from the Caspian Sea. The 11-company consortium Azerbaijan International Operating Co. plans to extend an existing pipeline from Baku, Azerbaijan, through the territories of the former Soviet Union, ending at Georgia's Black Sea port of Supsa. U.S. officials instead want the oil to be pumped along a longer, more expensive route to Ceyhan, Turkey. John Wolf, the U.S. ambassador to the Caspian Basin, demanded the Baku-Supsa line be extended only as part of building the Baku-Ceyhan line.

Cuban health workers assist Iraq

A group of Cuban health workers have gone to Iraq, where they will serve at the Baghdad emergency hospital for at least a year. The contingent consists of orthopedists, pediatricians, physiotherapists, nurses, and other professionals. The embargo imposed by Washington and its allies against Iraq has had a deep impact on the country's health services. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, the mortality rate for babies younger than one year rose from 47 per 1,000 before the embargo was imposed in 1990, to 108 per 1,000 at the time of the most recent survey.

Court overturns Attica verdict

Frank Smith, a former prisoner at the Attica Correctional Facility in New York State, suffered a setback on August 3 in his fight for compensation. Smith was awarded \$4 million in 1997, when a Manhattan appeals court ruled in favor of a class action suit against New York state police and correction officials, and the then governor Nelson Rockefeller.

Smith and other prisoners were tortured and brutalized in the aftermath of a rebellion at Attica in September 1971. Prisoners took hostages and engaged in negotiations for several days. The governor then ordered an assault on D Yard, which was under prisoners' control. At the end of this attack, 29 inmates and 10 hostages lay dead.

The new ruling, by a federal appeals court, overturned the lower court's monetary award and other aspects of the decision on technical grounds. At the same time, the new decision notes that "there is very substantial evidence that ... some and perhaps most or even all, of the D Yard inmates were the victims of brutal acts of retaliation." The ruling "just makes me feel more energized" to fight, responded Smith.

Charlotte busing ordered stopped

On September 10 a federal judge ordered an end to busing, and all other means of "assigning children to schools," in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, school district. The ruling on a case filed by seven white parents was the latest in a series of similar judgments, including in Denver, Cleveland, and Norfolk, Virginia.

In 1969 Charlotte became the "birthplace of busing," after the District Court found that the district's schools were deliberately segregated. Describing the inferior resources granted the schools attended by Black children, one former student recalled wearing hand-me-down uniforms received from a white school.

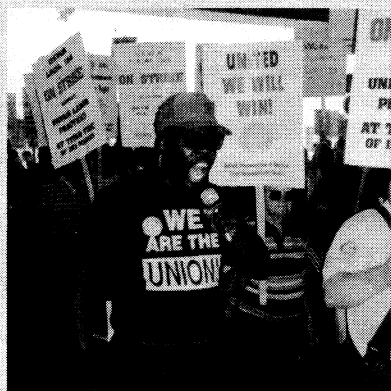
In this latest case, the judge did not deny that "racial imbalances" still exist, but denied that they are "vestiges of the dual system." School officials who defended the anti-discrimination programs say that facilities at majority-Black schools are still inferior. Two Black families who joined the legal defense of the programs say they will appeal the decision if the school district does not.

— FRANK EVANS

THE MILITANT

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Pilots wage strikes, resist job cuts in New Zealand

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — The domestic air carrier Ansett New Zealand served lockout notices to its 146 pilots August 30, telling them to call off a 24-hour strike planned for September 13 and giving them a deadline of September 16 to sign a new contract. The company's contract offer would cut 35 pilots' jobs and significantly increase flying hours.

The pilots have carried out three 24-hour strikes since August, resulting in losses of NZ\$2.2 million for the airline (NZ\$1.00=US\$0.52). The Australian airline Qantas, which had been considering buying Ansett New Zealand, if it cut costs and replaced "unsustainable" employment contracts, has now shelved those plans.

Ansett, the smaller of the two main airlines flying New Zealand's domestic routes, is demanding these concessions as part of a \$4.7 million annual cost-cutting plan. Already there have been cuts in staffing levels of ramp workers and flight attendants.

In response to the lockout notices, pilots began calling in sick, forcing the airline to cancel around 200 flights in the first seven days.

On September 3 government Transport Minister Maurice Williamson stepped into the dispute, suggesting that overseas pilots be brought in to fly the planes and offering to assist with their immigration procedures. "If the pilots are unwell they must be left in peace to convalesce," he said sarcastically. Ansett had earlier threatened to bring in such strikebreakers on three-month contracts. The International Federation of Airline Pilots has now placed a ban on pilots taking the Ansett jobs.

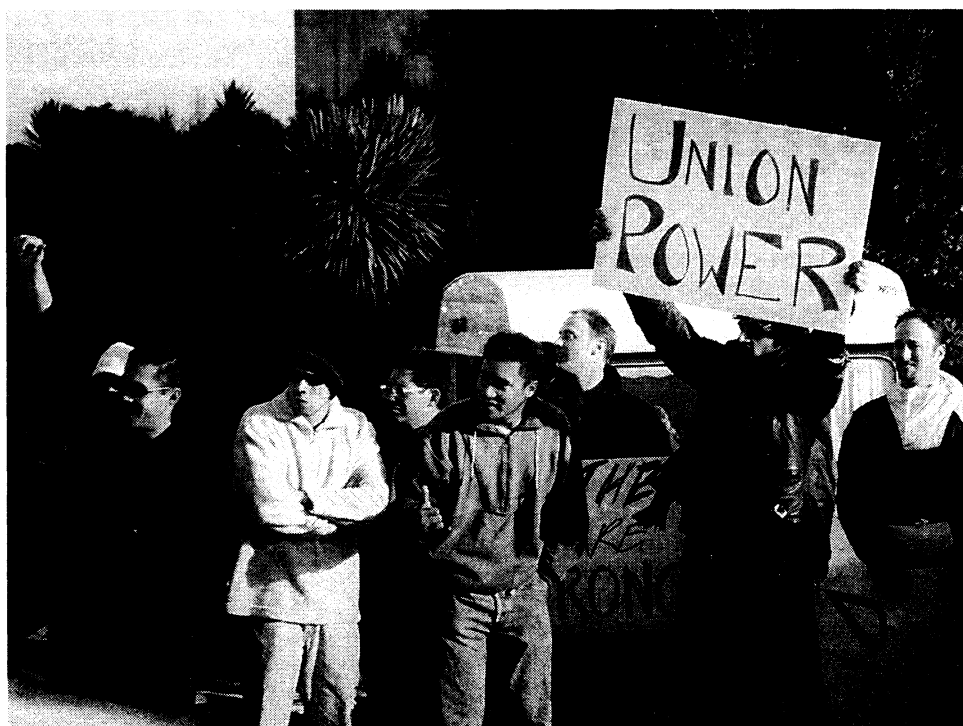
The proposed contract, which includes a NZ\$12,000 signing bonus, has no written limit for flying hours. Ansett has said it wants to increase hours from the current 85 per 28 days to the Civil Aviation Authority limit of 100.

The September 13 strike date coincides with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' summit in Auckland, for which thousands of police and support personnel are being flown in. The Airline Pilots' Association, which represents the pilots, is now planning a legal challenge to the lockout, and a fifth strike has been called for September 17.

The pilots' strikes follow a number of other actions around the country in recent weeks. On August 2, some 1,500 workers employed by appliance manufacturer Fisher and Paykel nationwide went on strike for 24 hours over their pay claim.

Five hundred nurses at Tauranga Hospital struck for two days September 1 over pay and staffing levels. Their counterparts at Waikato Hospital in Hamilton struck for three days in March. These strikes highlight the growing crisis in the public health system, with a nationwide shortage of nurses and consequent deteriorating levels of patient care and safety.

In mid-August 200 medical laboratory workers in Auckland went out for three days, demanding a 3 percent pay raise against the laboratory company's offer of 1 percent. A planned second strike was called off when they settled for 1.5 percent. Around the same time, 100 boatbuilders employed by Sensation Yachts struck for 24 hours for a collective contract. The company, which makes luxury superyachts, has grown from a work-



Militant/Terry Coggan

Strikers and supporters picket August 2 during strike at Fisher & Paykel in Auckland

force of 50 to 350 in 18 months. The workers, who picketed on the off-ramp of the nearby highway, are considering further action if their claims are not met.

Eight workers at an Auckland textile company forced their bosses to negotiate after two weeks on strike in August over a contract that would cut sick pay, bereavement pay, and jury service leave, and give only a 2 percent pay raise. The other 20 workers in the plant are working on individual contracts, which have been pushed on many workers in New Zealand since the passage of the 1991 Employment Contracts Act.

In Wellington, morning commuters watched as an armada of 30 small commercial fishing boats from around the North Island steamed up the harbor and docked downtown August 25. The fishers, members of the Federation of Commercial Fishermen, then marched on Parliament and confronted Minister of Fisheries John Luxton, protest-

ing growing costs which, according to Federation executive member Dennis Wells, are forcing small operators out of business and costing jobs.

Meanwhile, the opposition Labour Party's September 7 announcement that it will repeal the anti-union Employment Contracts Act if it wins the coming general election was described by Employers Federation chief executive Steven Marshall as bringing alive employers' worst fears.

According to the *New Zealand Herald*, Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley has warned in recent weeks of a "unions' swing to the left" and that this, combined with plans to repeal the Act would be "bad news for New Zealanders." Labour plans to replace the Act with a slightly modified "Employment Relations Act."

Felicity Coggan is a member of the Engineers Union in Auckland.

S. African gov't stonewalls on unions' demands

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa — As the *Militant* went to press, officials of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) were weighing their response to a government declaration that there would be no further discussion of state employees' wage demands.

Following massive demonstrations by workers and other government employees on July 23 and August 24, union leaders met with Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi of the African National Congress-led government on September 7.

COSATU officials said those present at the meeting agreed to a two-week period to consider union proposals on where more money could be obtained to fund a wage increase for government employees. Union officers are now demanding a 7.3 percent increase. The government's last offer was 6.3 percent — roughly equivalent to the consumer inflation rate.

A day after the meeting, however, Fraser-Moleketi declared there was "no more fat to cut" and said there would be no further talks on wage increases this year, only on future wage policy.

A statement issued by COSATU September 9 said if Fraser-Moleketi refused to comply with the September 6 agreement it would

represent "the most serious attack on the very right of trade unions to exist" and as a result there would be "no basis to negotiate with the government now and in the future."

Leaders of the 1.8-million-member union federation, which is politically aligned to the ANC, said they would discuss their response to the minister's announcement at an executive committee meeting September 14-15. The great majority of COSATU members are black.

Officials of public sector unions and associations belonging to the Federation of South African Trade Unions, which has a higher percentage of members who are white, were also discussing their response. An important feature of the recent union protests has been joint action by workers belonging to both federa-

tions.

Meanwhile, thousands of members of the Communications Workers Union (CWU) have continued their fight against the telephone utility, Telkom. The majority of the utility is state-owned, with U.S.-based SBC Communications and Telekom Malaysia holding 30 percent of the company.

CWU members are demanding wage increases of 7-10 percent. Telkom bosses are only offering 6-6.5 percent.

Following several weeks of strike action, work-to-rule protests, and overtime refusal by union members, Telkom declared on September 6 that it would lock out workers who refused to sign a "final offer."

In response, thousands of workers ignored the lockout threat and protested throughout

South Africa, including hundreds outside the All-Africa Games in Johannesburg.

As employers in a range of industries continue to destroy jobs at a rapid pace, many miners are taking the lead in fighting these job losses.

More than 4,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers at the Kloof gold mine near Carletonville marched on September 2 to protest threatened layoffs. And on September 9, 391 gold miners from Durban Roodepoort Deep scored a victory when the Labor Court ruled in their favor, stating that the company had failed to "consult" them before laying them off. Although the company said it would not appeal the decision, it threatened to keep the miners suspended pending talks with the union.

Canada mine bosses link wages to copper price

BY LYNN LEBLANC AND STEVE PENNER

KAMLOOPS, British Columbia — The 990 miners at the Highland Valley Copper mine in Logan Lake, British Columbia, voted by 86 percent on August 29 to accept the contract proposal put forward by the provincial government's job protection commissioner. The company and United Steel-

workers of America (USWA) union officials backed the proposal.

The company had said that acceptance of the proposal was the precondition for re-opening the mine after a three-month shutdown. The mine is the largest open pit copper mine in Canada, and produces 1.5 percent of the world's copper. It had been closed since May 15.

The company had claimed that it was no longer profitable given the sharp decline in the world price of copper, and demanded concessions from the union and the government in order to stay open.

The New Democratic Party (NDP) government had previously agreed to cut the mine's electricity rates by tying them to the price of copper. The lower the price of copper the lower the charges for electricity. But the company announced it was closing when USWA members refused to accept lower wages.

"It was more like a lockout than a mine shutdown," according to Ed Drinkwater, a truck operator at the mine. "They shut down and said they wouldn't open again until they had a contract that was acceptable to them," he pointed out.

The new contract ties workers' wages to the ups and downs in the price of copper.

For example, if the price of copper — currently about US\$0.74 per pound — fell to US\$0.67, wages would be cut 2 percent. If the price fell to US\$0.60 per pound, wages would be cut 15 percent.

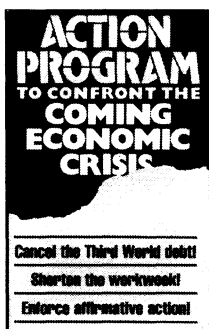
Many of those who voted for the contract, like Leon Marks, a welder, felt they didn't really have much of a choice given the price of copper. "The company waited until the people were hungry enough." Moreover, he added, Employment Insurance had warned that workers' unemployment benefits would be cut off if they rejected the contract proposal.

Morgan Emes, a millwright, argued the company was getting what it wants. "All they're doing is tying our wages to the price of copper." This would make workers more vulnerable to maneuvers by the company. "They blackmailed people into voting yes by saying we would lose our UIC [unemployment benefits] if we voted no."

"We were voting with a gun at our heads," Drinkwater added. Some workers were unhappy with the five-year length of the contract. The last agreement was a 9-year pact that resulted from a 107-day strike in 1989.

Lynn LeBlanc is a member of the Young Socialists.

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Southern teams go 'where workers point us to'

BY FRANK EVANS

"I think the hands-on experience of this trip shows that the books can be placed in many more places than Pathfinder bookstores," Dan Fein said in an interview September 15. Fein and three others spent five days visiting towns in North Carolina starting September 5. Asked to sum up the experience, Fein said, "Our trip showed me the effectiveness of going to the outlets that workers point you to — which may not be the most obvious places."

Socialist workers living in the South organized sales trips to three different regions during the first half of September. Teams from Alabama went to North Carolina and Valdosta, Georgia. A carload from Houston headed for Bryan, Texas.

These efforts are helping to give shape to the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, and place it in libraries and stores. The book contains five speeches by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes that address the changes in world politics over the last decade and a half. It serves as a guide to those in city, town, and country, who are reacting against the increasing exploitation and brutality served up by the capitalist system (see front-page ad and excerpt from the book on page 13).

Two of the southern teams took part in important political events. Arlene Rubenstein, a member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in Atlanta, told the *Militant* that she and three other Pathfinder supporters joined a rally of 350 people in Valdosta on September 2 to protest the killing of Willie James Williams by the police. The Peoples Tribunal organized the event as part of an ongoing campaign. Afterwards the team sold a number of copies of the *Militant*. A rally participant bought a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*, and then invited the team to visit his barber shop.

Earlier the team met a store owner who is a member of the People's Tribunal. His record store had stocked books for a period, but low sales had convinced him to concentrate on music. "This opened up a discussion on what

has changed in politics," said Rubenstein. "He asked someone on our team that he knows what she would recommend, and she urged him to order *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, which she is reading, and *Capitalism's World Disorder*. He ended up writing a future order of nine titles, including *Capitalism's World Disorder*."

Sales of *Militant*, books go hand in hand

During day two of the North Carolina trip, members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 850, on strike against Continental General Tire, led Charlotte's first ever Labor Day parade. Among the 3,000 people who marched, 3 workers bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at the special price of \$20, more than 100 bought copies of the *Militant*, and 7 people bought subscriptions to the newsweekly. One person subscribed to the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*, and another renewed his *Militant* subscription and bought a copy of *New Internationalist* no. 11 featuring "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War."

The Charlotte Labor Day march also proved to be a springboard for promoting Pathfinder titles, and *Capitalism's World Disorder* in particular. "Socialists who were there asked workers where they get their books, and if they had any suggestions for outlets for us to visit," said Fein. "One of our leads was a store in Chapel Hill. When we visited there, we found Pathfinder's *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon displayed prominently on their 'New Arrivals' shelf. The manager took two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and said he would order many more titles at the end of the month when he did his orders."

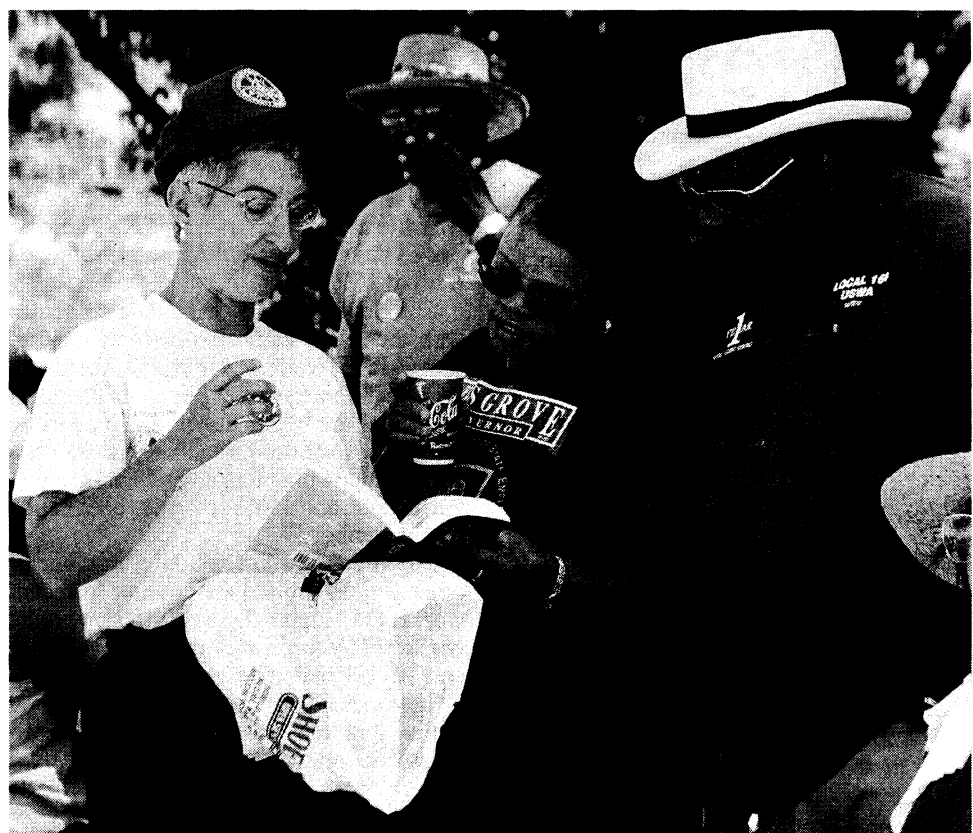
"We found out about a bookstore in the Black community in Durham from a worker at the rally too," said Fein. "They ordered around \$400 worth of books."

The team had already visited bookstores serving campuses in Greensboro and Chapel Hill. One store took two copies immediately, and ordered 12 other titles. The team visited campus libraries as well. A Chapel Hill library ordered *New Internationalist* no. 11 and a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. "The Greensboro librarian said he would consult with his colleagues and thought it would be a good counterbalance to the Patrick Buchanan books they had," Fein stated.

The team also set up a table stocked with socialist periodicals and Pathfinder books at the Chapel Hill campus. They sold a number of *Militants*, and a copy of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara. "We met two women campus workers who stopped and told us of their efforts to unionize public employees," said Fein.

Leads from plant-gate sales

The North Carolina team also organized sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the books to workers during shift changes at the U.S. Airways maintenance base at the Charlotte airport, the Fieldcrest Cannon textile mill in Kannapolis, and the Cone textile



Militant/Mary Ann Schmidt

At rally in Natchez, Mississippi, on September 11, to mark one year of Local 303's strike against Titan Tire: workers look through *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

plant in Greensboro.

"The 700 or so members of the IAM at U.S. Air are in the middle of a 'cooling off' period, and may go on strike September 26," reported Fein. "Twenty to thirty of them marched on Labor Day. We sold six *Militants*, as some workers told us how they are looking forward to September 26."

"At the Fieldcrest Cannon mill we sold a *Perspectiva Mundial* along with nine *Militants* at two shift changes. The 5,000 workers there recently voted for UNITE — the Union of Needleworkers and Textile Employees — to represent them," added Fein.

"After our visit, these airline and textile workers — along with working people and young people in the same area — can now read and buy *Capitalism's World Disorder* at stores in Greensboro and Charlotte."

Phil Duzinski and Lea Sherman from Houston began their one-day trip on September 8 with a plant gate sale. They sold to workers at Sanderson Farms in Bryan Texas. This is a poultry packing plant, recently organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

The 800 workers there are majority Black or Latino, Duzinski told the *Militant*. "We sold four *Militants*, two *Perspectiva Mundials* and handed out 100 flyers advertising the election campaign of Socialist Workers candidate Dave Ferguson for Houston City Council," he reported.

"Afterward we went to a big university store for an appointment. Using the catalogue, the buyer circled at least 40 individual titles that

he thought various professors and others, including himself, would be interested in."

SWP union fractions lead campaign

Socialist activists organized in the industrial union fractions of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists have led these teams from the front. Supporters of Pathfinder who are in the IAM in Los Angeles are setting the pace in the campaign as well.

"We have taken responsibility for distribution of Pathfinder books, especially *Capitalism's World Disorder*, at the airport, at surrounding bookstores, campuses, and libraries," Mark Friedman, an airline worker in Los Angeles, told the *Militant* September 12. "We also organize a weekly plant gate sale to dockworkers in San Pedro. Sales of the *Militant* average 20-35 weekly at the docks, and we've sold two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Ali, a worker who is Black, bought the book after buying the *Militant* for several weeks. He gave us the address of the bookstore he visits for us to place Pathfinder titles in," continued Friedman.

Pathfinder supporters who work at the airport met the book buyer for three airport bookstores on September 10. "The buyer ordered five copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* for each store, and other books by Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Evelyn Reed, Leon Trotsky, and multiple copies of several issues of *New Internationalist*," said Friedman. "For the multilingual bookstore in the international terminal he ordered more than a dozen titles in English, Spanish, and French."

Join teams to sell 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

Three regional teams will be fielded during the last week of September. These teams will build on the successes of our initial experiences in carrying out the campaign to place *Capitalism's World Disorder* in bookstores and libraries where workers, farmers, and youth in struggle buy and read books. These experiences were discussed at the Atlanta conference of socialist workers organized in national trade union fractions, and more recent accomplishments along these lines are also being reported in the *Militant*.

In addition to continuing to place *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other Pathfinder books, the teams will also visit plant gates, campuses, and farms in the regions they travel to get the *Militant* and Pathfinder books into the hands of interested toilers in the factories and rural areas, as well as students on campuses nearby.

Volunteers are needed to participate in the teams. Young Socialist members, friends and members of the Socialist Workers Party, and supporters of *Perspectiva Mundial*, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder books are all welcome to join these teams. They will be coordinated by the SWP Trade Union Committee, organized by Nan Bailey.

The teams planned are:

Tidewater, Virginia Team from September 21 to September 30.

Western Coal Team from September 25 to October 2.

Southern Georgia Team tentative dates from September 25 to October 1.

To volunteer for one of these teams, contact the supporters of this campaign nearest you listed on page 12.

Cops arrest eight Kaiser workers

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE — Spokane County sheriff's deputies arrested eight Steelworkers and their spouses for allegedly blocking traffic at the front gate to Kaiser Aluminum's Mead plant near Spokane August 28.

Kaiser has locked out 3,100 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) at its plants in Mead, Trentwood, and Tacoma in Washington State, as well as in Gramercy, Louisiana, and Newark, Ohio, since January of this year.

Dan Russell, the USWA local president at Mead, said the August 28 rally there followed two weeks of negotiations between Kaiser and the union that had broken down without reaching agreement to end the lockout.

The sheriff's department said that at the rally "union members became unruly and began threatening replacement workers" as they arrived for the evening shift.

Jeanne Jokkel, a leader of Spouses of Steel, was at the rally that night. In a phone interview with the *Militant* she said, "There was no 'near riot,' as Spokane media reported." According to Jokkel, about 150 people gathered to yell at the scabs, and to slowly walk on the picket line, delaying but

not stopping traffic into the plant. "We were on county property, not Kaiser's" the whole time, she added.

USWA picket captain Stan McPhee said that a replacement worker entering Mead ran over the foot of John Tierney, one of the locked-out Steelworkers. Although Tierney appealed to sheriff's officers, they arrested him. "They wouldn't take a report even after I was put in jail," he told Fox 28 news.

Jokkel was also hit by a Kaiser truck on its way through the picket line. She suffered a bruised hip and elbow, she told the *Militant*. "I was stunned; I almost passed out," and had to sit down on the back of a truck. She was upset with the police response. "The deputy across the street saw it happen, but refused to make a report. He even shoved me away from him twice," when she talked to him about it, she said. She later filed a report at a police station.

Sheriff Mark Sterk said that the arrests were made after protesters refused to disperse. "They probably didn't move as quickly as they should of," he told Fox News.

However, deputies arrested Rocky Mason, a Steelworker, and his wife, Carlene, as they walked away from the rally. "We were pick-

eting, they asked us to leave, we left, they arrested us," he said. The two were booked on charges of disorderly conduct.

According to Jokkel, two other people were arrested who weren't even at that gate, but were picketing nearly half a mile away.

While in jail, Mason and his wife, who is diabetic, pleaded repeatedly with officers to get her a badly needed insulin shot. The cops refused to do so. Mason said, "She didn't get out of jail until 2:30 in the morning and her blood sugar was so bad she was drenched sweating, shaking."

Another woman was hurt while being arrested, straining a rotator cup in her shoulder, according to union members. Some of those arrested didn't get out of jail until nearly 4:30 a.m., as the Spokane County jail wouldn't accept checks or credit cards, Jokkel explained.

The Kaiser workers are building an October 2 rally at the Trentwood union hall, to mark the one-year anniversary of their strike, which Kaiser bosses then turned into the lockout (see calendar on page 10).

Scott Breen is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

N. Carolina strikers to vote on offer after year-long battle

BY FLOYD FLOWLER

ATLANTA — "This means we've whipped them," declared striker Larry Little. "They said we were permanently replaced, that we would never get back in that plant. It took a year but they're beaten."

This was his reaction to the terms of a tentative agreement mailed September 15 to all members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 850. The 1,450 members of Local 850 have been on strike against Continental General Tire since September 20.

"The Cost of Living Allowance goes up to 100 percent over the life of this contract, and there are big improvements in the pension," Little said in a phone interview. "A lot of people don't like going from five shifts to four, which puts everyone on 12-hour days. It'll be

hard, especially on us older workers, but we couldn't get everything."

Under the tentative six-and-a-half-year agreement, Continental General must bring back 900 strikers immediately, but can keep 400 scabs in the plant for up to six months. The remaining strikers will receive 80 percent of their pay until they're returned to work. The contract contains a buy-out offer for those who choose not to come back.

The offer also covers workers in two other USWA locals at the company's plants in Bryan, Ohio, and Mayfield, Kentucky, and brings the expiration dates of the three contracts within six months of each other. "We've been fighting for common expiration dates," Little said. The contract will be voted on September 19.



Militant/Mike Italic

USWA Local 850 members on picket line June 29 wave "pink slips" at scabs during shift change. They vote on tentative contract September 19, after boss said they were permanently replaced.

Chicago Young Socialists helps set pace in national fund drive

BY LUIS RIVERA

CHICAGO — As part of the Young Socialists fund drive, the YS chapter here in Chicago is beginning a raffle that will last the duration of the campaign. The chapter plans to sell raffle tickets and distribute flyers explaining the raffle and the importance of financially supporting an organization such as the YS.

As well as selling tickets during our regular political work at plant gates, on campuses, and at political events, members will distribute flyers explaining the importance of supporting an organization such as the YS that will also contain information about the raffle. The flyer will include the list of prizes to be raffled off and when the actual drawing will take place.

Some possible prizes are a T-shirt from the game played by the Cuban national team against the Baltimore Orioles, Young Socialists T-shirts on police brutality and the fight for immigrants' rights, and some highly sought-after Pathfinder titles. The drawing will be held at a social or forum at the end of the fund drive, which goes through November 14.

The Chicago YS has also raised its goal to \$1,200, which is up from the previous goal of \$1,000. The chapter decided this based on what

is needed nationally to help the YS reach its goal and on what we believe is possible if our members give the drive the priority it deserves. The chapter is fighting to help make the YS an independently financed organization. After all, if we do not have an organization that can sustain itself we do not have an organization.

In addition to the raffle we are also organizing to have small, simple breakfasts before the weekly scheduled sales teams are dispatched on weekends here. The chapter is also planning a garage sale to raise money. Together with the \$500 received in pledges from the Midwest educational conference, we feel confident that the Chicago YS will reach its goal.

The Midwest Socialist Educational Conference held here September 4-5 was a good start for the region. Some \$960 was pledged to

the drive, and \$147 collected on the spot. Contributors at the conference gave toward their local YS goals.

In addition to the pledges toward the Chicago goal, there were pledges to the goals YS members have taken in Des Moines, Minneapolis, Chippewa Falls, Detroit, and New York. The vast majority of the pledges were not paid at the conference, but we are beginning to organize their collection.

To make a contribution to the YS Fund Drive call the chapter nearest you, listed on page 12 or contact the YS at 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110.

Tel: (415) 824-1429. E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

Young Socialists Fund Drive

City	Goal	Received	%
Detroit	350	45	13%
Chicago	1,200	97	8%
Chippewa Falls	200	5	3%
Birmingham	400	0	0%
Des Moines	100	0	0%
Fort Collins	200	0	0%
Los Angeles	500	0	0%
Minneapolis	400	0	0%
New York	700	0	0%
Newark	500	0	0%
Pittsburgh	200	0	0%
San Francisco	800	0	0%
Santa Cruz	650	0	0%
Seattle	400	0	0%
Atlanta	0	0	
Philadelphia	0	0	
Total	6,600	147	2%
Should be	8,000		

'Pathfinder books open up knowledge,' says auto worker contributing to fund

BY JON ERWAY

"Pathfinder books open up knowledge about what's going on," said Bud Haithcoath, a 29-year veteran at Ford's truck assembly plant in Edison, New Jersey. As he handed Susan Anmuth five \$20 bills toward the Pathfinder Fund, he added that the work of Pathfinder "is always inspiring people to be part of what's going on." A reader of Pathfinder titles for the past six years, Haithcoath is the second of Anmuth's co-workers to donate to the fund.

As we enter the fifth week of the Pathfinder Fund, \$9,276 has been received from supporters around the world. Pledges by Pathfinder readers and friends internationally total \$82,400. Both these facts—coupled with the example at the truck assembly plant—indicate work is still ahead of us to organize talking to every possible contributor and to carefully plan fund-raising events to maximize contributions. Focusing on this will help us meet the \$125,000 goal in full by the November 15 deadline.

At the moment, supporters in the Twin Cities in Minnesota, as well as in Houston, are leading the way in the amount of money contributed. Supporters of Pathfinder in Canada and Cleveland are of the top-ranking in percentages with 25 percent and 19 percent of their goals, respectively, mailed in so far.

A fund-raising event held September 11 at the Pathfinder bookstore in St. Paul, Minnesota, helped supporters in the state maintain the steady flow of funds collected.

The evening featured a talk by Doug Jenness, the local Pathfinder Fund director, on "World Politics Today." Jenness reports that the event netted \$425 in contributions from those attending, with \$1,000 in new pledges for the fund. "Almost \$2,500 of the current \$6,365 pledged" in the Twin Cities area alone, Jenness said, "is from supporters donating their sales tax rebates" from the state of Minnesota

to the fund. So far, they have sent in \$2,914 of their \$10,000 goal.

Houston supporters have taken an initial goal of \$6,100, said local fund director Dave Ferguson, a member of the United Steelworkers of America. Five enthusiastic contributors—including one of Ferguson's co-workers—wanted to cover a good portion of their pledges early on in the drive. Their five contributions totaled \$925 toward Houston's goal.

Haithcoath, the auto worker in New Jersey, said he also sees Pathfinder books as an alternative to the capitalist media. "The regular

media tells people how to think," he said, "and if you're not careful, you fall into that pattern. Pathfinder opens your mind." His contribution, he concluded, "is to help the struggle."

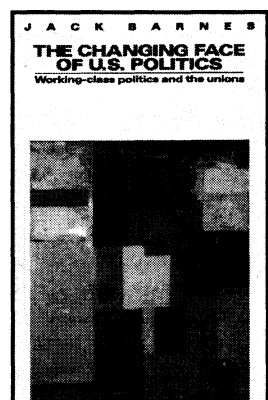
To find out more about the Fund, to get involved or to make a contribution, contact your nearest Pathfinder bookstore listed on page 12.

Please make all checks and money orders out to Pathfinder, earmarked Pathfinder Fund, and send to:

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Check out the 'Militant' website, now on line!

By the evening of Friday, September 17, readers of the *Militant* will be able to access this issue of the paper on our new website, at www.themilitant.com

Since 1994, the text of all *Militant* articles has been available on line via a "gopher" site on the internet. The new website will be a substantial improvement visually over this format.

As a start, the site will feature the current issue as well as information on how to subscribe and contact local distributors of the *Militant*. An "About this site" page will explain the next steps under way in constructing the site. This including making the *Militant* archive back to 1994 available through the website.

We encourage our readers to visit the site and make suggestions, both technical and esthetic, on how to improve it.

Below is a letter recently received from a reader in Sweden.



I think it is a good idea to publicize the

Militant on the Web. The Pathfinder bookshop in Stockholm has been on the web a couple of years already (<http://www.algonet.se/~pathfbkh>). We have had about 3,000 visits.

We didn't make any "frames" and very little graphics. We had about the same thinking you have in the *Militant* article in issue no. 31 [to keep it simple for older computers and browsers]. But nowadays everyone in Sweden has the MS Explorer or Netscape free. So it is not a problem with frames anymore here. When the frames started some webs were made in both ways. It is rather easy to do.

Personally I think a small frame to the left or above makes it very much easier to find your way between the different sides in the website. To go DIRECT to the side you want to look at. I hope we will have time to remake our site in frames soon.

Well, anyway I wish you good luck.

Lasse Erlandsson
Stockholm, Sweden

Gov't admits some facts in Waco massacre

BY LAURA GARZA

HOUSTON — Revelations that the FBI fired incendiary tear gas canisters during their attack on a group of people known as the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, on April 19, 1993, have brought renewed attention to the horror the Clinton administration unleashed that day.

More than 80 people were killed, including 25 children, when the compound was consumed in flames as a result of an assault led by the FBI. In response to growing pressure and widening calls for a new investigation, including announced plans for hearings in Congress, Attorney General Janet Reno announced September 9 the appointment of John Danforth, a former senator from Missouri, to head an "independent investigation" into the assault on the Branch Davidians.

The deadly fire, and the action of the varying police agencies on the scene in allowing the fire to burn unimpeded for at least half an hour, was seen unfold by tens of millions of people, and it evoked immediate outrage and horror. The few survivors of the conflagration who did not require hospitalization were immediately jailed.

What happened in Waco

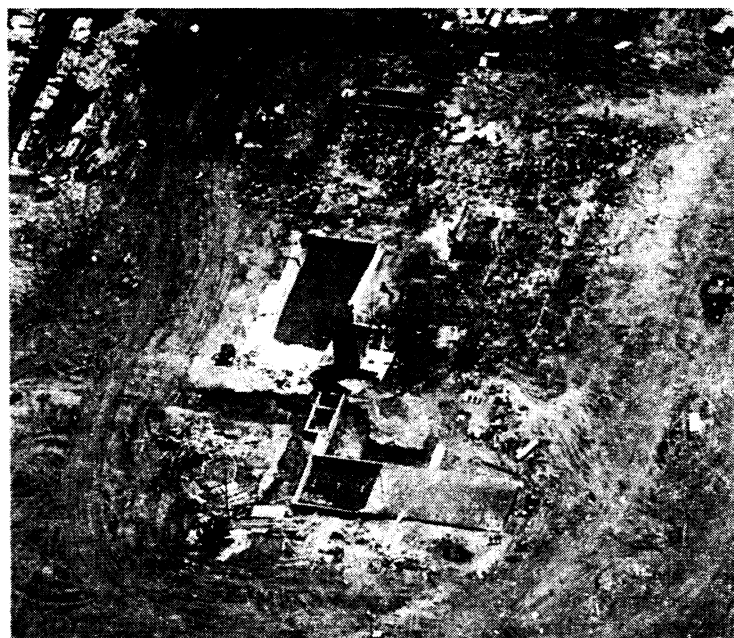
At the time, the *Militant* reported that the assault on the compound was the culmination of a police investigation based on U.S. cop officials' allegations that the Branch Davidians might be illegally refashioning guns into automatic weapons. An attempt by 100 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) cops to raid the compound and arrest the Davidians' leader, David Koresh on Feb. 28, 1993, was a fiasco. Several members of the Branch Davidians were killed, others wounded, and the ATF's actions resulted in the shooting deaths of four of its own agents. Branch Davidian members stated that the ATF agents started shooting first and that they returned fire.

Following this gunfight, more than 400 federal agents laid siege to the compound and Clinton sent in the FBI to control the operation. The cops cut off electricity and phone services, and people in the compound were subjected to loud broadcasts of dentist drills and animals being slaughtered. In March about 30 adults and children left the grounds, leaving almost 100 inside. The adults were promptly arrested. The cops' irritation at the length of the siege and the negative media coverage was highlighted when they flattened a reporter's car with an armored fighting vehicle.

On the morning of the assault, armored vehicles equipped with battering rams began plowing into the wooden walls of the Branch Davidians' complex. People inside shot at the tanks with little effect. As the attack continued, whole sections of the exterior walls of the living quarters were demolished and the roof began to collapse.

Six hours into the assault, a fire started that killed most of those remaining in the compound. Some survivors contended that any exit was made difficult by the cops surrounding and shooting into the compound, cutting off any route of escape.

Remos Avram, a survivor, disputed police claims that the fire was deliberately set by those inside. He said the blaze began



Left: the Branch Davidian complex in Waco, Texas. Right: the same area after the FBI-led assault on April 19, 1993. FBI said Branch Davidians started fire, but hid fact that it used flammable tear gas canisters in attack. More than 80 people died in fire.

when gas lanterns being used inside — because the electricity was cut off — were overturned as the armored vehicles battered down the walls.

In the aftermath of the government-organized killings, the Clinton administration swung into high gear to justify their actions, a stance that remains to this day.

No agents involved in the assault were ever charged with any crime. President William Clinton stated at the time, "We did everything we could to avoid the loss of life. They made the decision to immolate themselves and I feel awful about the children."

William Sessions, then head of the FBI, said he would not have done anything differently. The plan "was well thought out, well executed," he declared.

Reno, who gave the order to assault the compound, stated she took responsibility for the events, but alleged that action was needed immediately because children were being abused by the members of the religious sect. This charge had to be dropped after no evidence was produced to back such claims.

A torrent of lurid stories was unleashed about the beliefs of those inside the compound, especially focusing on Koresh. He

was accused of hatching a mad suicide plan that included setting the deadly fires.

As a result of a lawsuit filed on behalf of families and survivors of the Branch Davidians, the FBI was forced to acknowledge in August what they, along with Reno, had denied for six years — that devices capable of causing a fire had been used the day of the assault. Federal officials used flares during the siege as well.

It has also been confirmed — through heavily censored documents just made public — that members of the U.S. Army's special Delta Force were on hand the day of the raid, supposedly as observers. They also visited the siege site earlier, and Clinton initially acknowledged that the military had been consulted regarding the plans for the final assault. A massive amount of military hardware, including assault vehicles, helicopters, and weaponry was handed over to the FBI for the operation.

Much of the recent discussion has focused on whether or not incendiary devices were used. But it is undisputed that a massive amount of CS gas had been lobbed into the compound to make the area unbearable. Medical examiners consulted for a TV program stated the coroner's reports revealed many died of asphyxiation, or debris that

fell on top of them as the buildings collapsed. They said that while CS gas did not directly kill those inside, it could have incapacitated children, making escape even more difficult.

Renewed calls for investigation

In the wake of the new evidence, different cop agencies, from the FBI to the Texas Rangers, have been shown to have had a hand in obscuring the facts. A judge recently ordered all evidence turned over to him so it could be made available in the pending suit. Largely in anticipation of this, these different agencies are now trying to posture as the guardians of truth.

Michael McNulty and David Hardy, two of the key players in uncovering evidence buried by the cop agencies involved in the Waco siege, are pushing theories of government conspiracy common to rightist groups. McNulty has made two documentaries, one recently released, on the assault. The idea that the whole affair was a conspiracy is popular among right-wing opponents of the government. This also plays into the idea pushed by some rightists that gun ownership is a special target of the government, and action to protect this right will be needed.

Truckers suspend strike in Washington State

BY JEFF POWERS

SEATTLE — Independent owner-operators formally suspended their two-week strike at the Seattle and Tacoma, Washington ports August 31 and returned to work. The truck drivers, who are part of an organizing drive by Teamsters Local 174, say they will decide within 30 days whether to resume the strike against all, some, or none of the trucking companies.

About 1,000 owner-operators work at the two ports. They drive for more than 30 trucking companies and get paid a flat rate for each load they carry. The truckers include many recent immigrants from Russia, the

Ukraine, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Somalia, and Morocco. According to a recently released AFL-CIO study, they earn an average of \$8.50 per hour, out of which they must pay for their trucks, gas and other upkeep on the vehicles, Social Security tax, income tax, and all other expenses.

When things go wrong each operator is responsible. "Last year I figured I made \$48,000," John O'Brien told the *Militant*. "My expenses were \$46,000. I had a bad year — I blew an engine."

Waiting time is an especially critical issue for the truckers. A central demand of their fight is an hourly wage, something the owner-operators in Vancouver, British Columbia, won on August 21 of this year after a one-month strike at their port. The Vancouver drivers now receive Can\$46 per hour (US\$30), which will go up to Can\$50 per hour on March 1, 2001.

Bob Hasegawa, secretary treasurer of Teamsters Local 174, said that union officials decided to end the strike as a good faith gesture. In an article that appeared in the September 1 issue of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Hasegawa is quoted as saying, "We wanted to show the union was willing to work together with the ports to find a long-term solution to better pay and working conditions."

"This was a victory for us, but now we feel it's a good time to stand back and see if the ports will respond to some of our requests in equal good faith. If they don't, we will reconvene the strike," Hasegawa continued.

At a noontime barbecue held by the union August 31, a number of drivers expressed surprise that the strike had been suspended.

"I was not happy with the decision to return to work, and I am not the only one," Kevin Merriott, a driver who works for McMillan Piper told the *Militant* in a phone interview. "I only found out about it from a

phone call from someone who is not a driver. No one from the union talked to me directly.

"We had a very successful rally at Pier 5 and Pier 18 on Monday [August 30]," Merriott continued. "About 150 to 200 people came and we completely shut down the piers for a period of time. It is true that the companies were putting a lot of pressure on their drivers to return to work. It is also true that the 10 to 20 percent increase that some of the companies came up with convinced a number of owner-operators to come back to work, but the strike was having an effect."

The August 30 rally was one of a series of daily events drivers from Teamsters Local 174 organized. Each morning the truckers would meet and send informational pickets to most of the Seattle and Tacoma piers.

On several occasions Local 174 drivers picketed train crews from the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad, often delaying their entry into the piers for hours, as the switchmen and engineers would not cross the Teamsters lines.

"We won some things and the strike was worth it," Ismail Alnouri, a driver from Morocco, told the *Militant*. "I have been back to work for a couple of days and the dispatcher is definitely treating us all better. Before he was always on us asking where we were and what we were doing."

"The trucking companies and the Seattle and Tacoma ports had a meeting one day ago and they agreed that the port employees would stop taking lunch, which always caused an hour delay. Now they will keep two gates open during lunch," Alnouri said.

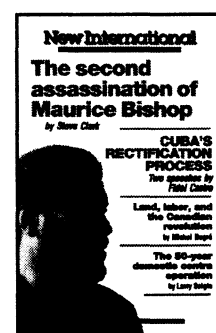
"The company I now work for raised the price per load to \$44 from \$37," he continued. "The ports also promised to find one medical insurance for us that the truck companies will contribute to. This will be a big difference because most drivers now have no health insurance."

From Pathfinder

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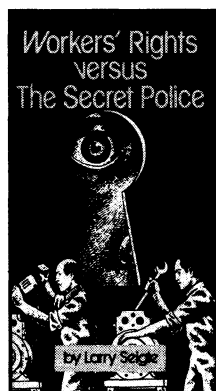
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New Zealand summit backs imperialist force to E. Timor

BY JANET ROTH
AND MICHAEL TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Preparations to send imperialist troops to occupy East Timor became the focus of the annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), held here September 10-13. APEC is a meeting of government and business leaders from 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, dominated by the imperialist governments of the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

U.S. president William Clinton argued in a speech in Washington, D.C., September 9 that the stakes for imperialism are broader than East Timor alone, also having repercussions for stability and imperialist investments in Indonesia and the Asian region as a whole. Indonesia, Clinton said, "is the fourth-largest country in the world and the largest Islamic country.... It has the capacity...to swamp its neighbors in a sea of disorder if it fails." He demanded: "If Indonesia does not end the violence, it must invite — it must invite — the international community to assist in restoring security."

Amid reports of splits in the government and military, and a possible coup against Indonesian president B.J. Habibie, the initial action of the Indonesian regime was to refuse to allow imperialist forces into East Timor and instead impose martial law there. In response, Canberra and Wellington, backed increasingly by Washington and other imperialist governments, stepped up their pressure on the Indonesian regime to allow their troops in.

Clinton suspended all military ties with Indonesia and hinted at economic sanctions. He warned that Indonesia's economy would be "crashed by this if they don't fix it" because foreign investment would collapse, and "the economic consequences for them are going to be very dire." The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) threatened to cut off further lending, with the IMF delaying payment of its next loan of \$450 million.

Following Washington's lead, Wellington also cut its military collaboration, Britain suspended arms sales, and Canberra canceled three joint military exercises with Indonesia. Alongside this, an international occupation force began to be put together.

Occupation force is prepared

While initiated by Canberra, this force faltered until Washington gave it the go-ahead. Then a range of governments indicated their willingness to be part of it, and ultimately Jakarta relented. The Australian government has already committed 2,000 of the 5,000 troops it has on short-notice standby, while Wellington is initially sending 350 troops. Both governments already have warships in waters near East Timor, as have Washington and London.

Washington has indicated it will provide communications and intelligence services and the troops needed to operate and defend them on the ground, and planes to transport troops from other countries. British foreign secretary Robin Cook reported that 250 British army Nepalese Gurkha troops were ready to go within days to East Timor. The Portuguese government, the former colonial power in East Timor, has indicated its participation, as have officials in Canada, France, Sweden, Japan, and Brazil.

Many of Indonesia's Southeast Asian neighbors initially held back from condemning Jakarta. But by the end of the APEC gathering officials of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines had agreed to be part of the imperialist-led occupation.

To rally support behind military intervention, the capitalist politicians are relying on the impact on public opinion of the reign of terror being carried out in East Timor.

East Timorese independence leader Jose Ramos-Horta flew to Auckland to lobby APEC leaders to intervene immediately, without waiting for Indonesian agreement. Daily protest demonstrations outside APEC venues here also focused on demanding the imperialist powers act more urgently against Jakarta.

UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson called for a war crimes tribunal to investigate human rights violations in East Timor. On September 12 the Indonesian government bowed to this pressure and agreed to allow a multinational force to be sent to East Timor, under the auspices of the United Nations.

A day earlier, the *Jakarta Post* reported that Indonesia's main political parties had called on the government to freeze diplomatic ties with Canberra because of "Australia's intervention in Indonesia's domestic affairs," and that "a wave of rallies against Australia" had taken place in Jakarta and other major Indonesian cities. The Indonesian regime has often tried to justify its 24-year occupation of East Timor by portraying it as a nationalist measure in defense of Indonesian sovereignty.

Largest force since Vietnam

The intervention forces assembled by Australia and New Zealand are their largest since the Vietnam war. It marks a new step in the rulers' drive in both countries to reestablish their prerogative, since their defeat in Vietnam, to intervene militarily against working people in the broader region.

A full-page opinion piece in the *New Zealand Herald*, written by *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent David Lague, called for a dramatic increase in Australia's forces and for a more aggressive military stance in Asia. Lague opined, "the survival of Indonesia is far from clear, the threat of war looms in the Taiwan Strait, tension between India and Pakistan could erupt into serious conflict, and belligerent North Ko-



Students in East Timor demonstrate for independence in July 1998. Intransigent struggle has forced crisis for Indonesian regime.

rea remains dangerously unpredictable. It is now a matter of some urgency to rebuild the Australian military."

A debate has been occurring in the New Zealand parliament about the character of its armed forces, with the government accusing opposition parties of "trying to deny New Zealand a role in world affairs."

Driving these steps to use military power is the need for the imperialist rulers to protect their investments in the region — to

ensure payment on the immense debts owed by the semi-colonial countries to international financial institutions, while extracting more profits from the labor of workers and farmers and forcing open the door for imperialist companies to buy up factories, banks, and land.

Janet Roth and Michael Tucker are members of the Service & Food Workers Union in Auckland.

Canberra readies troops under UN flag

Continued from front page

my people." Gusmao and other East Timorese leaders have long called for imperialist intervention under the UN banner.

Prointervention rallies

Following the massive vote by the East Timorese people for independence from Indonesia in a United Nations-organized ballot August 30, the Australian government stepped up its drive to win UN sponsorship—and U.S. backing—for military intervention in the emerging country. Prointervention rallies and actions took place across Australia as sections of the Indonesian army deepened a reign of terror in East Timor following the announcement of the ballot result September 4.

Rightist gangs organized by Indonesian army officers killed many hundreds of independence supporters and herded thousands into camps, including in West Timor, while as many as 300,000 other residents fled into the mountains. Dili, the capital, and other towns and villages, were deserted, smoking ruins within days.

Reports and pictures of the rightist terror in East Timor have dominated news reports in Australia, helping to fuel a prowar atmosphere, accompanied by editorials purporting to give a more sober argument for intervention.

In what the press touted as "dramatic" action, Australian prime minister John Howard sent Royal Australian Air Force Hercules transport aircraft to Dili September 6, 7 and 10 to evacuate several hundred UN personnel and Australian nationals, and a handful of East Timorese. With Jakarta's agreement, 50 Special Air Service (SAS) troops secured Dili airport for the September 10 operation.

At the same time calls for Canberra to immediately send troops to East Timor escalated. Demonstrations and trade union bans against Indonesia were organized in cities across Australia, led by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and the Catholic Church. This campaign included rallies and marches of up to 25,000 in Melbourne, September 10, and 15,000 in Sydney, September 11.

Cardinal Edward Clancy, the head of the Catholic Church in Australia, wrote to Howard,

September 6, "A peacekeeping force should be dispatched without a moment's unnecessary delay... Our Government has to redouble its efforts and leave no stone unturned in its bid to rescue the people of East Timor."

Michael Costa, New South Wales Labor Council secretary, declared the same day, "This is one occasion when the government can't rely on the U.S. to be the world's policeman. We cannot stand and watch innocent people being slaughtered on our doorstep."

Union tops lead anti-Indonesia actions

Rowdy protests organized by officials of the Construction, Forestry, Mining, and Energy Union targeted flights and offices of Garuda, the Indonesian airline, in Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne. On September 10 a crowd of 700 people at Sydney's international terminal blocked departure gates to prevent passengers boarding flights to Indonesia. Following the three-hour protest at Sydney airport, Garuda's downtown Sydney offices were occupied for close to two hours by protesters chanting "Indonesia Out! UN In!" In Melbourne 40 building workers blocked Garuda check-in counters. Flight Centre, a national travel agency, encouraged travelers to boycott Indonesia.

The Maritime Union announced a nationwide ban on all Indonesian exports and imports. Ships left Port Botany, Newcastle, and Brisbane without Indonesia-bound cargo. In Burnie, Tasmania, 30 demonstrators protested the arrival of the ship *Siskin Arrow*. About 5,000 metric tons of paper pulp from Indonesia were left on the wharf.

Officials of the Australian Workers Union pledged that members working at five refineries would refuse to process crude oil from Indonesia—about 30 percent of the total processed in Australia. Officials of the Textile, Clothing, Footwear Union demanded that the Sydney Organizing Committee for the 2000 Olympic Games cancel any Indonesian contracts for garment production.

Major dailies and radio stations promoted the protests. At the September 11 Sydney march, placards and banners demanded "Force Not Talk," "Australian Troops to East Timor Now!," "Indonesia Out! UN In!," "Howard's a Coward," and "Stop the Indone-

sian Butchers."

In addition to trade union contingents, ALP politicians, East Timorese independence and solidarity groups, and representatives of the Catholic Church, the marches and rallies included the Australian Democrats, the Greens, student groups, the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), and the Communist Party of Australia. Max Lane, national coordinator of Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor (ASIET) and a well-known leader of the DSP, was featured on at least three television channels leading the crowd in Sydney from the platform in a "Send troops! Send troops! Send troops!" chant.

The big-business press noted that the same forces that had taken to the streets three decades ago to protest Australian troops in Vietnam, and more recently against wars in Yugoslavia and Iraq, were now calling for troops to be sent to East Timor.

On the same page with extensive coverage of the Sydney protest, the *Sun-Herald* also re-

Continued on Page 12

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

Maoism

VS

Bolshevism

THE 1965 CATASTROPHE IN INDONESIA,
CHINA'S 'CULTURAL REVOLUTION,'
AND THE DISINTEGRATION
OF WORLD STALINISM

By Joseph Hansen

Following the Chinese revolution of 1949, many workers and youth in Asia and elsewhere — inspired by that historic blow to imperialism — were politically misled by the Mao Zedong leadership. These articles, reports, and resolutions by Joseph Hansen explain the communist alternative to Mao's Stalinist course, which in 1965 paved the way for a bloody CIA-backed coup in Indonesia.

\$10:00

Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Jubilant supporters greet Puerto Ricans released from jail

Continued from front page

each spent 16 years in jail. They plan to make Chicago their home and were surrounded by family members on the stage. The other two, Ricardo Jiménez and Luis Rosa, traveled on to Puerto Rico.

All four freed *independentistas* emphasized the importance of the fight for the release of those who remain behind bars.

Alejandrina Torres told the crowd, "We have fought inside and you have fought outside but there are still some in jail so we have more work to do. You can count on me in the campaign to bring them home."

José Torres, Alejandrina's husband, added, "They can jail us but they can't defeat us."

The government refused to offer parole to Carlos Alberto Torres, their son, who is still serving a 78-year sentence.

Lisa Torres, their daughter, said, "Most of my life my mother has been in jail. She has survived abuses in jail and always stayed loyal to the cause, always stayed strong, thanks to her faith and the years of work you've done."

Two prisoners, Oscar López and Antonio Camacho, rejected the government's onerous conditions for parole and remain in jail. Juan Segarra Palmer signed an offer that will make him eligible for release in five years instead of serving a longer term. Haydée Beltrán, who is serving a life sentence, is pursuing parole separately. She and José Solís, who was framed up and sentenced to 51 months in jail last July, were not covered by President William Clinton's conditional release offer.

Countercampaign against the prisoners

Clinton's August 11 "clemency" offer followed a years-long campaign for the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners, most of whom have been jailed since the early 1980s on sentences ranging between 35 and 105 years in prison. In the month since Clinton's announcement, even larger numbers of supporters of the prisoners have marched in the U.S. and Puerto Rico calling for their unconditional release.

On the other side there has been a chorus of police and prison officials, capitalist politicians, and media editorials joining in a countercampaign, branding the independence fighters as criminals and terrorists and calling for the parole offer to be rescinded.

On September 8, the day after 12 prisoners announced they would accept the offer and official steps were begun authorizing release, Democratic mayor of Chicago Richard Daley called a press conference to condemn the release and to publicly call on the FBI to subject the ex-prisoners to close surveillance.

veillance.

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a resolution of censure against President Clinton's decision to grant clemency. On the House floor September 9, Republican Whip Tom DeLay accused the president of "coddling terrorists." Presidential contender William Bradley and other Democratic Party politicians also condemned Clinton's move.

The Senate passed a similar motion denouncing the White House by a vote of 95 to 2 September 14. That day Rep. Daniel Burton, chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, issued subpoenas for several Clinton administration officials and FBI personnel to answer questions about the parole offer.

Committees of civil liberties lawyers have been formed in the United States and Puerto Rico to help protect the ex-prisoners against any FBI attempts to use alleged violations of parole as a pretext to send them back to jail.

Washington's history of violence

At the rally, José López, director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, introduced and thanked the members of the clergy, politicians, and political activists who had played a part in the fight to bring the prisoners home. In reference to the stream of big-business press coverage labeling them as terrorists, he countered, "There has been a long history of violence against the Puerto Rican independence movement: the 1898 U.S. invasion, the 1937 massacre at Ponce, the 1950 bombardment, the [1978] Cerro Maravilla murders, and Cointelpro."

Josefina Rodríguez, mother of newly released prisoners Ida Luz Rodríguez and Alicia Rodríguez, had recently participated in a march of tens of thousands in Puerto Rico calling for unconditional release of the prisoners.

"The most important task is to raise consciousness that the U.S. has a colony called Puerto Rico," she said. "They ought to be free, to be decolonized, and then there would be no need for prisoners."

Michelle Morales-Gaunt, a teacher at the Puerto Rican cultural center, expressed the view of many at the rally: "Even though four are still in prison and even though it's conditional, it's still a victory."

Irma Romero, a longtime activist in the Puerto Rican community, pointed to the big demonstrations in Puerto Rico against the U.S. naval occupation and bombardment of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques as one of the reasons for Clinton's move. "The fight against the Navy in Vieques and that of the prisoners came together," she said.



Militant/Barbara Bowman

Carmen Valentín, one of the 11 Puerto Rican patriots released from prison after 19 years of incarceration, addresses supporters at the gate of the Federal Corrections Institute in Dublin, California, as she walks out of jail September 10.

Marvin García, director of an alternative Puerto Rican high school, spoke about the conditions the prisoners have faced while in jail — for Oscar López Rivera lockdowns for 23 and a half hours a day. Other prisoners have been subjected to degrading body searches, assaults, isolation, lack of treatment for serious ailments, and being kept far from their families.

Melanie Zimmer, an airline worker who attended the rally, said she felt she was seeing history being made. Afterwards, when she went in on the night shift, she told her co-workers, "This is a great day — some fighters got released." She said some argued what they had read in the press, that these were criminals. "I told them that the police lie, that these are fighters for a cause, for their country against colonialism, that their release is a win for all working people," she said.

Pattie Thompson is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Cappy Kidd is a member of the United Auto Workers. Betsey Stone contributed to this article.



BY ROSE ANA BERBEO

NEW YORK — The release of 11 of the 17 Puerto Rican political prisoners has been a big discussion among many working people in this city where more than 1 million Puerto Ricans live, most of them workers.

Dozens of people gathered at John F. Kennedy Airport at midnight September 10 to greet and cheer Ida Luz and Alicia Rodríguez, who came from San Francisco en route to Puerto Rico.

The next day several hundred people marched through the largely Puerto Rican neighborhood known as "El Barrio" on Manhattan's upper east side to celebrate the prisoners' release. A number of people at the march were also participating in activities to demand the release of framed-up Black rights activist Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Esperanza Martell, a leader of Pro-Libertad, which has campaigned for years for the liberation of the prisoners, told those at the rally that while 11 of the Puerto Rican independence advocates were freed, there are still prisoners left in jail. She said a protest would be held at the United Nations on September 23, the anniversary of El Grito de Lares, when Puerto Ricans revolted for their independence against Spain in 1868.

Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, also addressed the rally. Both the political prisoners and the people of Vieques, he said, are "prisoners of colonialism." In Vieques, Guadalupe said, "We live under the constant threat of being the victim of a U.S. bomb. It's a joke for them to say our prisoners are terrorists. They are the terrorists in Vieques."

Guadalupe and other activists from Vieques were visiting New York at the invitation of a group of New York City Council members who held public hearings on September 11 and 13 on the question of the U.S. Navy in Vieques. The council discussed a resolution not yet voted on, calling on the

U.S. Navy to "vacate its training facility" on Vieques.

Several hundred people attended an ecumenical service for "peace and justice in Vieques" held at St. Cecilia's church September 12, the birthday of Pedro Albizu Campos, the central leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party and the independence movement for decades. The keynote speakers were Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson and the archbishop of San Juan, Roberto González.

Dozens of Puerto Rican flags waved in the pews at every mention of U.S. colonialism. Jackson, voicing support for Puerto Rico's right to self-determination, defended Washington's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia as a supposedly similar cause.

Mike Maldonado, a meatpacker from Brooklyn and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers attended the September 11 rally with a coworker. He told the *Militant* he thought the release of the 11 prisoners "was due."

"I think it was a real frame-up by the FBI," he said. "Actually these people are not terrorists, they are struggling for the freedom of Puerto Rico."

Maldonado, who has supported independence for Puerto Rico for more than 30 years, said he was glad to see the large number of young people taking part in the march. "We've got to make the young people aware of what's going on. Any country in the world, no matter how small, should be free."

Republican and Democratic politicians, cops, and the big-business media have waged a propaganda campaign to label the Puerto Rican independentistas as "terrorists."

Democratic senatorial hopeful Hillary Clinton jumped into the "antiterrorist" campaign by publicly opposing the White House parole decree. Her move backfired, however, as she came under fire both by Republican opponents of the prisoners as well as Democratic politicians who claim to speak for Puerto Ricans in New York.

"Party Time — Freed FALNers celebrate but New Yorkers fume" was the headline of the September 11 issue of the right-wing daily *New York Post*. In the same issue, the *Post* ran an editorial calling it "immoral" that U.S. Marines are being deployed without training in Vieques, adding that "Vieques has been used for this purpose for decades. And there's enough unexploded ordnance buried on the range to render it unusable for any other purpose."

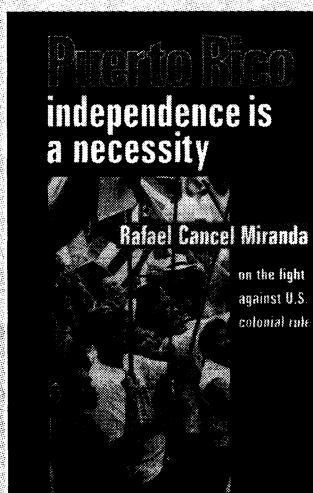
A column in the August 25 *Daily News* by New York City cop Anthony Senft who was injured in a bombing in 1982, called the Puerto Rican prisoners "ruthless, cold-hearted bombers." He said that "Clinton's clemency offer is a slap in the face of law-abiding Americans," especially because "Americans ... are experiencing a wave of terrorism in workplaces, schools and even day care centers."

Activists from Pro-Libertad and the Puerto Rico Collective, a pro-independence group, held a press conference September 7 to protest the slanderous nature of the big-business press coverage.

Rose Ana Berbeo is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers.

From Pathfinder

Puerto Rico Independence Is A Necessity



Interviews with Rafael Cancel Miranda
Cancel Miranda — one of the 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 the 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

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Fighters get hero's welcome in Puerto Rico

BY RON RICHARDS

CAROLINA, Puerto Rico — For 48 hours, the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport was the site of a festive ceremony to welcome the *independentistas* just released from prison in the United States. Nine of the former political prisoners were greeted here September 10–12. Two others have decided to live in Chicago.

People turned out on short notice. Within hours of the announcement that Edwin Cortés would arrive the evening of September 10, hundreds of people had gathered to await his arrival.

Young people carried portraits of the prisoners mounted on 10-foot poles. Throughout the evening and the next day the youth carrying the posters changed, but they were always among the most active as they marched and danced around the crowd. The portraits had been carried in the August 29 march of thousands in San Juan demanding the unconditional release of the prisoners.

There were more than 500 people present when Cortés emerged after 11 p.m. Those in attendance included prominent independence supporters Lolita Lebrón, Jorge Farinacci, and Hilton Fernández. Cortés climbed onto an improvised stage to give brief remarks. He drew applause when he thanked Luis Nieves, one of the central leaders of the campaign to free the prisoners, and even more cheers when he called on the U.S. Navy to leave Vieques.

The next morning the crowds gathered hours before any of the former prisoners appeared. They set up camp with folding chairs and coolers waiting to welcome home Adolfo Matos, Carmen Valentín, Dylica Pagán, Ida Luz Rodríguez, Alicia Rodríguez, and Elizam Escobar as they arrived throughout the day. Ricardo Jiménez and Luis Rosa arrived the next afternoon, September 12.

The arrivals were purposely staggered to avoid charges of violating the parole conditions, which include a prohibition on associating with others convicted of felonies. Formal negotiations over the exact nature of these conditions will begin in a few days.

Some 40 residents of the town of Lajas came



Militant/Ron Richards

Hundreds of people gathered at the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in Puerto Rico over September 10–12 to welcome *independentistas* just released from U.S. jails.

to welcome Matos on a bus provided by the municipal government.

Antonio Torres and Laura Rivera were among the members of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) who came from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus. "It's part of our duty" to be here, explained Rivera. She commented that there is a changing attitude and that youth are more open than before to supporting independence for Puerto Rico.

Both Rivera and Torres took part in the actions last year during the general strike in opposition to the sale by the government of the telephone company to the U.S.-based company GTE. "We did not succeed in stopping the sale," said Rivera, "but we gained for the people — a people more united."

It was a "test of fire," added Torres.

Responding to the widespread argument that a connection to the United States is needed to maintain the standard of living in Puerto Rico, Torres said that an independent Puerto Rico would have trade with countries all over the world. It is up to Puerto Rico who to trade

with, he said.

At this point Eyerí Cruz, a first-year student at Río Piedras and a FUPI member, joined the discussion. He said Washington's trade laws are restrictive and create dependency. We need "to remove this dependency," he insisted.

FUPI currently has chapters on eight campuses, including at private universities where it has not traditionally existed. Prior to the current upsurge in the independence movement, FUPI had shrunk to only one chapter.

Rebecca Vázquez, 22, from the Mayagüez chapter of FUPI, said the organization has staged a protest against the U.S. Army's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at the Río Piedras campus and is planning a protest in Mayagüez. Members of her chapter had joined with the labor movement not only around the sale of the phone company but the privatizations of hospitals as well, Vázquez said.

In discussions, placards, and the news media there has been a broad discussion of the definition of terrorist. A sign at the airport

action read in English, "U.S. bombs Puerto Rico with uranium and napalm, who is the terrorist?" One chant in Spanish was, "NATO forces are the real terrorists."

A column by J.M. García Passalacqua in the *San Juan Star* was headlined, "Why the Puerto Rican 16 are not terrorists." García is not a supporter of complete independence but rather supports a "compact of free association" where Puerto Rico would be formally independent but would agree in advance to accept U.S. domination in certain areas such as military and economic policy.

García wrote about the murder of two *independentistas* by the police at Cerro Maravilla in 1978. He said Americans should learn how the FBI's COINTELPRO (counter-intelligence program) operation was used to illegally attack the independence movement. He noted that the police have files on 175,000 people solely for their political views.

At 4:15 p.m. September 11 Elizam Escobar stepped out of the terminal building at the Muñoz airport and spoke. First he mentioned his comrades who are still in jail. Then he called for the U.S. Navy to leave Vieques.

"Our collective decision" to take the opportunity to walk out of prison, despite Clinton's onerous conditions, "was the best for the independence struggle," Escobar said.

He pointed out that even the Israeli regime released 200 Palestinian prisoners with less conditions than the Puerto Ricans. He also mentioned that the night before he had received a warm welcome in Chicago not only from Puerto Ricans living in that city but Mexicans and North Americans as well.

Within days of their release, the nine *independentistas* had their first meeting with parole officers. Most of them then announced they would attend the September 23 *Grito de Lares*, a pro-independence celebration held in the town of Lares. They said they received explicit agreement from parole officials that they will not be prevented from attending, or even addressing, the event.

Escobar said he would also visit Vieques in support of the fight to get the U.S. Navy out.

Titan Tire strikers rally in Natchez, Mississippi

Continued from front page
advertised the rally.

The upbeat and confident mood of the strikers set the tone for the day's events. Unionists spent several hours during the hot afternoon sharing experiences and discussing how to strengthen their struggles. After listening to speeches the crowd marched to the factory for a peaceful protest. At the factory entrance there was chanting and a few brief speeches.

Workers chanted "union, union," and "Contract, contract," and when it became clear that the gates to the plant were unlocked several hundred workers took an impromptu tour of the plant grounds, marching onto the parking lot and into the plant for a few minutes chanting along the way. Local police arrived to ask the pickets to leave plant grounds. Everyone complied, moving back to the street on the other side of the gates.

In the days after, eight workers were arrested on trespassing charges, including the vice-president of the local, Harry Gaylor. The company and local cops and courts have joined forces to portray the striking unionists as having committed dangerous or threatening acts. But the comments of Maurice Taylor, Jr., the president and chief executive officer of Titan International, and the editorial in the local daily *Natchez Democrat* clarified that one of their biggest objections was to the large number of other workers who came out in solidarity with the Titan strikers.

The September 12 *Natchez Democrat* described the protest at the factory as a "mob scene.... And although no one with the union will ever admit it, we fear that many of the instigators at Saturday's fiasco weren't even locals." Under the headline "Union charges plant" the front-page article reported emotively that "Holding union signs high, members and supporters crossed the parking lot, entered the plant and began yelling at plant workers until police convinced the protesters to leave."

On Monday Police Chief William Huff obtained 10 arrest warrants and threatened more, citing video footage of the events in his allegations that protesters trespassed on company

property. The next day Natchez police arrested eight Local 303 members. Titan boss Taylor slandered the unionists as "a bunch of thugs... [who] aren't even from Mississippi."

Attendance at the rally was a roll call of USWA members engaged in battles at a number of plants across the country. Members of Local 164 in Des Moines, also on strike against Titan Tire, organized a bus for the three-day round trip to join the rally. In May of this year they marked the first anniversary of their strike with a similar event.

Local 850 members traveled to the rally by bus from Charlotte, North Carolina. On the weekend of September 18–19 they will mark one year on strike against Continental General Tire. Two weeks ago they led the first Labor Day parade in the town. "We were making history!" said Local 850 member John Froneberger.

Several of the Steelworkers locked out by Kaiser Aluminum in Washington State, Ohio, and Louisiana were also present. Whether locked out like the Kaiser workers, or on strike like the Titan Tire workers, these unionists have said "enough and no more" to forced overtime and other attacks by the bosses on benefits, wages, and working conditions.

On Sept. 15, 1998, the 190 USWA members at the Natchez Titan Tire factory struck against the speed-up implemented in the plant during the previous year. "It was slavery," said Local 303 striker Willie Evans. Workers regularly put in 12-hour days and seven-day weeks, he explained. Titan Tire manufactures tires for agricultural, military, and other large-scale vehicles.

Like other the Titan strikers, Evans points an accusing finger at Taylor. "In 1997 [Taylor] laid off the workforce of over 300 workers. He rehired 190 to put out the same production



Militant/Mary Ann Schmidt

Some 300 Titan Tire strikers and supporters rally in Natchez.

as before. 'You are gonna operate in this plant like bees,' he told us — that shows what he thinks about us!"

Workers were typically told to do several jobs simultaneously, said Evans, "and there were safety problems, like the lack of maintenance of equipment." Despite his protests, Evans himself was forced to drive a forklift with a defective tire, until the jolting ride damaged his back.

Of the 190 Steelworkers who went on strike one year ago, fewer than 30 have crossed the picket line. "I count that as a major plus," said Evans, who helps maintain a 24-hour picket outside the factory. Some Local 303 members have taken other jobs, he said, including at a large Fruit Of The Loom garment factory in the nearby town of Vidalia.

Titan Tire plant employees from Clinton, Tennessee, and Montevideo, Uruguay, attended the rally to bring solidarity. Workers at the Titan plant in Montevideo had come across the strike when they were sent to the company's

plant in Des Moines in May 1998. They were told they would teach Spanish-speaking workers their jobs, Ruben Nieves told the *Militant*.

When the Uruguayan workers asked about the pickets outside, they were told that the strikers were making trouble. After the Uruguayan unionists found out what was really happening, they pledged their support, and are now working with the International Titan Council, formed in response.

Workers at the Titan plant in Clinton are fighting to organize into the USWA there. They "put out an underground newsletter" said one worker, who asked that his name not be used. The union has appealed the results of a recent ballot which it narrowly lost. "They have fired a lot of people for trying to start a union" said the worker, a member of the committee that has spearheaded the unionization attempts.

The featured speakers at the rally were the Democratic Party candidates for governor and lieutenant governor of the state of Mississippi. Several USWA officials also spoke.

John Peno, president of Local 164 in Des Moines, raised cheers when he said "you defeated Morry Taylor. Morry tried to divide us. He tried to split your union." Taylor is in the process of selling Titan Tire to the Carlisle Companies, Inc., and many workers celebrate the humbling of this aggressively antiunion and rightist figure.

"I say wholeheartedly that he has been defeated," Willie Evans told the *Militant*.

The day's events finished with a jambalaya cookout furnished by USWA Local 5702, locked out from the Kaiser plant in nearby Gramercy, Louisiana.

Susan LaMont is a member of the USWA in Birmingham, Alabama.

Boeing workers ratify contract after boss drops some demands

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE, Washington — Production workers at Boeing's commercial airplane factories ratified a new three-year contract September 1. Eighty-six percent of the 31,000 workers who voted in Washington, Oregon, and Kansas approved the deal.

Boeing avoided a likely strike by deciding at the last minute to withdraw two major takeaway proposals that would have provoked rejection of their "last and final offer." They dropped proposals for a "flexible" workweek, which would have allowed Boeing to run its factories on Saturday and Sunday without paying overtime for those days. The company also withdrew its proposal to begin charging workers for their company-paid medical and dental insurance programs. A separate "letter of understanding," however, says that if the price of medical coverage rises above a certain number in the next year, Boeing can start charging individual workers \$10 per month, \$20 for a couple, and \$30 for a family for medical insurance.

In the three days leading up to the negotiating deadline, workers had begun showing their anger at the company's takeaway proposals. Union members marched through the factories on their coffee breaks, chanting "Union Power!" and "No Way, 7 Day." Others began synchronized riveting, creating a noisy din throughout the factories. In Everett, 300 machinists in union T-shirts demonstratively turned their backs at a nationally televised ceremony for Boeing's roll-out of a new airliner, the 767-400ER.

John Heft, an assembler at Renton with three years at Boeing, voted for the contract because it "wasn't all that bad." But, he added, if Boeing hadn't withdrawn these takeaway proposals, "this place would have come unglued." The contract also included small wage increases of 4% for the first year, 4% for the second, and 3% for the third, in addition to cost-of-living adjustments. Starting wages, however, remain frozen at their 1992 levels, thus further widening the large wage gap between future new hires and the existing workforce.

To further induce a "Yes" vote, Boeing offered a 10 percent ratification bonus, which the company estimated would aver-

age \$4,400 per worker before taxes. Basic pension benefits were raised by only \$10 to \$50 per year of service for future retirees, far short of the union's original demands.

David Ice, who has worked 22 years for Boeing, voted against the contract because he thought the retirement benefits were too meager. "My main concern is for those retirees... It's heartless that the company just doesn't care," he said.

Like many workers interviewed by the *Militant*, Jim Thoma, a Renton assembler with 13 years on the job, thought the contract was "a fair deal." "The sign-on bonus had a little influence on me, too," Thoma added. Others who voted for the contract said it was the best they could get right now.

Irene, however, who didn't want her last name used, voted against the contract because she thought workers could have done better. She also turned it down because of the many joint "union-management committees" established in the contract. The union, the Renton worker said, "shouldn't be on joint committees, like Lean Manufacturing. These committees help cut union jobs."

The company and union officials praised the agreement. William Johnson, President of IAM District 751, which represents production workers in the Puget Sound region, said, "That's the best contract in aerospace, period. By far." The union negotiating committee had recommended a yes vote.

The company campaigned for a yes vote. It ran double-page open letter ads in major newspapers in the Seattle area; Portland, Oregon; Wichita, Kansas; and Spokane, Washington in the days leading up to the vote, calling the contract "more than fair." The "open letter" from Boeing chairman Philip Condit was also reprinted by the company and distributed on the job. The company also ran ads on all the major radio shows prior to the vote. In some crew meetings supervisors campaigned for a yes vote.

Boeing spokesman Peter Conte said the most significant outcome was that Boeing "avoided a strike." The aerospace giant feared a repeat of the 69-day Machinists' strike in 1995, which shut production down and forced Boeing to shelve its takeaway plans then. Boeing is just emerging from production and financial problems, and is in a dogfight with its main competitor, Airbus. A strike, they judged, could undercut their competitive edge at this time.

While union and company officials praised the agreement, on the shop floor the day after the vote, "no one was turning cartwheels," as Heft put it.

A major issue in the negotiations was subcontracting. Under the new agreement, a joint union-management committee will review outsourcing plans, and the company will give union officials 180 days notice of plans to send work to out-



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

IAM members rally at Boeing in Seattle August 22 to oppose concession demands.

side companies. Boeing has final say on subcontracting decisions, however, but promised in the new contract that "no employee will be laid off as a direct result of subcontracting or offloading work." A variety of exceptions to this promise are listed in the new contract, including layoffs due to economic downturn and mergers. Some workers voted against the contract because it offered no job security. Beverly Wickham with 18 years at Boeing said, "I don't want any more money. I just want a job."

Union tops' class collaboration

With the accord in hand, Richard Schneider, the union's chief negotiator said that the union now plans to throw its full support behind Boeing chairman Phil Condit. "We have been invited onto a great journey by Phil Condit," said Schneider, "To take this company in partnership into a new century. We have accepted that invitation." Union officials refer to Condit as "a miracle" for his role in fashioning a contract that they could recommend.

Two days after the contract was approved, the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* published an interview with Condit. The front-page interview was titled "Condit revisits flexible workweek." In it, he continued to press for alternative workweek schedules: "I think we can work with the union to say, 'OK, Let's try a couple ways; let's experiment.'" The new contract includes a "letter of under-

standing" (LOU) which allows Boeing to try out a flexible workweek on a case by case basis, if IAM officials agree to them. This interview upset quite a few workers in the plants, who had thought that Boeing would really drop the issue. IAM officials immediately issued a statement opposing any pilot program along those lines.

In the interview, Condit also tried to whip up "America First" attitudes and rally workers behind "our company" by hammering at the need to beat Airbus, Boeing's main competitor for commercial aircraft sales. "There are two competitors. It's us and them. If we don't get the orders, they do. If we fail to win orders, if we are not competitive with Airbus, the work here declines."

With the signing of the contract, Condit reiterated the company's goal of speedup: "If we don't work together and don't increase our productivity, everybody is going to suffer."

The week the contract was approved, 787 more IAM workers in the Puget Sound area were given a 60-day notice of layoff. That made a total of 11,586 IAM members who had been either laid off or given notice of layoff in the last year. Regardless of the new contract or Boeing's "promises," Boeing plans to eliminate thousands of more jobs over the next six months in its drive to increase profitability and beat competition.

Scott Breen is a member of the IAM at Boeing.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sat.-Sun., October 2-3

One Year Anniversary Rallies to Back Locked-out Kaiser Aluminum Workers
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Rally 2 p.m. October 2 at Trentwood Local Union, 14015 E. Trent Ave

For more information, visit www.USWA329.org

NEWARK, OHIO

Rally 11 a.m. October 3 at Frontier Ranch on York Rd, 10 miles west of Newark

For more information call:

(740) 928-4494 or (614) 888-6784

Sat., October 2

The Struggle for Justice Continues: Second Anniversary of Steelworkers Lockout in Pueblo, Colorado

11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Bessemer Park, 800 W. Northern Ave., Pueblo

For more information call: (710) 566-9056.

Sat., October 16

March for Immigrants' Rights

Washington, D.C. — Assemble

10 a.m. at Malcolm X Park. For more information call: (212) 473-3936 or 633-7108.

Sat., October 16

Rally and March for Justice for Max Antoine

Irvington, New Jersey — Join protest at noon to demand justice for Max Antoine, brutally beaten by cops. At Irvington Police Station, 1 Civic Plaza. For more information call: (201) 487-1531.

US Airways workers discuss possible strike

BY NANCY COLE

PHILADELPHIA — Midway through a "30-day cooling-off period," negotiations resumed September 13 for three days between US Airways and the International Association of Machinists (IAM), representing 7,000 mechanics and cleaners. These IAM members have been working under an expired contract for four years. Having rejected a contract offer in July, the US Airways workers are legally free to strike if no tentative agreement is reached by September 26.

The last time maintenance workers struck the company, for four days in 1992, fleet service workers (the ramp and catering jobs) were nonunion, and flight attendants were served with a

court order to cross the picket lines.

This time is a different situation. Fleet service workers are now members of the IAM and approved their first contract this year, which specifically grants them the right to honor any strike picket line at the airline. In Philadelphia, a letter from two shop stewards from the ramp distributed to maintenance workers as well as to fleet service workers, pledges "the full, unwavering support of Fleet Service Agents across the country," if there is a strike.

"Our support for these workers will be invaluable to their efforts, and will contribute to a swift conclusion of this fight," the letter continues. It concludes, "This will require sacrifice on our part, but it will make us a stronger union, and show the company that when a war is on, we know who our allies are, and who the enemy is."

The Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) at US Airways reports on its website that after they were ordered to cross the IAM

picket lines in 1992, the issue of whether their contract permitted such a "sympathy strike" was taken to arbitration. Long after the strike ended, an arbiter ruled their contract does not prohibit them from honoring picket lines of other union groups at US Airways, as the company had argued.

The AFA poses the question, "Why would we strike in sympathy with the IAM?" and answers, "The IAM is seeking a fair contract, just like we are."

A strike may be the only way, the flight attendants' union argues. "For IAM's strike to be effective, the company needs to see that the workforce stands united in our fight for a better working life." The AFA has scheduled membership meetings in seven cities as the IAM strike deadline nears, to discuss whether they will vote to honor the picket lines.

Nancy Cole is a member of IAM Local 1776 at US Airways in Philadelphia.

Miners and retirees defend health benefits

Continued from front page

posed to shore up depleted funds needed to cover coal miners' lifetime health benefits. The Coal Act, also known as the so-called Rockefeller bill, was signed into law by former President George Bush in 1992.

Following the meeting in Bessemer, which drew some 1,700 retired miners, another 1,400 attended a meeting in Charleston, West Virginia, on September 8, and 1,200 retired miners went to a meeting in Evansville, Indiana. The final meeting was attended by miners and retirees from the western coalfields in Price, Utah.

The Coal Act requires all companies that ever signed a UMWA contract — reaching back 30 years — to pay lifetime health benefits to their retirees. Since passage of the 1992 legislation, there have been more than 60 challenges to it in court by the coal companies.

The UMWA maintains the Combined Benefit Fund (CBF), which was established under the Coal Act and provides benefits for about 70,000 retired miners and their families. It is the largest of five pension and benefit funds run by the union. About 23,000 people in West Virginia and 15,500 in Pennsylvania rely on the CBF, and smaller numbers in 18 other states, according to union figures. Widows of miners make up a large percentage, and the average age is about 78 years.

The CBF is funded by some 300 coal operatives, both current and former coal bosses, and pays out an estimated \$31 million a month. Today the fund is in the red nearly \$50 million, and over the next five years the deficit is projected to be in excess of \$250 million. According to a union fact sheet, "Unless more money is made available, the beneficiaries will be faced with disastrous benefit cuts that will imperil their health."

This crisis was brought home by a handout given to miners as they entered the Uniontown meeting. It said in part, "Some hospitals have been aggressive in sending balance bills to beneficiaries, using collection agencies and taking beneficiaries to court."

Courts rule against miners' benefits

There have been three important court rulings against the union. In 1995, an Alabama court upheld a claim by coal companies who challenged the annual health care premiums they were required to pay each of their retirees. The court ruled in their favor and reduced all coal operators' contributions by almost 10 percent. In another ruling in 1999, the same Alabama court ordered the CBF to return \$40 million in contributions to the coal bosses.

The biggest blow came in 1998 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Eastern Enterprises, one of the so-called "reach back" companies, was not required to make premium payments to the CBF. The company argued it had stopped its mining business in 1966 and was thus not liable. Challenging this assertion, the union said Eastern transferred coal operations to a subsidiary, Eastern Associated Coal Corp., until it was sold off in 1987. This decision by the highest court in the country was hailed as a "tremendous victory" by the coal bosses. Until this decision, Eastern had been responsible for providing health benefits to 1,500 retired coal miners and their wives.

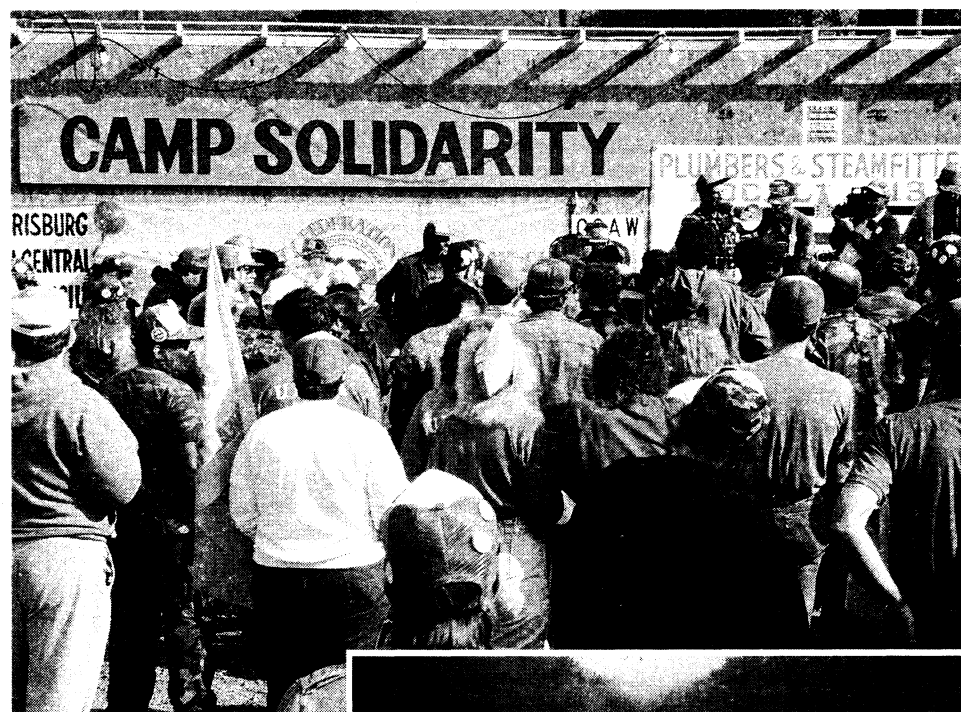
Eastern is now a subsidiary of Peabody Coal Group of St. Louis, the largest coal producer in the United States. Eastern was hit by a two-day wildcat strike in 1995.

The U.S. Supreme Court said the Coal Act violated the fifth amendment's ban on "taking" private property for public use without paying just compensation. "Needless to say, this ruling opened the floodgates for other operators who left the coal industry before 1974 to contest their payments to the CBF," said a Sept. 2, 1999, UMWA press release. One such company is the steel giant LTV, which has a \$145 million liability.

"Attitudes never change," said retired miner Henry Knight, who is recovering from open-heart surgery. "They tried to take this away from us since the day it was created." Knight, who worked in the mines for 38 years, is afraid he will lose his coverage. His view was echoed by many retired miners at the Uniontown meeting.

Health care won in 1946 strike

Speaking in front of a large banner, "Keep the Promise, Save the Coal Act," UMWA president Cecil Roberts gave the keynote address. Emphasizing that miners were "promised cradle to grave health coverage" by former president Harry Truman in 1946 for returning to work after a strike, Roberts said miners need "to make the government keep their prom-



Top: Militant/Kipp Dawson
Photo at right shows conditions that fueled 1946 miners strike, which won health care for miners and families. An explosion in Strait Creek Coal Co. mine in Pineville, Kentucky, in January 1946 trapped 31 workers underground. Arrow points to mine entrance where family and friends gathered. In foreground is housing typical of mining towns in the region. Defending lifetime health care has been a key issue in UMWA strikes over last 10 years. Above, unionists from Pennsylvania rally with Pittston coal strikers at Camp Solidarity, October 1989.



ise." During his presentation, Roberts asked how many miners in the audience participated in the 1946 strike. A wave of hands shot up in response. Many of the miners started working in the mines in their teens, some putting in 40 or 50 years.

These veteran miners knew first hand what the conditions were like in the 1940s — a time when, according to the Bureau of Mines, each year mining accidents led to an average of 1,120 fatalities and 50,300 injuries. It was a time when there was no federal government regulation of health and safety in the mines. Medical facilities were terribly inadequate. Miners received minimal health coverage, and the sanitary conditions were the worst in the nation. It was a time of the company doctor, the company store, and the company house.

When coal bosses refused to fund union health-care benefits in 1946, the union carried out a nationwide strike. After declaring a government takeover of the mines, Truman ordered the miners back to work. They refused until Truman backed down and agreed to endorse the miners' demand for lifetime health benefits. "You can't dig coal with bayonets" was a common refrain of miners at that time. It took another two years of struggle, including a strike in 1948, before the pension plan was implemented. It was only then that the first miner received a check from the new health and welfare fund.

Included in the 1946 UMWA contract was the demand that the government make a study of health conditions in the coalfield communities. The U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine, headed by Rear Admiral Joel Boone, was assigned to conduct the study. The "Boone Report" was published in 1947, and its findings shocked people across the country.

Once word got out that the miners had won health benefits, miners who had been severely injured in mine accidents wrote letters asking for help from the new UMWA Welfare and Retirement Fund. As a result, thousands of debilitated miners were taken to hospitals throughout the country. Many of these miners had not received medical care for up to 20 years and were bedridden under the care of friends and family. According to one government report, "Ninety-seven thousand disabled miners had received medical and rehabilitative help through this program by the end of 1955. Of those, almost 23,000 were able to reenter the work force — some returned to mining and other forms of employment."

Workers throughout coalfields affected

The health-care system miners have fought for and defended since 1946 is widely supported in the coalfields. Having a UMWA

health card is a matter of pride. It directly affects coal miners' families, retired miners, and the larger coal mining community. In addition, it has benefited nonunion miners who have, in many cases, a health plan similar to that of the UMWA. And medical facilities in many rural areas would be unable to continue without the funds for services covered under the UMWA health plan.

"Neglect" was the word that best summarized the social conditions of the coalfields through the 1940s. For many years the only medical care available was provided by the company doctor. There was a complete lack of specialized care, medical equipment, and medical facilities. Improved health care came about largely because of the efforts of rank and file miners and their union.

One situation miners took direct initiative to change was the lack of health clinics near underground portals. Too often a miner was injured underground, and after being brought to the surface lay for hours before receiving treatment. Miners stood by waiting helplessly, not being able to help their comrade. With most mines in rural areas, hospitals were often long distances away.

This unacceptable situation led miners in some coalfield communities to lead fund-raising efforts — countless rummage sales, hot

dog stands, and bingo games — to lay the foundations for building health facilities near the mines. In addition, many miners took out personal loans and were successful, in many cases, in getting local government and federal loans.

Roberts pointed to the Pittston strike as a key turning point. Anyone who questions the union's resolve on this issue should review the union's strike against Pittston Coal Group, which refused to pay into the health and benefits fund, said Roberts. In 1989-90, some 1,900 UMWA members fought an 11-month strike battle against Pittston. Over the course of the strike another 40,000 UMWA members throughout the coalfields walked out in support for up to six weeks. More than 50,000 supporters from across the country and around the world visited the union's strike center, Camp Solidarity, in southwest Virginia. Although the union pushed Pittston back with their strike victory, the strike has not stemmed

the continued onslaught by the coal bosses since then.

The union president urged UMWA retirees to lobby Congress for a union plan that calls for dipping into a federal trust plan — meant to pay for abandoned strip mines cleanup — to shore up the health care system. In essence, this would involve shifting about \$240 million in interest to the CBF. The union also proposes to concede to the "reachback employers" a "10 percent greater reduction differential than signatory employers." Roberts also

raised the idea for a coal miners' march and protest in Washington, D.C., although nothing concrete was proposed.

Many of the unfolding union fights, as well as recent strikers, have centered around the issue of health care and pensions. For example, the four-month UMWA strike by 350 miners in 1998 against Freeman United Coal Co. in Illinois approved a contract with a health plan that allows Freeman to contribute directly to the miners who then can purchase their own health plan. This means that the company no longer contributes to the UMWA's national health-care fund for future retirees.

Health care was also a central issue in UMWA strikes at the Jeddo Coal Co. in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, and the Deserado mine in Rangely, Colorado, that both ended earlier this year.

Many of the miners who came to the Uniontown meeting realize that a fight will need to be organized to keep their benefits. Although older in age, the determination of many of the retired miners is striking. Suffering from black lung, William Maroney, who worked 51 years at Republic Steel mine, was one of these miners. With the help of a walker and pulling an oxygen tank on wheels, the 82-year-old worker said he will be there if there is a fight. "It won't be the first time," he said.

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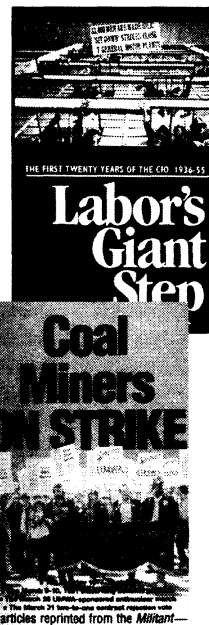
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Australian gov't set to intervene in East Timor

Continued from Page 7

ported that the Ausi Freedom Scouts, an ultra-rightist paramilitary group, was advertising for "patriotic Australians" to join them in East Timor "to stop the mutilation and massacre of unarmed East Timorese."

Plans to build up Australian military

In the atmosphere of war hysteria that was whipped up in the days before the APEC summit in Auckland, New Zealand, September 10-13, numerous opinion pieces appeared about Canberra's alliance with Washington being "on the line," linked to calls for beefing up the Australian military.

In a September 8 column in the *Australian* titled, "US should repay loyalty," foreign affairs writer Robert Garran complained, "Since the end of the Vietnam War, Australia has invested billions of dollars in equipment to fight in a high-intensity war alongside the US, but spent less on the equipment and troops needed" for contingencies like Timor that required ground troops. Howard has already signaled increased military spending "in the years ahead."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

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Independence for East Timor: Why Working People Should Oppose Imperialist Intervention. Fri., Sept. 24, 7 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4.00 Tel: (773) 342-1780.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

What Is Bonapartism: The Rise to Political Prominence of Jesse Ventura. Speaker: Greg McCartan, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m. 683 Washington St. Dorchester. Donation: \$4.00 Tel: (617) 282-2783.

NEWYORK

Brooklyn

Release of Puerto Rican Political Prisoners: A Victory for all Working People. Speaker: Martin Koppel, editor *Perspectiva Mundial*, recently returned from trip to Puerto Rico to report on actions demanding U.S. Navy get out of Vieques; others to be announced. Sat., Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. party to follow. 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen). Donation: \$10.00 (dinner, program, and party). Tel: (718) 399-7257.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

UMWA Miners "Lifetime" Health Benefits under Attack. Fri., Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson. Donation: \$4.00 Tel: (412) 381-9785.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Release of the Puerto Rican Prisoners and the Continued Fight for Puerto Rican Independence Today. Fri., Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. N.W., Suite #3. Entrance on Florida. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

The Chinese Workers State versus Imperialism. Speaker: Joanne Kumiansky. Fri., Sept. 24, 7 p.m. 1st floor, 176 Redfern St. Redfern. Donation: \$4.00 Tel: 9690 1533.

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How Bonapartism Greases the Skids for Fascism. Speaker: Felicity Coggan. Fri., Sept. 24, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3.00 Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

Independence for East Timor! No to NZ, UN or other imperialist intervention! Speaker: Ruth Gray. Sat., Sept. 25, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3.00 Tel: (3) 365-6055.

CORRECTION

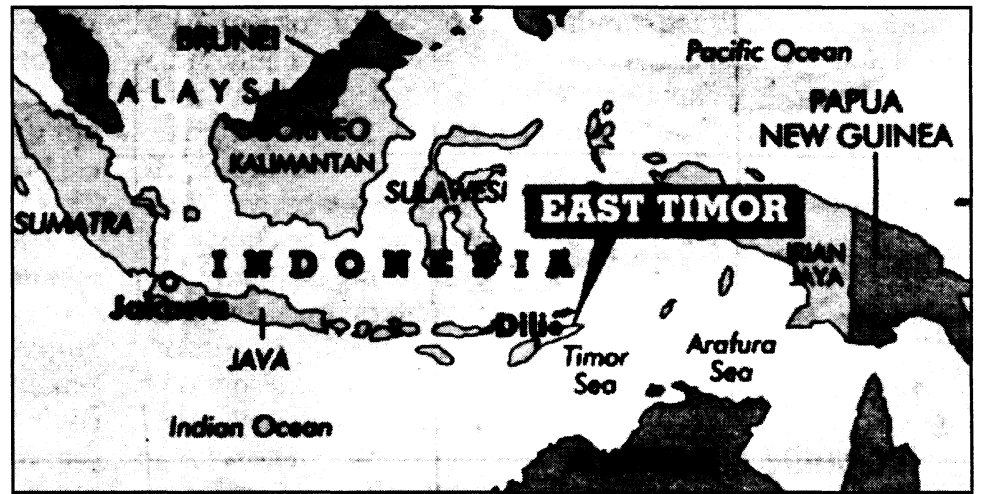
A caption on page 3 of the September 20 *Militant* incorrectly identified a photograph from East Timor. The photo showed a proindependence rally in Dili August 25, not the line at a polling station during the referendum several days later.

The imperialist-led intervention is also aimed at keeping the East Timorese independence movement in check. In a September 6 column, "High human cost if the world waits," the *Australian's* Jakarta correspondent, Don Greenlees, wrote, "Whether the pro-independence Falantil guerrillas continue their restraint in the face of provocation will depend on how quickly and decisively the United Nations and foreign governments react. It is important that they are given every incentive to resist the bait of armed confrontation" with the Indonesian army-organized right-wing gangs. Disarming Falantil is a stated goal of the agreement negotiated by UN officials in May that led to the referendum.

Australia's rulers backed the Indonesian regime's invasion of East Timor in 1975, as did Washington and other imperialist powers, and formally recognized its annexation. An estimated 200,000 East Timorese died in the wave of military terror and consequent disease and starvation, unleashed as the Indonesian army asserted its brutal occupation in the late 1970s.

Earlier, in 1965-66, the imperialist rulers also backed the rise of the Suharto regime in Indonesia through a rightist coup in which gangs like the ones unleashed in East Timor over the past months were organized to help carry out the slaughter of up to one million workers and farmers.

For months ALP foreign affairs spokesman Laurie Brereton has called for Australian troops to be sent to stop "East Timor's descent into a maelstrom of murder and may-



hem." But successive ALP governments, as well as the current Liberal-National coalition government, backed Jakarta's brutal occupation until late 1998.

The imperialist-led intervention in East Timor today is driven by fear of heightened instability in Indonesia. With Suharto's rule ending in May 1998 amidst a deep and ongoing economic crisis, a new generation of workers and farmers across Indonesia is beginning to deepen struggles for their rights.

Others struggling for national rights elsewhere in Indonesia are likely to step up their efforts. The East Timorese, too, have seized the new political space to press their fight for self-determination forcing imperialism, and now Jakarta, to concede there is overwhelm-

ing support for independence.

The Australian rulers' aim is to place their neocolonial stamp on the emerging nation. In March, before Jakarta's agreement to a ballot had been secured, the minister of foreign affairs, Alexander Downer, said that if East Timor chose independence, Australia would provide police, under UN command, to work alongside East Timorese police and civilian administrators to help establish a transitional government. Canberra would assist in running hospitals, schools, transport, the customs system, revenue raising and setting up a central bank and new currency.

Bob Aiken is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union.

From Pathfinder

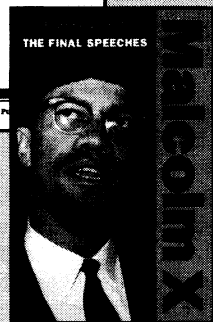
The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

LENIN

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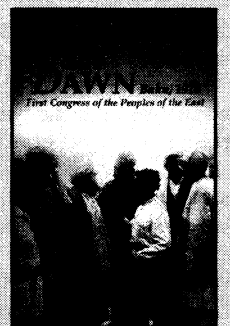


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Military brass serves interests of U.S. ruling class

The following excerpt is from the discussion period following an April 1993 talk by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, titled "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder." Barnes is responding to a question about the likelihood of U.S. military intervention in Yugoslavia at that time. The entire talk, which was presented at a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, is published as one of the chapters in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The book is copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY JACK BARNES

Do not believe the stories you read in the newspapers attributing the fact that Washington has not yet intervened in Bosnia to some independent political position in the U.S. armed forces. Some press reports claim the

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

most important tactical division in Washington involves the military brass, who are saying, "We don't want to use force in Yugoslavia unless we can use overwhelming force and be sure we'll win."

But the military brass is not an independent force. They will do what they are trained to do — organize the use of U.S. military might according to the needs of the ruling class, in the world as it exists today. The officer corps does not have different views from the main political currents in the ruling class; it is part of those currents.

Like every privileged bureaucratic layer in bourgeois society, the brass try to get more meat for themselves. They want a higher budget for the Pentagon. The officer caste is a wretched group, the greatest enemy of the citizen-soldier. They genuinely consider the Uniform Code of Military Justice to be higher than the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, and they consider their interpretation of the Code to be higher than that of any court. But they have no independent political line on anything.

When officers of bourgeois armies lose out in the military pecking order, they often become bitter, Bonapartist demagogues and turn to the ultraright. That has been the history of those in the officer caste throughout the modern history of capitalism. If they advance in the officer caste, they sometimes become successful bourgeois politicians, maybe even president of the United States — there have been a good number of those in U.S. history, most recently Dwight Eisenhower — or chairman of the board of a big corporation or university. That is all there is to it. Losers fade away. General MacArthur faded away soon after the Korean War. General Norman Schwarzkopf faded away barely a year after the war in the Gulf.

There can be sharp conflicts with the officer corps in ruling circles around particular military questions, because the bourgeois armed forces are rigid when it comes to adjusting to social changes. That is part of their bureaucratic structure. That is a consequence of the character of bourgeois military disci-

pline, which is an *imposed* obedience (plus "go along to get along"), not the discipline from political conviction of the cadre of a proletarian combat party or a revolutionary army.

Racism in the military

There is a myth in bourgeois public opinion, for example, that the army is an advanced institution on race relations. That is simply a lie. The U.S. armed forces was the *last* place in the United States where a powerful social institution — the officer caste — continued to insist there were biological, psychological, genetic differences between the races. If Jim Crow segregation was not maintained in the military, they insisted, even if it was being gotten rid of in the rest of society, the armed forces would be destroyed. The armed forces were the *last* institution to finally come around.

How many years ago was it that you finally no longer had to be a Filipino under 5 foot 7 inches in order to be an officers' steward on a ship in the U.S. Navy? Not many. Watch newsreels of officers being served on Navy ships. You won't believe it. Or look at who made up the burial details during World War II — there are newsreels of that too. They were usually all Black. That is the United States armed forces. The Navy is still the worst, if there are slight differences among them.

At the same time, it is against the interests of the ruling class for the armed forces to get too much out of step with the concessions the rulers have had to make to social struggles. They sometimes have to shove the officer corps a little bit to get it to change course a few degrees. For example, the ban on women in a whole number of combat operations will begin being phased out this month; women will be permitted to fly combat aircraft and serve on warships for the first time, although still not in ground combat units. Adjustments such as these will be made by the brass, even if not readily or early. Others they will resist, but if they fight for very long, you can rest assured it is with the support of large layers in the ruling class. We will soon know the outcome of the dispute that has broken out with those in the officer corps and Congress who oppose Clinton's campaign promise to end the ban on gays in the armed forces.

Role of officer corps in politics

Let me make two final points in this regard.

First, we are not seeing preparations for a military government today; that is premature in the United States. Instead, the sharpness of some of the public debates involving the officer caste reflects the growing centralization of government power in the executive branch as capitalism declines. All state structures become slightly more Bonapartist-like in the United States, as well as in other imperialist countries. The president, the executive branch, asserts more and more power over decisions on war and peace, on the use of force, on the deployment of resources, on other policy matters. The powers of the U.S. Congress and bourgeois parliaments become more limited over time.

Second, this tendency toward centralization, toward a stronger executive branch — toward what has been dubbed "the Imperial Presidency" even by some in the big-business press — does open the door at a certain stage to preparations for an attempt at a military coup. It does open the way, as crisis conditions deepen, for the establishment of a true Bonapartist regime. The



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

"The military brass is not independent force. They will do what they are trained to do — organize the use of U.S. military might according to the needs of the ruling class, in the world as it exists today." U.S.-NATO troops on outskirts of Tirana, Albania, May 5, 1999.

veteran SWP leader Farrell Dobbs used to say that if anybody thinks we are not going to see every one of these alternatives attempted by sections of the rulers as class battles heat up in the United States, then they are dead wrong and will never build a revolutionary workers party in this country. We will see every one of those alternatives tried.

But that is not happening today. Right now, the political conflicts in which certain military officers may figure are a reflection of the more immediate danger — the growth of executive power, the power of the presidency, in the United States and other imperialist countries. We hear complaints now and again from politicians in both parties, for example, about the 1973 War Powers Act, which was adopted by Congress in the wake of Washington's defeat in Vietnam and the mass popular opposition to that war. It supposedly requires the president to inform Congress within forty-eight hours of sending U.S. troops into combat, as well as congressional approval for any deployment of U.S. forces for more than sixty days. The truth is, however, that the War Powers Act has never once been invoked by Congress — not once. Not when U.S. forces landed in Lebanon in 1982, nor in Grenada in 1983, nor in Panama in 1989, nor in the Gulf two years ago. Every administration, both Democrats and Republicans, has given the back of its hand to the act, and the bipartisan Congress has fallen in line well after the die was cast in combat.

Ten years after the fact, the press is now running exposés about U.S. government in-

volvement in massacres in El Salvador — which everyone already knew about. But they got away with it at the time. Remember what Oliver North always says to both Democratic Party liberals and his former Reagan administration cohorts when either of them try to finger him for Washington's secret arming of Nicaraguan contras in the 1980s. Financing and equipping the contras to bring down the Sandinista government was a *bipartisan effort*, North insists. Scores of Democrats and Republicans in Congress knew what was being organized out of the White House, and they never did a thing to stop it. It was a bipartisan effort in El Salvador, too, and U.S. imperialist foreign policy continues to be bipartisan.

Whenever the rulers have to use large-scale armed forces in combat anywhere in the world, it creates a problem for them in this country. There will be resistance, and over time it will grow and become connected to other social struggles. As the conflict drags on, citizen-soldiers, the *ranks*, will begin to put their stamp on opposition to U.S. military actions. At some point, workers struggles will begin to coincide with the resistance by antiwar youth and soldiers. That is what we began to see during the Vietnam War. And we will see it again under conditions marked by depression and rising class tensions, unlike the relative capitalist prosperity and stability of the 1960s.

Opposition to capitalist austerity, to imperialist wars, and to growing rightist violence will go hand in hand in the years that lie ahead.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



September 27, 1974

BUFFALO — More than 2,000 people from all over the Northeast assembled in Buffalo's Niagara Square Sept. 14 to commemorate the third anniversary of the Attica rebellion.

Banners and placards proclaimed support for the 61 indicted Attica Brothers in their struggle against government frame-ups. "Jail Nixon, Free the Attica Brothers," and "Freedom for the 61 — Drop the Charges," were among the many signs. Anger at President Ford's recent pardon of Richard Nixon ran high.

Legal defense coordinator Haywood Burns told the enthusiastic crowd, "We are here to indict the real criminals," those responsible for the massacre in D.Yard. Thirty-two prisoners were killed in the cop assault. He demanded that Nelson Rockefeller and Russell Oswald be indicted for the deaths at Attica.

At the time of the Attica revolt Rockefeller was governor of New York and Oswald was the state corrections commissioner.

"If they can talk in Washington about pardon for Richard Milhous Nixon," he declared, "they better be talking about amnesty for the Attica Brothers."

Following the rally, which raised more than \$1,100 for the defense effort, demonstrators staged a militant and vocal march through downtown Buffalo. They passed the Erie County Courthouse, site of the upcoming trials, and the Erie County jail, where several of the Attica Brothers are now imprisoned, chant-

ing, "Jail Nixon, Jail Ford, Free the Attica Brothers."



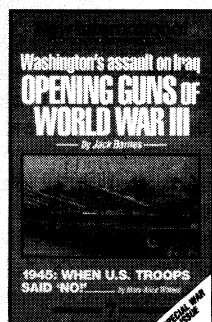
September 26, 1949

Once again the country's 480,000 militant coal miners have taken the lead in defense of the standard of living and rights of American labor. With the slogan, "No Welfare, No Work!" the miners on Sept. 19 shut down the pits. They are demanding a new improved contract and the payment of all royalties due the miners' welfare fund from defaulting Southern operators.

The determined fighting action of the United Mine Workers comes at a most crucial moment for America's industrial workers, whose drive for "fourth round" wage increases and adequate health and pension funds has been dealt a treacherous and crippling blow by the report of Truman's steel and "fact-finding" board.

With the example of the miners before them, the workers in steel, auto, rubber and other basic industries are bound to take heart in their own struggles to win some form of security during illness and old age. Since the miners walked out there has been a marked stiffening of morale among the workers and other industries. This is evidenced, in part, by the beginning of "wildcat" strikes in Pittsburgh steel plants against the demoralizing stalling by CIO Steel Workers leaders, the Truman administration and the steel corporations.

Further reading from Pathfinder



New International no. 7

- Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq by Jack Barnes
- 1945: When U.S. Troops said "No!"
- Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War by Samad Sharif

\$12.00

Blacks in America's Wars

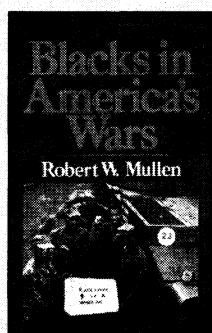
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Robert W. Mullen

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No imperialist troops in E. Timor

Working people around the world should oppose and protest the imperialist intervention now under way in East Timor under the United Nations flag, spearheaded from Canberra. Its aim is to advance imperialist domination in the region and make sure that any moves towards East Timorese nationhood won't threaten capitalist rule in Indonesia — where a recent upsurge of working-class protests forced the Indonesian rulers and their imperialist backers to elbow dictator Suharto out of power — and beyond. It has nothing to do with helping the people of East Timor to free themselves. Disarming independence supporters is one of the stated goals of this intervention.

The workers, peasants, and youth of East Timor are not helpless victims who need a UN protectorate for "three or four years" or for a few months. For decades, they have shown an unbreakable spirit, even when forced to retreat.

They fought for independence from Portugal in the 1970s, defeating pro-Jakarta forces to bring to power a proindependence government in late 1975. They waged a struggle against Indonesian military occupation for the past 24 years through rural guerrilla resistance and mass mobilizations. Most recently the mass sentiment for national self-determination was registered in the landslide vote for independence in the August 30 referendum.

This struggle today has new potential allies among the workers and peasants inside Indonesia who have begun to take action in their own interests. Resistance to the employers and their government by the toilers in city and countryside throughout Indonesia over the past two years has dealt political blows to the military-dominated regime in Jakarta and helped the East Timorese to advance their struggle to a new stage.

The imperialist intervention in East Timor is not only aimed at containing the independence struggle but also at keeping in check the rising struggles of new generations of working-class fighters in Indonesia.

For decades Washington, Wellington, Canberra, and other imperialist governments have dragged working people into their wars, often using a humanitarian and progressive facade. Yet the stark truth is that in 1965–66 in Indonesia and 1975–79 in East Timor these same powers gave the go-ahead, and helped politically cover up, mass slaughters organized by Jakarta's military.

The evolution of events between the August 30 referendum and the deployment of imperialist forces in East Timor points to a similar collusion between Washington, Canberra, and other imperialist powers on one hand, and the Indonesian regime on the other, in carrying out the latest reign of terror against the East Timorese people.

For weeks the big-business press in the United States and elsewhere speculated that Indonesian armed forces chief Gen. Wiranto "had lost control" over some of his forces in East Timor. This was aimed at obfuscating the fact that it was the Indonesian military at the highest level — under the cover of the "militias" — that was organizing the widespread killing of independence backers, burning of houses, and massive expulsions of East Timorese.

At the same time the Clinton administration and other imperialist governments were stating they would not advocate sending a military force into Dili without Jakarta's approval. It served the interests of these imperialist powers to give time to the pro-Jakarta gangs to do their dirty

work — dealing blows to the independence movement by physically eliminating thousands of its cadre and terrorizing East Timor's population. At the same time, Canberra, Wellington, and Washington helped prop up those in the independence movement favoring imperialist intervention to "save the day."

After a couple weeks of the rampage that was in effect organized by the imperialist-backed Indonesian military, and once it became clear Jakarta couldn't just do away with the independence movement, the imperialist powers cranked up the pressure to send in troops. Threats of sanctions were issued by Canberra and Washington, while Wellington floated the prospect of unilateral deployment of troops, once it was clear Jakarta would strike some kind of deal with the imperialist powers. At the start of the APEC summit, for example, Clinton implied the Indonesian regime would quickly accede to such demands, which did come about within a couple of days.

Likewise, inside Australia, New Zealand, or the United States, working people have no stake in supporting intervention. We have instead every reason to support both the East Timorese freedom struggle and the fight in Indonesia for land and labor rights.

The same capitalist rulers who are attacking our unions, working and living conditions, and democratic rights have adopted the mask of "peacekeepers" in East Timor and elsewhere. Their aim is to boost their military might and to strengthen their ability to deploy it to advance competing interests, to fatten profits for the handful of already wealthy families that rule each imperialist country.

"What can we do?" many supporters of East Timorese freedom are asking. But who is "we"? The "international community" is a fiction. Armies defend the interests of ruling classes at the head of nation states. The intervention forces will be used to try to create a neocolonial regime dependent particularly on Canberra and Washington.

Imperialist economic and trade sanctions against Indonesia are also part of the arsenal of reactionary intervention. Trade union boycotts and bans aimed at Indonesia serve only to boost the prointervention campaign of the bosses and their governments. So do the calls by the "left" in Australia and elsewhere to send troops. They tie us politically to the exploiters' war chariot, while deepening bourgeois nationalism and anti-Indonesian sentiment that cut across international solidarity with the struggles of working people in Indonesia and East Timor.

First and foremost, supporters of East Timorese freedom need to tell the truth about the real history, role, and goals of imperialism in East Timor — monopoly capitalist interests that are also behind this new military intervention — over decades.

Rather than get behind "our" governments as they seek to line us behind their latest military foray, workers and farmers need to keep our eyes on those who have put nation-time on the agenda in East Timor, and those across Indonesia who are fighting for space to stand up to the bosses, Habibie's regime, and the military.

Let's organize forums, speak-outs, and other protests demanding: No imperialist intervention in East Timor! Withdraw all foreign troops! Open the borders to the refugees! Independence for East Timor now!

Why life health care for miners?

BY JAMES VINCENT

UNIONTOWN, Pennsylvania — Throughout the coalfields in the United States the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) has launched a life-and-death struggle to safeguard lifetime medical insurance for coal miners and their families. The health and welfare and future of all working people in Appalachia and beyond is at stake.

The assault by the employers against the Coal Act began more than 20 years ago when the coal bosses provoked a showdown battle with the UMWA. The result was a 111-day nationwide UMWA strike, one of the most important labor battles in decades. The miners defied then president James Carter's ordering them back to work. In the process they blocked a concerted union-busting assault and strengthened the UMWA. Although they came out of that battle on an overall stronger footing, the miners lost their "free" health care with the introduction of fee-for-service co-payments for the first time in decades.

The next major test came in 1989 when the Pittston

AS I SEE IT

Coal Group announced that they were cutting off medical benefits of retired miners and their widows. This provoked an 11-month strike by Pittston miners, who fought off Pittston's attempt to deny medical benefits to retired union members.

Since then, the mineworker's union has fought several defensive battles. The coal bosses are still on the prod. The attack on retired miners is not something off in the future. It is happening now. Some hospitals are sending bills to miners, using collection agencies, and taking miners to court. This comes on top of lawsuits — 60 to date, and the list is growing — the coal bosses have filed against paying lifetime benefits. In addition, many of the largest coal barons have simply refused to pay premiums totaling \$100 million into the Workers Comp Fund.

With their pals in government and the court system, the coal bosses are getting away with murder — literally — by denying thousands of miners black lung benefits. In 1997 only 0.9 percent of miners seeking compensation in Kentucky, the third largest coal-producing state, received benefits! Black lung is a preventable disease. But almost 30 years after federal legislation was enacted to combat it, the disease is still the main killer of miners.

The 1998 Supreme Court ruling, letting Eastern Enterprises off the hook, was posed in clear class terms. Arguing that the Coal Act violated the Fifth Amendment's ban on "taking" property for public use without compensation, is a cover-up. What they are really saying is, "You miners are too damn old! We're sick of paying your bills!"

The capitalist families that rule this country have a different view than working people do on what constitutes a "lifetime." Speaking about Social Security and education, which applies also to health care, Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes explains in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*: "Workers think of each other in terms of a lifetime. We cannot think of each other the way capitalists think of us. We cannot make ourselves think of other human beings as though they do not exist up to the age of thirteen or after the age of sixty-five. That is not how workers function. We have a different class view, a different moral view of society. Elementary human solidarity is in our interests, not in conflict with them."

Retired workers should not be tossed aside once they are no longer producing profits for the bosses. The labor movement must take up the fight for free, quality health care for all. The situation miners face today, as with other workers, is the direct result of the failure of the union officialdom to fight for the real needs of all working people — social security as an entitlement for our class, national health care, national unemployment insurance, and for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay.

Of the 85,000 miners today, less than one-third are in unions. The coal operators have been successful in raising their profit margins and their ability to run mines without the obstacle of the union by shifting production. More and more miners find themselves unemployed or working lower paid jobs. Many with years in UMWA mines are working in nonunion facilities, or as contract miners with little or no health benefits. This doesn't mean these miners are defeated or that they wouldn't jump at the chance to fight for the union.

In the 1920s, the proportion of coal mined under union contract fell from over 70 percent in 1922 to about 15 percent in 1932. With the rise of the workers movement in the 1930s, coming out of strike battles across the country following the Great Depression, unionization of miners shot back up, reaching 90 percent after World War II.

The struggle to maintain health benefits today is connected to the broader question of what lies ahead in the coalfields and what has already shifted in the working class. With new and younger workers getting hired in coal mines across the country, the tug-of-war between the coal bosses and the workers over whether coal will be mined union will deepen as the operators keep pushing to increase hours, speed up production, cut corners on safety, and gut health and safety benefits for all miners. It's a good time to join these struggles and spread the word about them at portals, other plants, and on the land.

Tell truth about Waco massacre

For workers around the world, watching the carnage in Waco was an almost unbearable reminder of the kind of violence the capitalist government, the capitalist parties, and their armed gangs — whether cops or rightist goons — will not hesitate to use. Today the target may be a marginal religious group. Tomorrow it can be workers who step out of line or their unions and other class organizations.

— SWP National Committee statement of April 21, 1993, on holocaust in Waco, Texas

That statement, published in the *Militant* at the time, explained how the murderous assault on the Branch Davidians religious sect was organized directly by the White House. It was a harbinger of the brutal anti-working-class policies of Democratic president William Jefferson Clinton, who had been in office less than 100 days at the time.

One of the chief hallmarks of the Clinton administration was exemplified by the events in Waco — taking steps to pave the way for broader use of police force against the working class and trampling on basic democratic rights, such as the right to due process and the presumption of innocence. This erosion of civil liberties goes hand-in-hand with increased use of the death penalty, more restrictions on the rights of inmates, jailing "terrorist" suspects for years based on "secret" evidence, and deeper attacks on immigrant rights.

The U.S. rulers are preparing for broader assaults on working people and their organizations. The establishment of a domestic defense command, a "counterterrorism czar," and mock invasions in U.S. cities foreshadow brutality coming down the road against unionists engaged in battles to defend their jobs, farmers defending their land, and activists protesting cop violence.

Right-wing opponents of the Clinton administration claim the evidence revealing that the FBI lied about

launching flammable tear gas canisters into the Waco compound proves a conspiracy was behind the police siege and assault. This demagoguery promotes an anti-working-class rightist agenda. It takes the focus off the fact that any capitalist government will use lies, half-truths, and allegations to justify the brutality of its social system. No conspiracy is needed for that.

In 1985 the mayor's office and Philadelphia cops decided to drop a percussion bomb on a home in a mostly Black neighborhood where members of the group called MOVE were resisting eviction. Eleven of the 13 occupants were murdered in cold blood, and 60 other homes were consumed in flames. The city authorities, like the White House officials, made a calculated decision to use brute force to end a deadlock that had become a political crisis for them.

It is irrelevant what caused the fire that killed 86 people in Waco. The actions by the government using armored vehicles equipped with battering rams to demolish the group's living quarters guaranteed their deaths. Several people who survived the assault insist the fire started as the walls and ceilings collapsed, knocking over kerosene lanterns they had been using for lighting after the FBI had cut off the electricity. This showed the government's contempt and disregard for the lives of the 100 people held under siege by more than 400 federal cops.

Millions of working people were outraged and horrified as they watched the Waco catastrophe on TV. Class-conscious workers must tell the truth about the Waco inquiry: the goal of the Clinton administration is not to get out the facts, but to portray the assault as a police operation that got out of control. After a flurry of testimony, they aim to put this incident in the past and move on. We need to explain how this type of government violence has been used before against unionists, Black rights activists, and others struggling for justice. And it will be used more in the future.

Steelworkers fight forced overtime in Ohio

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 and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is

USWA members from Mansfield Foundry, who had their own five-week strike during the summer, came by during the first week. Among those who visited on September 12 were workers at Ohio Edison, a Bosch plant, and at least one group of students.

On the early morning of September 10 hundreds of area union members gathered across the street from

ON THE PICKET LINE

happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

MANSFIELD, Ohio — Members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 169 have been locked out of the Armco, Inc., steel mill here since 11 p.m. August 31. The union has responded with informational picket lines at all three gates.

Armco, a rolling mill that makes specialty stainless steel for auto parts, presented USWA members with its "final contract offer" just hours before the lockout, demanding the local vote on it at their meeting scheduled for that afternoon. Local 169 had offered to extend the contract and to give 48 hours notice before striking. Instead, that night the gates of a newly installed barbed-wire fence were closed on those who showed up to work the 11 p.m. shift.

The main issue is a company demand to institute forced overtime. For at least the last year, workers have been getting by on 32 hours' pay, and a few are currently laid off. While most would like a 40-hour week because of the pay, they don't want last-minute forced overtime. Local union officials say they think Armco wants to reduce the labor force from 620 to 453.

During the week leading up to the lockout, Armco brought in guards who harassed workers on the job in a supposed campaign against sabotage by the workers. One unionist was recently fired because he objected to having his ID inspected repeatedly by the same guard in his work area that day. On the night of the lockout many more guards appeared.

As part of the contract fight leading up to the lockout, USWA Local 169 sponsored a rally outside the plant in July that drew 1,000 people. Other workers driving by the picket line stopped to find out what was happening and show support.

Armco has a lawsuit pending against the USWA demanding damages for three alleged work stoppages in June and July. It also wants a court order for workers to report for all scheduled shifts, including overtime. A hearing is scheduled in federal court in Cleveland on September 16.

The locked-out steelworkers have received community solidarity. Starting from the first day people driving by the informational picket line have constantly stopped to get information and express their support. A group of

the south gate picket line. Among them were members of United Auto Workers Local 549 at the General Motors plant in Ontario, Ohio, and of USWA Local 8530 at Ideal Electric in Mansfield. It was the day after federal judge James Henson had reversed his original ruling that Armco could not bring in replacement workers. GM worker Bud Windsor Jr. told the daily *News Journal* of Mansfield, "I'm here to show support [to Local 169 members] and to protect these people's jobs... They [Armco] are doing our community raw. This town was built on unions."

When vans of security guards drove up to the gate, a confrontation ensued. Eight guards ended up in the hospital and four supporters of the Steelworkers were arrested.

On the picket line a couple days later, Paul Johns, who has 30 years at Armco, commented, "This is about having a life and getting treated with respect." He pointed out that "Armco has seriously miscalculated about us, and our resolve to take a stand here. Mansfield is a solid union town and they are not going to turn the town against us."

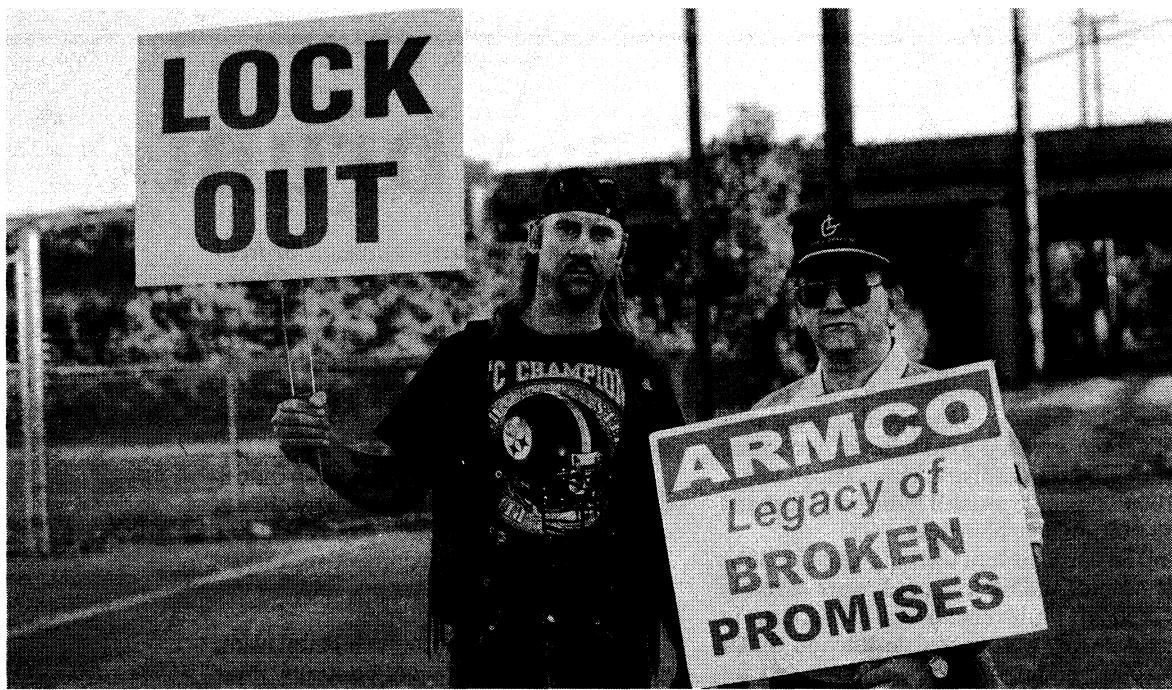
Aerospace workers push back 12-hour shifts

MONTREAL — "Although we didn't achieve all our demands, this is the best contract we have won at Rolls-Royce in the 10 years I've been here," said Mike Cadogan, a kitting storeman. "We now realize that it's only by sticking together and not giving in that we can achieve our goals."

On August 25 the 800 members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 869 at Rolls-Royce Canada in Montreal voted 80 percent in favor of a conciliator's report that the company had agreed to accept. The company repairs and overhauls aero and industrial gas turbine engines.

After the previous contract expired in April, the company demanded a seven-day work schedule including a new 12-hour shift from Friday through Sunday. The company wanted to decide where and when to impose this shift if the existing Monday to Friday eight-hour shifts didn't meet production needs. The company also pushed for greater job cross-training under the rubric of multitasks. This posed the elimination of jobs and layoffs in the future. Finally, the company wanted a five-year contract and offered a 10 percent wage raise. Workers voted 100 percent to reject this offer June 14.

A second company offer dropped most proposals for cross-training, of-



Militant/Eva Braiman

Steelworkers on picket line at Armco steel mill in Mansfield, Ohio, September 12.

fered a 10 percent wage increase over three years, and added a wide range of improved benefits. It also retained the proposed 12-hour shift from Friday to Sunday, but with increased overtime pay for Saturdays and Sundays. Current employees were to be exempted unless they volunteered. However all new employees could be forced on to this shift.

The union bargaining committee recommended the offer. On August 5, workers at a packed meeting jeered during the presentation of the company's offer by the negotiating committee. Many workers believed the company would find ways to force people onto this shift despite the "voluntary" wording. Others feared that once this shift composed of new employees and volunteers was established, the company would be in a better position to impose it on everyone in the next set of negotiations.

The meeting lasted more than four and a half hours. Only one worker spoke in favor of the offer from the floor. Workers rejected the proposal in a secret ballot vote, with 86 percent opposed, and then voted 95% to give the negotiating committee a strike mandate.

The negotiating committee then organized a work-to-rule campaign, a boycott of all overtime, and a series of other job actions. Some days workers took an extra 30 minute lunch break. Other days everyone punched out early.

On August 12 all 400 day-shift workers marched through the plant for an hour, passing the company president's office and walking through various upstairs offices, blowing whistles and chanting "so so so solidarity." That day the company contacted the Quebec Department of Labor and asked for a conciliator.

The conciliator's report, which the company accepted, dropped the 12-hour weekend shift proposal, all remaining proposals for cross-training, and strengthened a clause against the subcontracting of work. The improvements in wages and benefits contained in the second offer were all retained.

Jérôme Diman, an inspector, thought the massive rejection of the second offer and the subsequent job actions were "decisive" in the company's backing down.

Debbie Curotte, a processor, said, "We've had no protection on subcontracting before and now at least they have to justify continuing any subcontracting if there are layoffs." On August 24, the day prior to the vote on the conciliator's report, Pratt and Whitney, a major aerospace firm based in Montreal and rival of Rolls-Royce, announced the layoff of 700 plant and office staff.

Robert Fougère, a machinist-fitter and veteran of a 22-month strike at Pratt and Whitney in 1974-76, voted against the offer. "This was the most serious fight I've seen here in 20 years but we should have gotten more for

the pension," he said, expressing a sentiment shared by many who voted no.

"We just slowed the company down. They'll come back with the 12-hour shift and the multitasks again next time," said André Baril, an electrician with 20 years in the plant. Nonetheless, he added, "seeing people sticking together scared the company."

Hotel workers rally for contract in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO — One thousand hotel workers and their supporters demonstrated in front of the Westin-St. Francis Hotel here September 6 to demand a new union contract.

The previous contract between 8,000 members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 2 and 50 San Francisco hotels and motels expired August 14. The hotel owners have refused to reduce the work load of housekeepers, increase health benefits, and bring a serious wage proposal to the union.

At an August 19 meeting, 3,200 workers voted by a 98% margin to authorize a strike. On September 2, the union organized informational pickets in front of the downtown San Francisco Hyatt Regency, Sheraton Palace, Holiday Inn, and Fairmont Hotels, as well as the Holiday Inn at Fisherman's Wharf. The week before, workers at three hotels stopped work for 15 to 20 minutes and gathered in lobbies for union business meetings.

A wide range of unionists joined the hotel workers at the rally. Five Teamsters now on strike for two months against Basic Vegetable in King City, California, made the 150 mile drive to San Francisco to demonstrate with the hotel workers. "We should take our strike to the city," one Teamster told this reporter as they passed out leaflets and talked with workers about their fight.

A contingent of San Francisco school bus drivers, members of United Transportation Union Local 1741, sought support in their fight for full-time work and a pay increase from Laidlaw Transit. They invited HERE members to join them in a Community/Labor Solidarity Rally September 15.

Other participants included unionists in the Service Employees International Union, United Food and Commercial Workers, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, and Carpenters. As part of the rally, Local 2 officials organized a sit-in in front of the Westin-St. Francis hotel. Cops arrested 147 participants.

On average, housekeepers in the big hotels are required to clean 15 rooms a day. Their supply carts may weigh as much as 200 pounds. Carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, and back injuries are widespread among the housekeepers, 99 percent of whom are women. They want the room quota lowered, and a pay raise to at least

\$13.50 an hour from the current \$12.

The union is targeting 11 major hotels whose owners are part of a multi-employer group, with the aim of using an agreement with them as a pattern for the remaining 39.

Local 2 has also been carrying out an organizing drive to win union recognition at the large San Francisco Marriott Hotel.

Redland Brick workers end strike in Maryland

WILLIAMSPORT, Maryland — After nearly 10 weeks on the picket line outside of Redland Brick Inc. in Williamsport, Maryland, members of Teamsters Local 992 approved a new contract by a vote of 43 to 28. The 108 workers at the plant walked out when their contract expired on June 18 after rejecting 88-4 the company's offer, which had also been endorsed by Teamster officials. Two of the important issues in the strike were improved retirement benefits and sick pay.

The new five-year contract allows retired workers to purchase health insurance through the company's plan until they turn 65. Most workers will get a 50-cent raise, some will get \$1, while others will get nothing. Under the agreement the approximately 30 replacement workers will retain their jobs. Union workers with the least seniority will not be recalled but will be placed on a preferential hiring list for future jobs.

The workers maintained pickets outside the plant 24 hours a day through the course of the strike. They were greeted by frequent honks of support from passing motorists. Unionists from several nearby auto plants, as well as from a large tannery across the street organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees offered support.

Through the course of the walk-out, the striking Teamsters stood up to cop surveillance and harassment and a sweeping court injunction aimed at limiting the number of strikers, chairs, and even coolers that could be on the picket line. Once on strike, the unionists voted down two additional contract offers brought to them by the Teamsters negotiating committee before finally approving the fourth proposal.

Bernard Henson, a 23-year veteran at the brick plant, pointed to the fact that the company did not win its goal of breaking the union. Many are stronger in their resolve to win dignity on the job, he pointed out. "I'm staying with the union," was the way he summed it up.

Henry Hillenbrand, member of USWA Local 185 in Cleveland; Jim Upton, member of IAM Lodge 869 in Montreal; Omari Musa, member of United Transportation Union Local 239 in San Francisco; and USWA member Brian Williams and Dave Salner in Maryland contributed to this column.

PATHFINDER

TRADE UNIONS IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALIST DECAY

BY LEON TROTSKY

Featuring "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future"

BY KARL MARX

"Apart from their original purposes, the trades unions must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. . . . They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions."

—Karl Marx, 1866. \$14.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Workers bear brunt of quake in Athens

BY MARIA PLESSA

ATHENS, Greece — On September 9 at 2:56 p.m., while most people were still at work, the city of Athens was rocked by an earthquake. As of September 12 the death toll had risen to 115 while at least 25 people were still missing in the rubble. Thousands of people were reported injured. According to the interior minister, Vasso Papandreou, 100,000 people are still living outdoors and 60,000 are now homeless.

The northwestern working-class suburbs of Menidi and Metamorfosi were severely damaged, while other better-off sections in areas nearby were spared destruction. So far 40,000 buildings have been inspected for damages caused by the quake and 4,500 have been declared as needing to be demolished. One third of the public schools in the Athens area are unsafe and need repair as a result of the quake.

While touring the devastated zones, *Militant* reporters saw entire blocks of buildings marked with a red "X" on the outside, meaning the buildings had to be destroyed. On some streets 9 out of 10 buildings have the red X while the rest have a yellow X, denoting repairs are needed. Nearby squares and empty spaces are filled with tent cities as the residents of these working-class areas have nowhere else to go.

Many working people individually brought food and other materials in solidarity with those residents in the areas hardest hit by the quake.

"Our relations with the Greeks are now better than before," said Nizar, a Pakistani immigrant worker, who was standing in front of his tent. Nizar worked in a plastics factory in the area. "It is like this because the earthquake did not discriminate between Greeks and immigrants."

Most of the small plants in the area are now destroyed, including factories which employ many immigrant workers. Some workers were trapped in plants by the earthquake. According to the government's Manpower Organization (OAED) 30,000 workers have lost their jobs.

Touring nearby areas, though, one could see that the effects of the quake were "discriminatory" in other ways. The poor neighborhoods are devastated while well-built homes of the rich, which are located nearby, remain almost intact.

Many working people in northwestern Athens expressed outrage at the shoddy construction by contractors who skimmed on materials and cut corners to make a fast buck. Olga, a Russian immigrant, said state authorities "brought us things like croissants and water, but important things, No!"

Ilias Kalantzis, who is camped out in the central square with his family, explained, "What they show on TV is all a show. They go to those few places where tents were distributed and they bring the cameras along. I see that on TV and wonder, it is for others and not us."

The town square is full of makeshift tents

constructed from pieces of plastic or from camping tents bought by the victims themselves. "The free tents being distributed by the municipality are done selectively," said another member of the Kalantzis family. "We should consider blocking off some major highways to pressure the government."

The government has promised an immediate grant of 200,000 Drachmas (US\$1=310 Drc.) for each family that has lost its housing. This requires Greek identity cards or residence papers, making undocumented workers ineligible.

At the destroyed Ricomex chemical plant, emergency rescue teams continue their search for workers who are trapped or have been killed. One volunteer Turkish rescue worker there who identified himself only as Mustafa explained, "Our rescue team came from Turkey first of all to indicate our solidarity with the people who are buried in the rubble. It was only a few days ago that we ourselves faced the same experience in Turkey. But we also wanted to express our solidarity towards the Greek people."

The region of Istanbul in Turkey was devastated by an earthquake registering 7.4 on the Richter scale August 17, where at least 18,000 people perished. The Athens quake was 5.9 on the Richter scale.

Throughout the entire western part of Athens, families continue to reside in tents because they fear the consequences of the aftershocks on their homes.



Apartment building in Athens after earthquake hit September 7. Housing in working-class neighborhoods was destroyed, while homes of rich stood firm.

Right wing gains in German elections as social democrats push austerity

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

The governing Social Democratic Party (SDP) of Germany suffered heavy defeats in the September 5 state elections in the western state of Saarland and the eastern state of Brandenburg. The conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), ultrarightist groups, and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former ruling party in East Germany, posted gains.

The election results confirm the trend of the Social Democrats and their coalition partner, the Greens, losing ground in every election since the federal elections last October, when they ousted Helmut Kohl's CDU coalition government after 16 years in office.

In Saarland, where the SDP has governed for the last 14 years, the party's vote dropped from 49.4 percent in the last elections to 44 percent, while the CDU gained from 38.6 percent to 45 percent.

In Brandenburg, another social democratic stronghold, the SDP's losses were even bigger — down to 39.5 percent from 54.1 percent in the last elections. The ultrarightist German Peoples Union (DVU) got more than 5 percent of the votes in Brandenburg, giving it five seats in the state parliament. The DVU waged an extremely nationalistic campaign centered on the high unemployment in Brandenburg — currently 20 percent — with the call: "German jobs for German workers."

The CDU and the PDS also gained in the Brandenburg elections, going from close to 19 percent each in the last elections to 26 and 25 percent respectively. Neither the Greens nor the Free Democratic Party (FDP) were able to surpass the 5 percent required to be seated in the state parliament. The SPD suffered more blows September 12. The CDU won an outright majority in the state government of Thuringia in the east, where it had shared power with the Social Democrats. And the SPD vote dropped sharply in municipal elections across the industrial state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The government headed by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder suffered an earlier setback last February in the Hesse state elections, where the Social Democrats and the Greens

lost to the CDU after eight years in the government of that state. In those elections the CDU and its sister Christian Social Union (CSU) campaigned nationwide with a petition against a proposed new citizenship law that was supposed to make it possible for up to 7 million immigrants in Germany to get German citizenship while keeping their original citizenship. The ultraright party, the Republicans, also gained in the Hesse elections.

Debate over austerity package

A central debate in the election campaigns in Brandenburg and Saarland was over the \$16 billion austerity package and \$4.3 billion in corporate tax breaks that the Schröder government is presenting to parliament this fall. The package includes lowering unemployment benefits and adjusting pensions only for inflation, not to incorporate wage increases, which has been the rule. So while this year metalworkers in Germany negotiated wage increases of 3.6 percent, pensions would go up less than 1 percent. The proposed budget also includes cuts in agricultural subsidies, housing assistance, and funding for the shipyards.

The Social Democratic heads of government in Brandenburg and Saarland, Manfred Stolpe and Reinhard Klimmt respectively, campaigned against Schröder's austerity package in the state elections and promised to block it in the Bundesrat, the upper house of parliament, where representatives of the state governments are seated. Nevertheless, they lost heavily in the elections.

Schröder has charted a more openly procapitalist course than is traditional for the SDP. He is often compared to Labour Party prime minister Anthony Blair of Britain. Schröder and Blair recently published a joint paper mapping out the essence of what they term the "Third Way." In it they state, "The weaknesses of markets have been overstated and their strength underestimated" by social democrats. "Achieving social justice became identified by ever-higher levels of public spending regardless of what they achieved or the impact on taxes required to fund it on competitiveness and employment."

Gerhard Schröder won the federal elections

last year with some vague promises of reversing some of the attacks on working people carried out during CDU Chancellor Kohl's last years in government, such as reduced sick leave payments and laws that made it easier to sack workers. Schröder's government initially took steps to meet some of these promises. Now the federal social democratic coalition government is promoting an even harsher austerity policy than the ones that made Kohl's government so unpopular.

Protests are beginning again among public sector workers in Germany. Kohl's government had its base among farmers, so the CDU chancellor was reluctant to attack agricultural subsidies to the same extent Schröder has begun to.

Reunification weakens economy

The reunification of Germany, a process in which the imperialist state that was West Germany is trying to swallow the workers state in the former East, has considerably weakened the German imperialist rulers. They have to a large degree financed reunification by borrowing on the international capital markets. The German government's debt in 1998 was \$798 billion, up from \$319 billion at the start of reunification in 1990. The interest on this debt totals \$43.6 billion a year, making it the biggest budget item after social security.

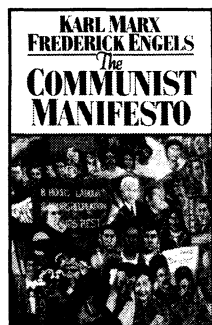
The German economy isn't projected to grow by more than 1.5 percent this year. Some 10.5 percent of workers throughout Germany are jobless. In the east, the rate rose for the sixth month in a row in August, to 18 percent. This weakness of the German economy, which accounts for more than a third of the economic output in the Euro zone, is one major factor in the decline of the euro (the European common currency) since its introduction January 1. The European imperialist powers' military weakness and dependence on Washington is the other major factor. Political polarization is increasingly characterizing politics in Germany, as the German imperialist rulers try to deal with their economic, military, and political weakness, and workers and farmers resist the harsh measures the rulers have in store for them.

From Pathfinder

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