

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Ethel Lobman: an unceasing fighter for human solidarity

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 37 OCTOBER 25, 1999

## Stop the deportations! Equal rights for all immigrants!

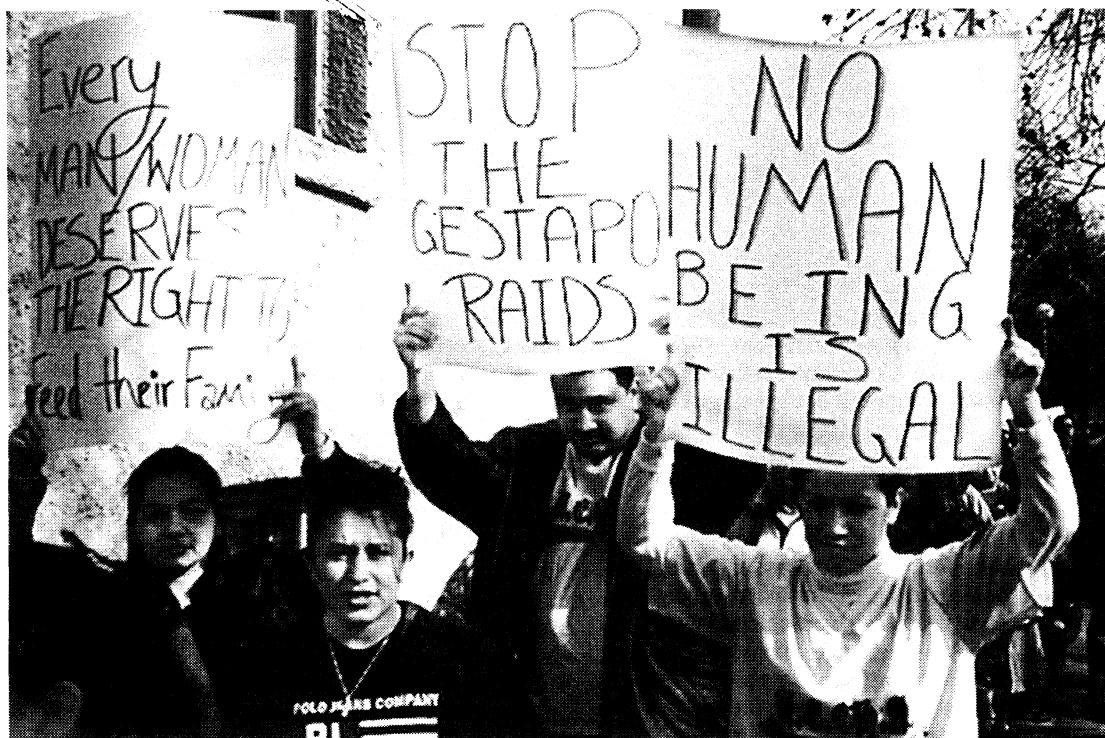
Many people will be marching in Washington, D.C., October 16 to demand human rights for immigrants and an end to factory raids and deportations. This action merits the support of all working people. It is a chance to put a spotlight on the denial of fundamental rights of a large section

### EDITORIAL

of the working class.

Over the last several years the Clinton administration has spearheaded a bipartisan drive to clamp down on the rights of workers who were born outside the U.S. borders. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 tripled to 15,000 the number of agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) — the hated *migra* — and increased their leeway to deport people. Today the INS is the largest federal police agency in the United States, with a war chest of \$1 billion. It maintains its own prisons, the abysmal conditions of which sparked protests among detainees in New York and New Jersey last year.

The 1996 law cut some 1 million immigrants who have legal papers from food stamps and limited their eligibility for welfare. In a typically vicious measure, so-called legal immigrants infected with the AIDS virus will be denied publicly financed health care. Those who are undocumented have an even harder time, and new laws make it more difficult to



February 1999 rally in Yakima, Washington, protests firing of undocumented workers ordered by INS. Militant/Scott Breen

attain legal status.

The INS has stepped up its raids in workplaces throughout the country. In the eight months to June of this year, for example, immigration officials seized more than 1,200 people in 86 factories in New York's garment industry. The bosses work hand-in-glove with the cops, seizing the opportunity to include union militants among the lists they hand over. In total, a record 300,000 people have been deported in the last two years, more than twice the number expelled in the previous two.

"American jobs belong to America's legal

workers" declared Clinton in 1996 as he signed an order prohibiting companies that hire undocumented workers from receiving federal contracts. With such rhetorical justification and with their anti-working class, anti-immigrant policies, Clinton and his ilk lay the basis for the more consistent and systematic anti-immigrant demagoguery of Patrick Buchanan and other ultrarightists. Buchanan scapegoats immigrants and other sectors of the oppressed for the unemployment and social dislocation caused by the crisis of the

Continued on Page 14

## Steelworkers fight lockout in Illinois

BY SHELTON McCRAINEY  
AND ALYSON KENNEDY

GRANITE CITY, Illinois — Seven-hundred fifty members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1063 were locked out of their jobs by American Steel Foundry here on October 4 after rejecting a five-year contract proposal. After the contract expired September 30, the company proposed a "last, best,

and final offer." It was rejected at an October 2 union meeting.

The local has organized pickets at plant entrances. Two smaller locals at the plant — International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 309 and International Association of Machinists Local 2006 — have contracts that will expire at the end of the month.

"If they want me to give five years of my

life, they need to give us a chance to read the contract and understand it," said Tom Bridges as he stood on the picket line in front of the plant. "We saw and voted on the contract on Saturday. The company scheduled a down day on Monday. [We] came to work Tuesday and we were locked out."

The company proposed only a yearly 40-

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## Protesters say, 'Stop execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal'

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge signed a new death warrant for framed-up political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal on October 13. If served, Abu-Jamal will be executed by lethal injection December 2.

Supporters of Abu-Jamal's fight for justice and opponents of the death penalty are mobilizing to demand a halt to the state of Pennsylvania's death march and to call for Abu-Jamal's release. A national protest to demand Abu-Jamal's freedom has been called for 11 a.m. Saturday, October 16, in downtown Philadelphia.

Dozens of advocates of Abu-Jamal's release turned out for a news conference held by the Chicago Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal October 14 to protest the death warrant. At the news conference, it was announced there will be at least one bus from Chicago to the Philadelphia action, leaving the night before. A local protest will be held at Federal Plaza in Chicago at 4:30 p.m. October 18.

As we go to press, a demonstration for Abu-Jamal's release is taking place in New York City, and buses are planned for the Philadelphia rally.

Ridge's death warrant came about one week after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the Black journalist's case. Abu-Jamal was immediately put into "phase two" of death row. He is separated from other inmates, is under 24-hour surveillance, and has further restrictions of visitation rights and phone use.

Abu-Jamal was railroaded to death row on

Continued on Page 14

## Truckers in Quebec strike for union rights

BY JOANNE PRITCHARD

MONTREAL — Owner-operator truck drivers began taking actions across Quebec the week of October 2 in support of their right to unionize and negotiate their working conditions collectively. They voted October 10 in assemblies organized across Quebec to defy an injunction ordering them to put an end to any "picket lines, assemblies, demonstrations or any roadblocks...that limit or prevent the free circulation of goods and services." Police began arresting the strikers and towing away their parked trucks for violating the injunction the next day.

The drivers involved are affiliated to the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (Confederation of Democratic Unions) and the Confederation of National Trade Unions. Quebec labor legislation does not recognize the right of independent truckers to be unionized. About 4,000 truckers are on strike; a further 18,000 are affiliated to the Quebec Federation of Labor.

The strikers' main demand is for a decent hourly rate as opposed to being paid by the

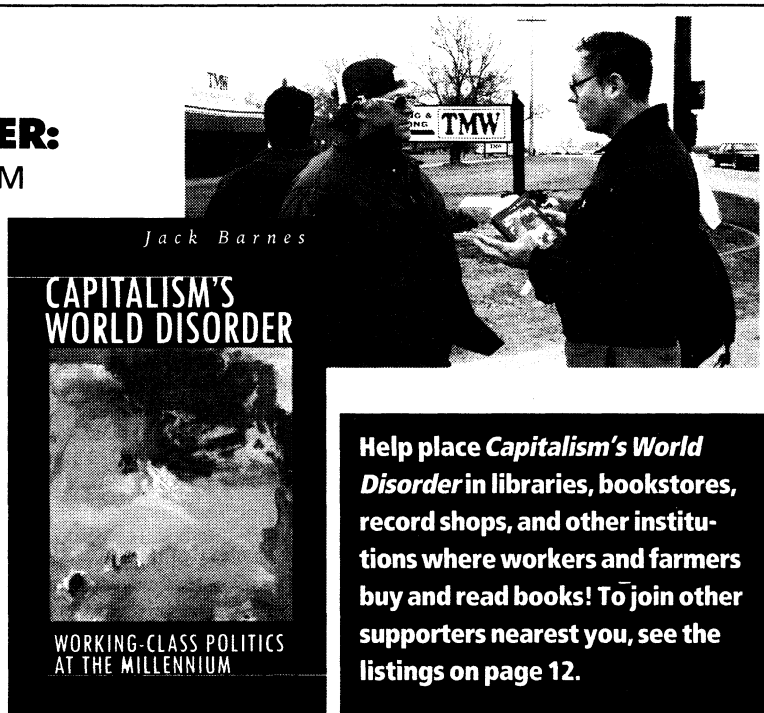
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**CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER:**  
WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

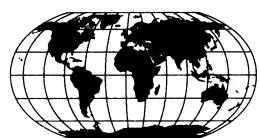
JACK BARNES

"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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**Campaign against Mexican truckers hurts labor — page 7**



## Rightist party elected in India

Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was reelected prime minister October 3, while his party increased its influence in parliamentary elections. Vajpayee is the first prime minister to win back-to-back elections since 1971. Foreign and domestic bondholders hope his government, the sixth in the last four years, can produce a more stable regime. The BJP consolidated its forces by building a 24-party coalition — the National Democratic Alliance — drawing more heavily on other bourgeois nationalist parties as allies. The BJP increased its number of parliament seats only slightly, from 181 to 182 since last year's election. The seats of its parliamentary allies, however, jumped from 81 to 118. This includes Shiv Sena, described by an article in the October 8 *Economist* as "ultra-nationalists."

The Congress Party, which has traditionally dominated parliament, suffered big blows, getting 112 seats, down from 140 in 1998, with many fewer electoral allies.

Though the BJP reportedly diluted its nationalist, anti-Muslim rhetoric, it campaigned on credentials from its war against Kashmir rebels, whom it portrayed as Pakistani-backed, and on conducting India's first nuclear tests. The rightists also attacked Congress Party prime ministerial candidate Sonia Gandhi for being born in Italy. "The people don't want a foreigner as prime minister," sneered BJP spokesman, Arun Jaitley.

Yaswant Sinha, the regime's former finance minister, said the new government would pursue "a second generation of economic reforms," like selling off state-owned banks and industries. The new regime has raised fuel prices by 40 percent. Some 300 million people in India live in poverty.

## Ankara attacks Kurds in Iraq

Thousands of Turkish troops stormed the Iraqi border in the final days of September, carrying out a mandate by the army brass to battle every Kurdish "terrorist" until they surrender or are "neutralized." Unconfirmed reports say that as many as 30 rebels have been killed. Guerrilla soldiers of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) had been fighting for independence, until they declared a unilateral cease-fire recently after PKK leader

## S. Korea: nuclear leak sparks protest



Protesters outside a government office in south Korea October 6 following accident at a nuclear plant. Two days earlier, 45 liters of heavy water had leaked at the Wolsung plant in southeast region, exposing at least 55 people to dangerous radiation.

Abdullah Ocalan was captured in February.

Eight Kurdish rebels crossed into Turkey and surrendered to Turkish troops, as part of their call for a cease-fire. A Turkish court ordered them arrested. They were charged with membership in an illegal organization, after four days of questioning by military cops. Under so-called antiterrorism laws, they were not permitted to see lawyers. The eight were jailed in the southeastern city of Mus.

## British judge rules that Pinochet should be extradited to Spain

Acting on a warrant from Madrid that charged Augusto Pinochet with crimes against citizens of Spain under his rule, chief British judge Ronald Bartle ruled October 8 that the former dictator of Chile should be extradited to Spain. Pinochet's U.S.- and British-backed regime was responsible for the "disappearance" of thousands of people between 1973 and 1990. Pinochet's 1973 coup overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende.

vador Allende.

The warrant from Spain charges the dictator with 34 counts of torture and one count of conspiracy to torture. Pinochet, who pled innocent to the charges, was nabbed by London cops on Oct. 16, 1998, while recuperating from back surgery. London, Madrid, and Washington will seek to use a show trial of their former — and now expendable — henchman as a precedent for new interventions around the world under the banner of "humanitarianism." Despite this reality, however, many liberal, social democratic, and Stalinist groups and individuals have supported the moves to try Pinochet in an imperialist court. Pinochet's defense is trying to spring him from the trial on the basis of his deteriorating health. While he awaits the outcome, British authorities have placed him under house arrest at a southwest London mansion he rents.

## Brazilians protest gov't austerity

Eleven hundred participants in the "Peoples March for Brazil" completed their 1,000-mile journey to Brasilia, the capital, October 7, culminating in a demonstration of 10,000 people to protest the government's gutting "reforms." "IMF get out!" was a popular chant. Many of the austerity measures pushed by the government are aimed not only at meeting the needs of the Brazilian capitalist class, but also at satisfying the International Monetary Fund, which issued Brazil a \$41.5 billion "bailout" loan last year. "Enough of FHC" read many posters and banners, referring to Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso's initials. Brazil's Congress, in the meantime, has approved a new set of "pension reforms." The bill provides

incentives for workers to toil longer in a system that has no official minimum retirement age.

## Caracas vies for land in Guyana

The government of Venezuela claims historical rights to a 56,000-square-mile, gold-rich hunk of land, called Essequibo, which is now part of its eastward neighbor Guyana. The regime has stepped up calls for negotiations on the disputed territory. At the same time, Caracas has increased troop movements on the border, including flying helicopter gunships over Guyanese territory. Spain colonized Venezuela and Britain colonized Guyana. The borders they carved ultimately left Guyana, which won formal independence in 1966, with Essequibo. Caracas never recognized the agreement.

## Lima pushes wage cuts

Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, looking to compensate the ruling families he serves for the slumping economy and to satisfy the ever-present International Monetary Fund's demands for austerity, announced in late September measures that will further squeeze the rural and urban workers there. This includes imposing a 15-percent wage cut on some workers, as well as an increase in the tax on gasoline. Peru has faced depression conditions for at least two years.

## Hundreds die in Mexico floods

Deadly mudslides triggered by heavy rains claimed the lives of at least 222 people in Mexico's coastal and southern region in the first week of October. In the state of Puebla, 166 were confirmed dead as of October 8. The disaster disproportionately affected peasants and other working people. Dozens of peasants were killed in small villages like Chiconcua and Camocuautla, where evacuation took place. Villagers say that hundreds are still engulfed underneath the mud. In Tabasco, located along the Gulf of Mexico, some 82,000 people were in shelters and 75 percent of the capital city, Villahermosa, was flooded, four or five feet high in some places.

## Millions lack health insurance

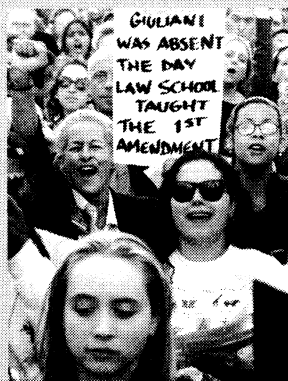
In a period of economic boom for the U.S. rulers, the number of working people lacking health insurance jumped to 16.3 percent or 44.3 million — an increase of 1 million since 1997, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. From 1987 to 1998, 12 million people joined the legions of uninsured toilers. "While most Americans — 70 percent — were covered by private insurance plans typically offered by their employer," read an article in the October 4 *Newark Star Ledger*, "many companies have scaled back or eliminated coverage. Close to 50 percent of poor full-time workers were uninsured in 1998. Some 35 percent of Latinos, 22 percent of Black, 21 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 12 percent of whites have no health benefits, the article reported.

— BRIANTAYLOR

# THE MILITANT

## Defend democratic rights!

*New York mayor Giuliani's attack on the Brooklyn Museum not only challenges the right to view artistic exhibitions. It impinges on all the democratic rights working people have won, including the right to organize. Such attacks provide a springboard for rightists, who seek to drive them further. The 'Militant' campaigns to defend our hard-won rights. Don't miss a single issue!*



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# Los Van Van concert in Miami: a victory for free speech

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD  
AND ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI — Three thousand people flocked to the Miami Arena on October 9 in defiance of threats, jeers, and a campaign of intimidation organized by rightists in the Cuban-American community and their allies in the city government. They came to enjoy an evening of red-hot dance music direct from Havana. The Cuban dance band Los Van Van wound up their successful 28-city tour of the United States and Puerto Rico with an unprecedented concert, while a crowd of anticommunist demonstrators yelled obscenities outside.

The concert was a victory celebration for many fans of the band — and an atmosphere of defiance was palpable. "It's the music, man. You've got to put the other stuff aside," one young man told TV reporters as he mounted the steps of the Arena. "The other stuff" was a several weeks-long campaign by opponents of the Cuban revolution to stop the concert from taking place, and right-wingers yelling "prostitutes," "jineteras," and "commies" from across the street.

Some people waved, and held their tickets up as they walked past protesters.

The concert crowd was young and Cuban, and included many Blacks. "We came to dance. We have the right to our music. This is the music we grew up with," one young Cuban who did not want to be identified told *Militant* reporters. A Cuban concert goer who is Black told news media he came in a raft from Cuba five years ago. "Sure, I've always been anti-Castro. But what's that got to do with the music?" he commented. One fan had "Los Van Van" shaved on his head.

Michael Martinez, 17, was asked by a TV reporter why he and his two friends were wearing Che Guevara T-shirts to the concert. "Because he is a great symbol for humanity," he replied.

A sense of pride and excitement could be felt inside the arena. Dancers waved, smiled, and crowded television cameras on the dance floor, eager to be seen on TV. Local television had begun live coverage of the right-wing protest hours before the concert was scheduled to begin, in a clear effort to dissuade people from attending.

The police stage-managed the protest so that concert goers were forced to walk a gauntlet of rightist protesters who were placed on both sides of the only entrance. A few people, intimidated by this situation, turned around. The majority walked past the rightists who yelled insults and spit at them. The Miami bureau chief of the Spanish news agency EFE was knocked down after being hit on the head by a battery.

After the concert was over, people leaving the arena streamed out with victory signs and holding up their Los Van Van T-shirts. They were forced by the police to walk back passed

the irate crowd of rightists who threw bottles, rocks, ice, and eggs at them. Police in riot gear stood between the barricaded protesters and the elated music lovers in a media-oriented show of protection. But they did nothing to stop the rock throwers.

## City gov't tries to stop concert

Donald Warshaw, Miami city manager and former chief of police, blamed the concert goers for the violence when he told Channel 10, "When you're in a minority and you are making obscene gestures at a crowd of protesters, it's not the smartest thing to do, and even the police can't deal with that."

The city government's efforts to stop the concert were led among others by Miami mayor Joseph Carollo, who went on local radio talk shows calling the effort to bring Los Van Van to Miami an outrageous provocation staged by the Cuban government. He labeled concert promoter Debbie Ohanian "Havana Debbie." In this campaign he was joined by city commissioners, and mayor of Miami-Dade county Alex Penelas, who issued a statement condemning the concert and praising the protesters.

Under pressure from city officials and a media campaign organized by rightist radio commentators, the original concert hall for Los Van Van was canceled. When the event was rebooked in a different location, the city aided in the organization of protests. Concert promoters were charged \$31,000 for police protection. The show went forward anyway, due to the profound changes in Cuban-American community, which have weakened the right wing both in and out of the Miami city government.

At 6:00 p.m. on the night of the concert, Brigade 2506, a terrorist organization involved in the invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, organized to show a film titled "Libertad" (liberty), which claimed to portray the suffering of a Cuban rafter who came to this country for "freedom." Most of those at the movie show were older and very few rafters were present. At the same time, it was clear that many rafters went to the concert.

Many people believe that one of the reasons for the opposition to Los Van Van playing here is because the musicians are Black.

To try to prove that they were not racist, some of the anticommunist protesters had signs saying "Blacks are brothers, Reds are not!" Few Blacks joined in.

The radio commentators opposed to the Los Van Van performance said that the reason they didn't want them to play is because they are ambassadors of the Cuban government. "They are not artists but terrorists," said one of the commentators on Radio Mambi. Los Van Van has been playing music in Cuba for 30 years. "Like all Cuban artists, we are members of



Music fan proudly enters Miami Arena to hear Los Van Van despite rightist protesters

the Ministry of Culture. But we do not come representing the Ministry of Culture. We come as artists to play our music," Juan Formell told reporters at an October 9 press conference.

Three years ago Rosita Fornés, a Cuban singer who has never publicly broken with the Cuban government, was to appear at the Centro Vasco restaurant. The establishment was fire-bombed. She was then scheduled to perform at the Jackie Gleason Theatre. The performance was canceled for a second time after threats.

That same year many enterprises that did business with Cuba were firebombed, including Marazul Travel Tours and Tu Familia shipping. In 1997, WRTO-FM Tropical 98.3 — the only station that played the music of Los Van Van — stopped broadcasting their songs after a month because of a bomb threat, critical editorials on other Spanish-language stations, and the withdrawal of some of its major advertisers.

In the last year or two, however, many Cuban bands and musicians have played in the Miami area, but mostly in smaller clubs in Miami Beach. This was the first time a space such as the Miami Arena was used. The music of Los Van Van is played in Miami clubs and their CDs and tapes are sold throughout the city.

Miami commissioner Thomas Regalado participated in the protest of the Los Van Van concert. "It's a one way street," he told the *Miami Herald*. "In Cuba you don't see our performers like Chirino and Gloria being able to play." This was answered by one concert participant who pointed out that should the Miami-based Cuban-American Gloria Estefan perform in Havana, she would immediately be prevented from performing in Miami. In one highly publicized incident in 1997, Puerto Rican salsero Andy Montañez was banned from performing here because he had been photographed hugging Cuban singer Silvio Rodríguez.

## Widespread support for free speech

The turnout for the concert showed the widespread support for free speech and ar-

tistic expression in Miami, including among Cuban-Americans. It showed the rejection among many of rightist propaganda that claims widespread "violation of human rights" in Cuba, which supposedly justifies not allowing Cuban artists who don't desert their country to perform in the United States.

For days leading up to the event, work areas buzzed with a lively, sometimes heated, but civil discussion about Los Van Van's appearance in Miami and about the effort to shutdown the concert.

At one Machinists-organized plant, a number of Cuban-Americans who are known for their stance against the Cuban revolution argued that cultural exchanges were good and that people should be able to attend free from intimidation. Those who in the past have openly taunted and harassed opponents of the U.S. embargo against Cuba said nothing to a few co-workers who attended the concert.

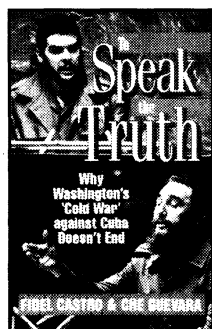
When one worker wore her Los Van Van T-shirt co-workers wanted to see what other cities the band played in. Half a dozen asked for postcards that were given out at the concert. One worker wanted information on the band's Internet site.

Many others wanted to hear about the music and discuss the counterprotest. Some said they would like to go to Los Van Van's next concert in Miami, scheduled for December.

At an aerospace plant nearby, one older Cuban worker said he went to the protest and "all those who went [inside] were communists."

But another worker said, "The right way to protest would be to not buy tickets. But they tried to prevent other people from going. They [Los Van Van] don't just play for Cubans either. Colombians like them, other people like them. If I can, I'll go in December when they come back," he said.

*Eric Simpson is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 415 and Rollande Girard is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 1126.*



## To Speak the Truth

Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End

Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

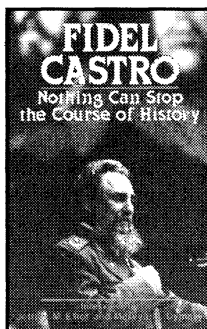
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From Pathfinder

## Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the Course of History

Interview by Jeffrey M. Elliot and Mervyn Dymally

Takes up U.S.-Cuban relations, Cuba's role in the fight against apartheid rule in South Africa, the overthrow of the Grenada revolution, and the social consequences of the foreign debt in Latin America and the Caribbean. \$18.95



## 'Withdraw troops from E. Timor!'

Communist League candidate in New Zealand speaks out

The following statement was issued October 14 by Ruth Gray, announcing her campaign for Parliament in the Christchurch Central electorate. Gray is a member of the Engineers Union.

My campaign is demanding the immediate withdrawal of New Zealand, Australian, and all foreign troops from East Timor. The deployment of the United Nations force has nothing to do with helping the people of East Timor to free themselves. Its real goal is to advance imperialist economic domination of the region. Through 25 years of unbroken struggle, which was actively opposed every step of the way by the rulers in Wellington, Canberra, and Washington, the workers, peasants, and youth of East Timor have demonstrated that they are not helpless victims, but determined

and courageous fighters for their own national independence.

My campaign is also calling for support from the wider labor movement to the pilots locked out by Ansett Airlines. The pilots' fight is part of the growing resistance by working people around the world to the attempts by the bosses to unload the effects of the deepening capitalist crisis onto our shoulders. My campaign stands in support of all such efforts by working people to defend ourselves, our living conditions, and our trade unions.

I support the recent protests and occupations of university registry buildings by students opposing fee increases. Education is not a privilege but a right and my campaign calls for education to be free to all, including at the tertiary level.

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# 'Good job, good time, and good luck to Pathfinder'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"We are making real progress in the campaign," Nan Bailey told the *Militant* October 13. Bailey is overseeing a campaign headed by the Trade Union Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) "to place *Capitalism's World Disorder—Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* and other Pathfinder books in bookstores and libraries where workers and farmers read, borrow, and buy books."

The book, Pathfinder's newest publication, contains five speeches by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes, reflecting the experiences and discussions of the party, and of workers and farmers more broadly, over the past turbulent decade.

They provide the reader with a powerful tool in understanding the disorder of the international capitalist system, and in linking up with the many and varied struggles of working people that are laying the foundations of a movement against that system.

Bailey told the *Militant* that the Trade Union Committee is moving quickly toward proposing national goals for the campaign, and needs information from those who are participating in it. "We have requested figures on the numbers of the book sold and placed since the campaign started through September 30," she said, "and figures on the number of bookstore and library visits that have occurred. Any goals adopted, too, and details of participation."

Pathfinder Press's business manager, Sara Lobman, reports that contact with stores and libraries is bringing results. Following these visits, some outlets ordered 39 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* during September, and nine in the first 11 days of October. More reports are coming into the *Militant* as well. Space restrictions mean that several reports, including one from a successful trip to Scotland, will be published in coming issues.



## Sales team places Pathfinder titles in Georgia stores

BY GLADYS WILLIAMS

QUITMAN, Georgia — On October 5-6, I had the privilege of having three friends from Pathfinder bookstore and the *Militant* newspaper—Arlene and Paul from Atlanta, and Jeanne from Birmingham — come for a short visit.

They arrived around 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. and we took off for a library in the area to see what books they have about Cuba, and try to place a Pathfinder order there. I am referring to recent books about Cuba, because the ones this library has are outdated. The person we needed to see was busy trying to update their computer and the young man Jeanne spoke to had no authority to place an order.

From there we journeyed to several other towns in the area. Our first stop was a record store. This was our second visit there. The owner informed us that the people who patronize his business are not "readers." We had taken it upon ourselves at an earlier date to leave some book covers which might have increased someone's curiosity about Cuba, Malcolm X, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and other Pathfinder titles, but none of the covers were visible.

Our next stop was a barber shop. The person who runs the shop was busy with a customer but he seemed very interested so we left him a catalogue to look through and the promise to return the next day.

On the way to our next stop, we saw a couple of houses with a few Latinos, and I suggested we turn around to talk with them and to try to make a sale. I approached with my famous "Hola" and asked if anyone spoke English. One worker came forward and it was on then. One person on our team spoke Spanish, and that helped too.

It was a good conversation and we all communicated very well about them being called trash and other expletives that we all have been called at one time or another. We sold him *The Communist Manifesto*, *The*

*Action Program*, and a copy of *Perspectiva Mundial*, and exchanged phone numbers because this worker is waiting for *Capitalism's World Disorder* to come out in Spanish. We were all thrilled about our new friendship and our sale.

On our way to get something to eat, we passed a shop called Roots. I told my friends that they had printed T-shirts for the People's Tribunal, an organization formed to create and develop racial equality that will enhance political justice, economic education, and spiritual growth. The focus of the People's Tribunal right now is the Lowndes County jail, where Kevin Farmer, a policeman, is accused of killing Willie James Williams, a Black worker.

Two Pathfinder supporters from Atlanta had participated in a September 4 march for justice against police brutality in Valdosta and after the march visited Roots. We were following up on their conversation. We made an appointment for the next day at noon. At dinner, we ate a lot, dessert and all, and went back to my house for a while.

A farmer from Savannah called to inquire about a lady from a newspaper that had called him but he didn't have a number or a name and thought maybe I could help him as to who that might have been. As it turned out Arlene was who he was looking for. They talked and got things straight about a visit to Savannah for Thursday.

We left shortly after to go to the farm of a farmer involved in the People's Tribunal who is one of those fighting against the loss of land suffered by farmers who are Black. The next morning I got my grandchildren

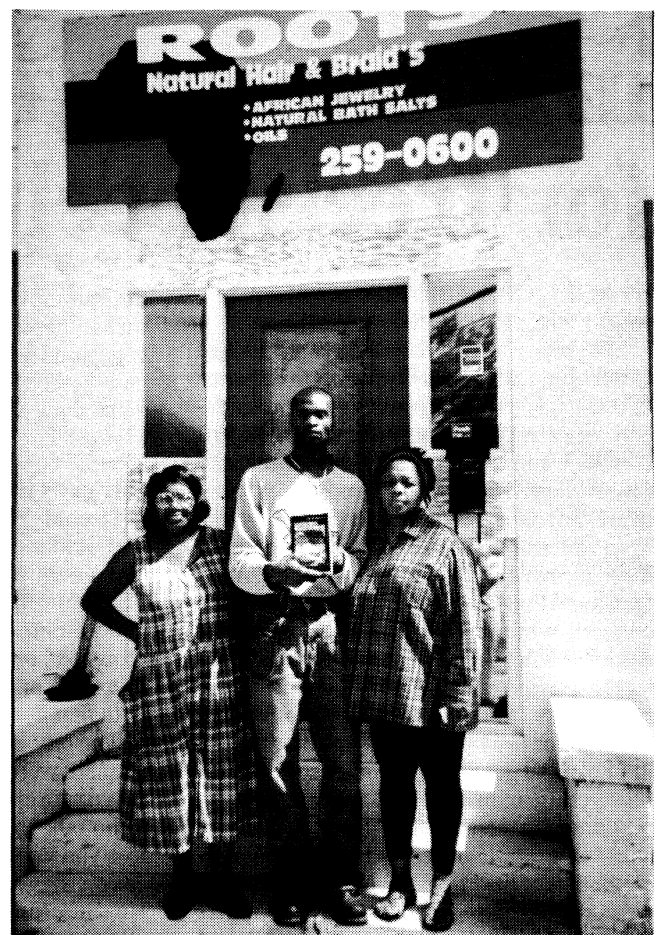
ready to be dropped off for school, and took 'Tadpole,' a friend of mine, out to the farm to help take the tobacco out of the bulk barn.

At 11:00 a.m. my three friends and I went back to Roots and talked extensively to the owner and placed an order, including a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and took a picture.

We thanked her graciously and left. Our next stop was the barber shop, where the owner had already chosen his books from the catalogue and made an order for his shop. He said that they have classes there sometimes and told us that we were welcome. He ordered Pathfinder titles by W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, and *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* by Doug Jenness.

From there we drove to a sewing factory that employs 1,800 for a plant-gate sale. The huge plant is a separately incorporated town and almost completely fenced in with a lot of signs with "Don'ts" — so we didn't. We didn't park in their restricted areas, we didn't generate any sales, we didn't get to talk to a lot of people and we didn't have a lot of time, but it was quite an experience. We'll be back.

That night we had a good, informative class on the first agrarian reform in Cuba based on a speech by Fidel Castro that was in the *Militant*. As we were all tired from our day's activities, and my three friends' journey to Savannah began at 6:00 a.m., we said goodnight at 11:00 p.m. As I drove home I felt good about our accomplish-



Militant/Jeanne FitzMaurice

From left: Gladys Williams, Paul Cornish, and Valletta Blyedelaney in front of Roots in Valdosta, Georgia. The store is expanding into a bookstore and gallery.

ments. Good job, good time, and good luck to Pathfinder.



## Co-workers' suggestions of stores prove helpful

BY TOM HEADLEY

WASHINGTON, DC — The suggestions and participation of co-workers has proved

Continued on Page 10

# — YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD — YS makes progress on fund drive

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

BY JACOB PERASSO

CHICAGO — Young Socialists around the country organized successful fund drive events over the October 9-10 weekend, moving the YS closer to making its national goal of raising \$8,000 by November 14. Responding to a national appeal to raise money at a more sustained pace, several chapters have organized fund-raising activities, from raffles to the preparation of dinners before Militant Labor Forum events, over the past two weekends to mark the "halfway point" in the Fund Drive, and to successfully reach half of their local goals.

The YS chapter in New York held a party that raised \$130 towards their \$700 goal. Doug Nelson, the chapter organizer, explained that such events provide an opportunity for chapter members to discuss politics informally with youth interested in the YS, have fun, and raise a little money at the same time.

In San Francisco, YS members from Santa Cruz and San Francisco took advantage of the Red Weekend, where participants were busy professionalizing the YS National Office, to work towards reaching half of their goals.

YS members and supporters organized meals for the Red Weekend, which the participants appreciated. They also kicked off a joint raffle, which will be held the last day of the fund drive, and organized a Saturday night party. Santa Cruz and San Francisco raised \$335 towards their goals.

At the Philadelphia regional educational conference October 2-3, a fund pitch was given by J.P. Crysedale and \$454 dollars was raised. "The conference was successful, and we raised money in the process. YS members here are considering raising our goal," said Crysedale (see report below).

Several hundred dollars have now been

collected from pledges made at the September 4 educational conference held in Chicago. The Chicago YS also sold \$50 in raffle tickets at a Pathfinder Fund event held here.



## YS strengthened from East Coast regional socialist conference

BY ELENA TATE

PHILADELPHIA — The Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party cosponsored a weekend of classes and discussion here October 2-3. Nine YS members from Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, and Chicago were among the 40 participants, and one young person asked to join following the conference.

Saturday night there was a forum on why the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners is a victory for all working people and on the fight to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques. Migdalia Jiménez of the Chicago Young Socialists spoke about a recent trip to Puerto Rico she participated in as a reporter for the *Militant* newspaper. Jiménez reported on the August 29 rally in San Juan for the unconditional release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners and about her trip to Vieques, where youth and workers are protesting the U.S. naval base that occupies much of the island.

She also spoke about the rally she attended in Chicago to welcome the release of 11 of the prisoners. Jiménez described the event by saying, "Because of the conditions of Clinton's 'clemency,' the prisoners we were welcoming home had to come one at a time, in separate cars. But this just showed how glad people in the Puerto Rican community were to have them home. We waited five hours, until every one of them had been received!"

Martín Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Fermin Morales, a unionist and electrical worker and an activist with the local chapter of the National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, also spoke at the forum. The program described how the fight for Puerto Rican independence

strengthens the working class in the United States, as well as in Puerto Rico.

On Sunday there were three classes and a meeting on the fall perspectives of the Young Socialists for young people attending the conference. The classes were based on readings, including *To the Rural Poor*, by V.I. Lenin, and *Teamster Rebellion*, by Farrell Dobbs. The third class was called "How Bonapartism Greases the Skids for Fascism," and was based on readings from *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Discussion was lively in each of the classes.

A YS member presented a report on behalf of the YS National Committee on the YS fall perspectives. There was an hour-long discussion on how chapters have been successful at carrying out the YS campaigns and on plans for the coming months. At the center of the work of the YS is the fall fund drive, both because money is needed to fund the national office and to respond to politics, but also because organizing weekly fund drive events gives YS members an opportunity to build stronger chapters.

Another focus of the fall will be getting out to regions of the country where proletarian struggles are taking place but where no chapter of the YS, or branch of the SWP, currently exists, especially in small mining towns. A major activity YS members will be taking part in wherever we are is getting Pathfinder books, especially *Capitalism's World Disorder*, placed in commercial bookstores, big and small, where workers, farmers, and youth buy books.

The discussion at the YS meeting centered on what chapters have been doing to build the fund drive, including raffles in Chicago and Philadelphia, speaking engagements on campuses, and plans for a used book sale in Newark, New Jersey.

The Newark and New York chapters reported that they recently collaborated on organizing a class on the Cuban revolution, which drew three contacts of the YS. Also at the meeting, and during the larger conference, plans were discussed to bring as many contacts of the Young Socialists as possible to the memorial celebration of the life of Ethel Lobman (see article on pages 8-9).



# Young Socialists take step forward in 'Red Weekend'

BY GREG MCCARTAN  
AND JASON ALESSIO

SAN FRANCISCO — "This weekend was possible because we carried out a successful series of political campaigns as a national organization over the past four months," said Young Socialists leader Samantha Kern. "The strengthening of the YS that came out of our work this summer helped us recognize the importance of having a national office that we are proud of, and one that our central leadership committee can function out of. All of this puts us in a good position to plan for a YS convention early next year."

Over the October 8-10 weekend members of the Young Socialists, the San Francisco branch of the Socialist Workers Party, supporters of the communist movement, and several members of the party's Trade Union Committee participated in a "Red Weekend" to organize the YS leadership files, spruce up the organization's national office, and clean up the Pathfinder bookstore and offices of the Socialist Workers Party, which share the same premises. More than 25 people participated.

Kern pointed to many things over the past few months that have strengthened the YS and the organization's proletarian norms: YS members' participation and leadership in organizing the socialist summer schools in several cities this past summer; joining regional teams to sell the *Militant* and *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*; completing a "Red Week" to repaint several floors of the Pathfinder Building in New York; building and participating in the Active Workers Conference in Ohio in August; initiating regional socialist educational conferences across the United States; and participating in international political events in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

A functioning national office is key to moving forward on the national campaigns the Young Socialists is carrying out, from winning new youth to join its ranks, to jointly leading the campaign to place *Capitalism World's Disorder* and other books published by Pathfinder in outlets where working people buy books, to strengthening relations with other political organizations.

Over two days several thousand electronic and paper documents were sorted, culled, organized, and put into new filing systems that reflect the work of YS chapters, national campaigns, policies, work with international organizations, finances, and work with the Socialist Workers Party throughout the last five years of the organization's existence. Files with the minutes and records of national leadership meetings and conventions were established. Working files contain materials for the daily use in the national office, and material of longer-term use is now in archives. The weekend also included classes on how to use different computer programs that are needed.

A second crew organized the work space in the office, including painting a furnace and

filing cabinets; setting up the desks, computer, two phones, bookshelves, and fax machine; and decorating the walls and office. With help from experienced party members, YS members rewired their office's phone and electrical outlets, fixed their fax machine and printer, and got other equipment in running order.

YS members from San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and Seattle led the effort. "We learned a lot about political filing, how to use computer programs, how to get our office organized, and even how to do wiring and other skills," said Jason Alessio at the end of the project. "If we aren't organized on a national level we can't be too effective," he said.

"Our work over the past months has strengthened the proletarian functioning of the YS," Kern said. "This was the goal of the Red Weekend as well."

During the weekend Kern and YS leader Cecilia Ortega received several phone calls from YS chapters around the United States about events held that weekend as part of the campaign to reach half the \$8,000 goal set for the YS national fund drive (see article on facing page). YS members in San Francisco held a social event, a raffle, and helped organize meals to raise funds for the local goal of \$800. After working with the YS leaders for two days, the party's Trade Union Committee is organizing to ensure closer collaboration between the party and YS in carrying out joint campaigns to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* and place it in bookstores, libraries, and other outlets, as well as party branches working with the YS members in their area to ensure a successful fund drive.

In addition to two days of hard work, the weekend was infused with reports and discussion on developments in the class struggle, as well as making plans to continue the participation of communists in regional teams to get out to these struggles.

The Friday evening Militant Labor Forum featured reports from three speakers on labor rallies and efforts to reach out to coal miners with the *Militant* and *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Jim Gotesky, a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), had joined 1,000 locked-out USWA members and their supporters at the October 2 rally at the gates of Kaiser Aluminum in Spokane, Washington. Gotesky said he was impressed by the staying-power of their yearlong fight, and the determination of the locked-out workers.

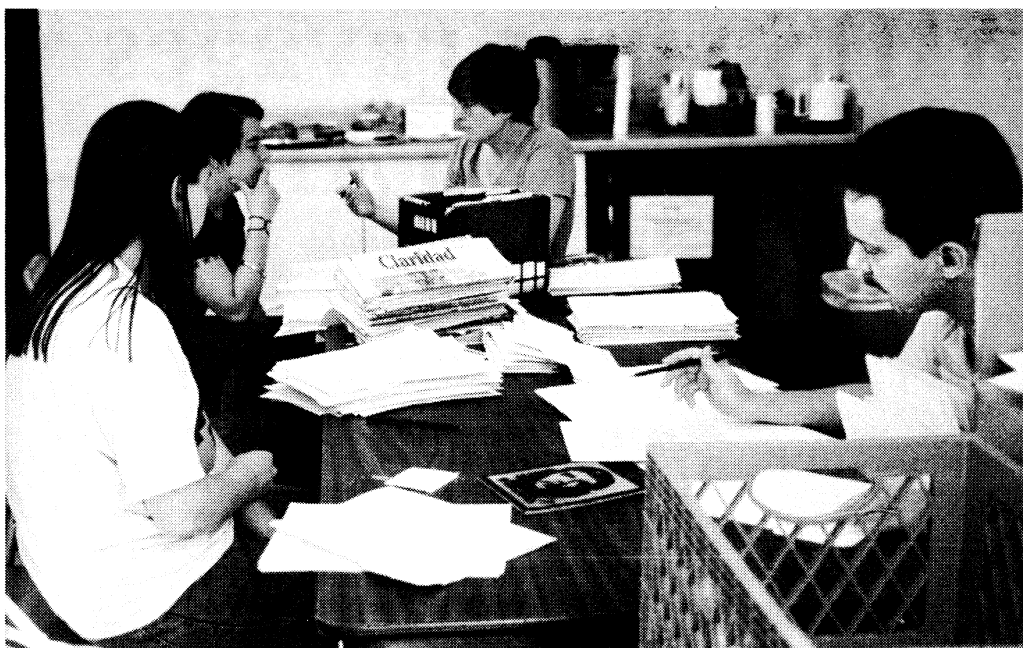
Jason Alessio, a YS member at the University of Santa Cruz, explained the gains made by socialists reaching out to coal miners in Colorado. Alessio, who participated in a team six months ago to the coal-mining region, had just returned from five days on the road with other socialists. "We met with workers who subscribed to the paper. They referred us to other miners who would be interested."

Ellen Berman, a member of the International Association of Machinists, joined a rally of 500 USWA members on strike against Rocky Mountain Steel Mills in Pueblo, Colorado. The October 2 "Jam for Justice" marked two years of the fight.

Saturday afternoon the brigade took a break to participate in a class given by party leader Norton Sandler on a working-class explanation and response to fascist-minded Patrick Buchanan and Bonapartist forces such as Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura.

Jack Willey, a member of the party's Trade Union Committee, reported on developments in the coal fields. Willey came to San Francisco from the October 7-9 Black Lung Conference held in Chicago, sponsored by the Black Lung Association and the UMWA. He described the beginnings of a fight to defend lifetime health coverage and pensions that the miners have won over decades, which are now under attack by the government and coal bosses.

Willey also reported that a team of socialists volunteered for a one-week team in the western coal fields to con-



Militant/Ellen Berman  
Participants in 'Red Weekend' sort through Young Socialists files in San Francisco, October 10. From left: Autumn Knowlton, Samantha Kern, Amy Husk, and Greg McCartan.

tinue the work of reaching out with the *Militant* and *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Participants in the weekend discussed ways to build that team and another planned for Alabama and Georgia leading up to a regional education conference in Atlanta at the end of the month.

Ortega reported on plans for a socialist

education weekend at the University of Santa Cruz on the origins of women's oppression and the fight for women's liberation. YS members there are hosting the weekend to deepen their understanding of this central aspect of the class struggle and its place in building revolutionary organiza-

Continued on Page 14

## Celebration in New York gives boost to Pathfinder Fund

BY SUSANANMUTH

NEW YORK—The October 10 meeting here celebrating Ethel Lobman's political experiences and communist activity gave the Pathfinder Fund an important and needed boost. Those attending gave \$7,056 in contributions and pledges at the meeting. This outpouring—which includes 26 new pledges and 11 pledge increases—was a fitting tribute to Lobman's nearly 56 years of building the communist movement.

Speaking at the event were Olympia Newton, organizer of the Young Socialists in Newark, New Jersey; Nelson González, who was recruited to the Socialist Workers Party through the fight—which Lobman helped lead—for community control of schools in New York City's District 1 in the 1970s; and Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. (See article on pages 8-9.)

Brian Taylor, staff writer for the *Militant*, closed the celebration with an appeal for the Pathfinder Fund. Taylor spoke about the place of Pathfinder literature in winning youth and others to the revolutionary movement today, describing how a high school student in Florida recently found his way to communist ideas.

The student first bought Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* at a commercial outlet. He was "blown away by the book" and started ordering more books by mail from Pathfinder in New York, Taylor said. Recently, upon learning of the Pathfinder bookstore in Miami, he immediately bicycled over to meet for the first time ever with worker-Bolsheviks.

Soon after, he asked to join the Young Socialists.

Particularly when combined with activity and study with members of the communist movement, Taylor pointed out, Pathfinder books can help change "a person's life. A number of revolutionists, some in this room today, came across a book or pamphlet by Pathfinder that stretched your imagination beyond the framework you had before reading it. In some cases it leads to you making profound life decisions."

In the best week in the fund to date, supporters sent in \$11,571. The Pathfinder fund stands just shy of \$40,000 or 32 percent of the \$125,000 goal. To be on target, however, \$76,920—or 62 percent—should have been paid. Local goals surpass the international target. Supporters must now zero in on collecting all of these contributions in order to meet the totals pledged by the November 15 dead-

line. To do that, special attention will be necessary to collect on average \$17,000 each of the next five weeks.

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:

**Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014-2570.**

SusanAnmuth is a member of UAW Local 980 in Edison, New Jersey.

### PATHFINDER FUND RAISE \$125,000 TO HELP PRODUCE THE BOOKS WORKERS AND FARMERS NEED NOW

Area	Goal	Paid	%
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>France</b>	500	250	50%
<b>Australia</b>	950	390	41%
<b>United States</b>			
Detroit	4,500	2,250	50%
Boston	4,100	1,980	48%
Newark	9,000	4,343	48%
Cleveland	4,000	1,895	47%
New York	13,000	5,803	45%
Chicago	8,000	3,360	42%
Pittsburgh	4,000	1,540	39%
Twin Cities	10,000	3,824	38%
Des Moines	1,800	632	35%
St. Louis	1,300	450	35%
Atlanta	3,500	1,120	32%
Philadelphia	3,600	860	24%
Houston	6,500	1,495	23%
Miami	3,500	790	23%
San Francisco	12,500	2,815	23%
Cape Girardeau	250	40	16%
Washington, D.C.	6,000	670	11%
Los Angeles	8,000	660	8%
Seattle	11,000	300	3%
Ft. Collins	475	10	2%
Birmingham	3,000	10	0%
Chippewa Falls	400	150	38%
Other U.S.	2,312	1,812	78%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>\$120,737</b>	<b>\$36,809</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Canada</b>	3,650	925	25%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	0	40	
<b>Sweden</b>	700	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$129,087</b>	<b>\$39,985</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Should be</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>\$76,923</b>	<b>62%</b>

### Young Socialists Fund Drive

City	Goal	Received	%
Philadelphia	400	259	65%
San Francisco	800	510	64%
Chicago	1,200	657	55%
Newark	500	135	27%
Seattle	400	105	26%
Santa Cruz	650	135	21%
Detroit	350	45	13%
Fort Collins	200	25	13%
Des Moines	130	10	8%
Chippewa Falls	200	5	3%
New York	700	10	1%
Atlanta	250	0	0%
Birmingham	550	0	0%
Los Angeles	500	0	0%
Minneapolis	500	0	0%
Pittsburgh	200	0	0%
Other	0	113	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,530</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Should be</b>	<b>8,000</b>		

# AIDS virus ravages sub-Saharan Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—A social catastrophe has claimed the lives of millions of people living on the African continent and threatens to wipe out tens of millions more. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the disease it leads to, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), have reached pandemic proportions in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to statistics released by the United Nations AIDS Project (UNAIDS) and World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 34 million people living in Africa south of the Sahara desert have been infected with HIV, and 11.5 million of them have already died. In 1998 alone, AIDS killed approximately 2 million people on the continent—80 percent of those dying of the disease worldwide. Many of those infected are unaware they have the virus because of the lack of basic health care and testing.

Since the disease first appeared, 83 percent of all AIDS-related deaths worldwide have taken place in sub-Saharan Africa. Seventy percent of the 5.8 million new cases of HIV in 1998 occurred in this region.

In Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe 20 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 49 is infected. In Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zambia between one in seven and one in nine adults is HIV-positive. In the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, and Kenya at least 10 percent of adults are infected.

UNAIDS and WHO say that the disease has cut the average predicted life expectancy in the nine worst-affected countries from 64 to 47.

## A social question

These horrifying statistics are not simply a medical question. They underline a social relationship imposed by the imperialist exploiters on the oppressed nations—and the workings of the profit system itself. These conditions are reinforced by unequal trade relations forced down the throats of the African nations and the tribute paid by the African peoples to service the foreign debt, which stands at about \$235 billion.

In contrast to Africa, death rates in Europe among people infected with HIV have fallen to less than a fifth of what they were in 1995, according to a study published last November in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal. Death rates are also decreasing in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control reported in August that the number of new AIDS cases in the United States fell by 20 percent from 1997 to 1998.

These shifts are a consequence of growing understanding of the disease—including education campaigns such as those carried out among gays—and the advent of new drugs such as protease inhibitors contribute to these shifts. Without these medicines, most of those who contract HIV can expect to be dead within a decade of infection.

But the \$15,000-a-year protease inhibitors are far out of reach for workers and subsistence farmers in Africa. Most governments on the continent budget less than \$6 per citizen for health care on an annual basis. Many working people have no access to basic medical care, let alone health insurance. Sanitation is very poor, particularly in rural areas and informal settlements.

In contrast to the soaring infection rates in this region, 1 percent of adults worldwide are infected with HIV. The rate is 0.76 percent in the United States and 0.33 percent in Canada. Norys Mayo Castro is one of about 400 Cuban doctors serving in South Africa. "People here are very poor," Mayo said in an interview. "Some aren't working. It's difficult to get healthy food—even to get food at all—and essentials. It's difficult for people to stay clean."

"If people with HIV/AIDS are eating, are healthy, and are clean and get another infection, it won't be so bad," she said, because their bodies will be able to resist sickness to a greater extent.

"It's easier to get sick if a person is already infected, but anybody can contract HIV/AIDS" if they are unaware of the way the disease spreads, especially through unprotected sex. "There are a lot of sexually transmitted diseases, especially among young people." The presence of these diseases, she explained, sharply increases susceptibility to HIV infection.

"We have to educate the community," she emphasized.

Much HIV/AIDS research in North America and Europe is devoted to engineering expensive drugs that can generate continual blood-profits for the capitalist pharmaceutical monopolies. Relatively little research is geared toward finding cheap vaccines that can cure the disease.

## Capitalism's 'natural wastage'

Over the past year the U.S. government threatened Pretoria with trade sanctions over legislation passed here that would allow the purchase of cheaper medication—including AIDS drugs—for state hospitals by bypassing the pharmaceutical monopolies. This law brought an avalanche of protests from drugs companies in the U.S.

On September 17, the Clinton administration announced an agreement to back off from trade sanctions on this question, and South African president Thabo Mbeki pledged that the law would be implemented without breaking World Trade Organization (WTO) rules on "intellectual property."

Three days later Mbeki told reporters at a UN gathering, "the fundamental question is affordable medicine."

Because capitalism generates unemployed workers and landless peasants who cannot be absorbed into the work force by the profit system, the AIDS pandemic in Africa is spoken of by a few forthright bosses as an almost welcome development.

The Nov. 15, 1998, *New York Times* carried an article on how businesses in Africa view AIDS. It quoted Patrick Gorman, chief executive of Chilanga Cement in Lusaka, Zambia. Gorman told the *Times* that between



Militant/T.J. Figueroa

**Cuban doctor Norys Mayo Castro, left, with African National Congress policy coordinator Lulu Madalane, in Sebokeng township in 1996. Lack of healthy food and basic health and sanitary conditions sharply increases susceptibility to HIV infection, said Mayo Castro.**

20 and 25 of the people he employs are dying of AIDS each year.

The article stated: "Most of (the company's) deaths are among laborers, who are easily replaced, and the company is laying off men anyway, Gorman said. 'To put it callously, it's achieving what we want,' he said. 'Natural wastage is letting us reach our manning levels.' Absenteeism for funerals had increased 15-fold between 1992 and 1995, but 'we've stamped on that,' he added."

## Oppression of women

The oppression of women and poor education are key factors in the spread of HIV.

In many rural areas south of the Sahara, no education has been done on the disease and how it spreads. Even in more urbanized areas of South Africa there are high levels of unprotected sex, according to press reports.

A social stigma is also attached to the disease. Last December, Gugu Dlamini, a 36-year-old AIDS education volunteer, was killed by a crowd in KwaMancinza, near Durban, after she announced over the radio that she had HIV.

South Africa's apartheid regime took no steps to educate this country's population on the disease. Now, government officials estimate that within two years the annual AIDS death rate will reach nearly a quarter of a million people, and half a million a year by 2007.

The African National Congress-led government, elected in 1994, has initiated a large-scale political campaign and popular education, including secondary school programs, to combat the spread of the pandemic. The Congress of South African Trade Unions launched an AIDS awareness campaign at its congress in August.

# Conference debates 'Afro-Cubans in Cuban society: past, present, and future'

BY SAM MANUEL AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A conference entitled "Afro-Cubans in Cuban Society: Past, Present, and Future" took place here September 16-17 at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. The two-day event presented a range of views on the question of racism and racist prejudices in Cuba. It included participation by a number of Cuban writers and artists from both within Cuba and outside the country.

The event was organized by the Center for International Policy, the Cuba Exchange Program of the Johns Hopkins University, the Latin American Studies Program of the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and the Fernando Ortiz Foundation in Havana. The foundation, led by well-known Cuban writer Miguel Barnet, focuses on the study of ethnology, sociology, and Cuba's popular traditions. Barnet is vice president of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC). Prior to the national congress of UNEAC in November 1998, the Foundation organized two days of discussion on the survival of elements of racism and racial prejudice in Cuban society today as well as the kinds of measures that must be taken to confront this problem.

This includes giving a greater presence to blacks, as members of Cuban society, in television and other mass media. Barnet attended the conference and participated actively in the discussion.

At a panel discussion entitled "The Past: From the Ten Years' War to 1959," Aline Helg, an associate professor of history at the University of Texas, argued that Afro-Cubans reached their heights in 1895-96. "Perhaps Afro-Cubans are entering the millennium more marginalized than 100 years ago," she said.

This point of view was answered by several of the guests from Cuba. Panelist Pedro Rodríguez, a researcher at the Center of Martí Studies, pointed to the fact that the fight for independence and for the abolition of slavery were closely linked together in Cuban history. "This should be studied more closely to understand the problem in the present and future

and to resolve it as they did by having a union of black and white Cubans," he said.

Among the panelists speaking at the session, "The Present: 1959 Until Today, on the Island," was Rigoberto Lopez, a film director and member of the Cuban Institute of Art and Film Industry. "We need to examine the problem not just from the point of view of black Cubans but the nation's point of view," he said. "One can't talk about a Cuban identity without including the contributions of black Cubans to Cuban culture."

Pointing to the fact that 33 percent of the population are Afro-Cubans, Lopez commented, "blacks have whitened and whites have blackened."

Wayne Smith, one of the central organizers of the conference with the Center for International Policy, hailed the fact that four Black American regiments fought in Cuba as part of the U.S. government's war in 1898 against its imperialist rival Spain.

A session was held on the topic, "The Present, in the Diaspora." There was also a session on "The Importance of Santería," moderated by UNEAC leader Barnet.

Santería originates in West Africa in what is now Nigeria and Benin. It is the traditional religion of the Yoruba peoples there. Its public practice was suppressed in Cuba before the 1959 revolution.

The final session entitled "The Future" was moderated by Enrique Sosa Rodríguez of the University of Havana and featured panelists Garciela Chailloux Laffita of Don Fernando Ortiz Casa de Alto Estudios; Gisela Arandia Covarrubias of UNEAC; and Carlos Moore, a Cuban-born professor at the University of West Indies, who left the island in 1963. Arandia said that while great progress has been made by blacks in Cuba, "full equality has not been achieved." Some roots of racism she said are in learned behavior and prejudices. She also said, in her judgment, the decades-long aggression by the United States against the revolution "fueled suspicions" of those critical of race relations in Cuba.

Arandia pointed to discussions in the national assembly and in the university as potentially leading to a "more profound" discussion on race. She noted Cuban president Fidel Castro's remarks at the 1998 UNEAC congress regarding racial prejudice

and the discussions there about the need to find solutions to the small number of blacks in prominent movie, theater, and television roles. "So we must continue forward and finish the project started in 1959," she concluded.

Moore is the author of *Castro, the Blacks and Africa*. He argued that 40 years of socialism and promotion of a single multicultural Cuba had not brought about the end of racism in Cuba. "A multicultural Cuba is nonsense and rubbish. There are two irreconcilable cultures in Cuba—one Black, the other white," Moore said.

He attacked the idea of a Cuban national identity where the anti-imperialist struggle had become intertwined with the fight of black Cubans for equality and the African culture has become incorporated into the Cuban culture.

Moore described the Cuban government as "white communist rule" and proposed a "government of parity of Blacks and whites" or "separation into two countries."

This attack on the Cuban revolution drew swift and sharp responses from conference participants.

"This idea of separation is an old one which we rejected long ago!" said Ana Cairo, a professor at the University of Havana. She added that Cuban culture and identity are not static, but "are being forged every day in every home, institution and mass organization."

Cuban journalist and writer Tato Quiñones explained, "I am neither white nor black but belong to a religious association (Santería) founded by Africans. The future of Afro-Cubans is tied to that of humanity as a whole," he added.

Another Cuban asked Moore, "My skin is light but I am not white as you would portray me. I was raised by my mother, a black woman. Where do I go in your Cuba?"

Arandia concluded, "This is not just a subject for the past but also for the future. And our future is not just what we inherited from the past. We must build upon the gains of the revolution."

*Sam Manuel is a member of the United Transportation Union. Brian Williams is a member of the United Steelworkers of America. Janice Lynn, a member of the International Association of Machinists contributed to this article.*



# Teamster campaign to restrict Mexican trucks hurts labor

BY JIMALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO — The officialdom of the Teamsters union is waging a strident campaign to maintain protectionist restrictions on trucking from Mexico. While pretending to sympathize with the plight of Mexican workers, the officials' propaganda pits truckers in the United States and Mexico against each other, letting U.S. employers off the hook for deteriorating wages, safety, and working conditions.

"Next New Year's Day, Americans may face a flood of unsafe Mexican trucks driven by untrained, unlicensed, and virtually unpaid drivers," Teamsters union president James Hoffa wrote earlier this spring. Quoted in newspapers across the country it appeared in the September 1999 issue of *America@work*, a monthly magazine pub-

## UNION TALK

lished by the AFL-CIO in an article titled "Putting the brakes on unsafe trucks," which charges that Mexican truckers pose an imminent danger to users of the highways in the United States.

Lurid descriptions of truck accidents involving drivers and cargo from Mexico, along with headlines warning of "thousands of ticking time bombs on our roads," have also been featured in the Teamsters' magazine *New Teamster*, previous issues of *America@work*, as well as editorials and press releases issued by Hoffa, John Sweeney, and other union officials over the past couple of years. Invoking concern for the safety of "America's families," union officials, led by those in the Teamsters and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), are asking Washington to impose further restrictions at the U.S.-Mexico border to trucks and drivers from Mexico.

This "America first," protectionist campaign by the labor bureaucracy plays into the employers' efforts to pit workers against each other. It cuts across building international working-class solidarity. It also paves the way for rightist radicals — like Patrick Buchanan who has been working hard over the last decade to recruit cadre to an incipient fascist movement — to get a broader hearing for their economic nationalism and their overall reactionary course within the working class and its allies.

The occasion for the union tops' sudden preoccupation with highway safety is a provision of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which will allow truck and bus drivers from Mexico to operate their equipment anywhere in the United States beginning Jan. 1, 2000. The trade agreement currently limits Mexican drivers to a "commercial zone" extending 20 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Teamsters and other union officials have organized picket lines, which they have then highlighted in their publications, with people carrying signs saying, "NAFTA: threat to highway safety."

NAFTA — like other economic and military pacts, conferences, or organizations that the capitalist rulers use — is aimed at extending the domination by the handful of wealthy ruling families in the United States and Canada over superexploited workers and oppressed nations such as Mexico. For that reason, class-conscious workers oppose NAFTA just as they oppose APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation), the European Union, or NATO. At the same time, they are not more opposed to NAFTA than they are opposed to any of the alternative ways for organizing bourgeois trade proposed by liberal opponents of this pact, trade union officials, or rightist politicians. They reject the labor tops' nationalist, anti-NAFTA campaign.

Hoffa and the other union tops promote class collaboration with the trucking bosses, in this case, those who seek to use trade restrictions and other protectionist measures as a club against their competitors. What's good for the company is good for "us," union officials argue, and keeping "Mexican

trucks" out, will save "American" jobs.

Of course, other capitalists in the U.S. freight transportation industry look forward to January 1 as another opportunity in the relentless drive by Washington to extend its penetration of Mexico to fatten their profits. And one can be sure that every trucking company will raise the threat of contracting out work to drivers from Mexico to extract deeper concessions from their employees.

The union officials' campaign disarms workers in the face of these attacks by the employers, attacks which will intensify as competition among capitalists in the United States, and with their rivals abroad, sharpens in the midst of the disorder of world capitalism. The officials' goal is to convince working people that we have common national interests with the employers that stand above class differences. So we're fed the demagogic lie that to protect jobs or highways in "our own country" we need to support "our own employers."

The chauvinist campaign by Hoffa, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, and the others who sit on top of the labor movement is part of the preparations that the exploiting classes use to try to drag the working class into war. The capitalist rulers don't just demonize their adversaries against whom they are preparing a military attack. They also bank on economic arguments transmitted by the union tops, who serve as their lieutenants in the labor movement.

When workers come to think of themselves as "Americans" first, last, and always, we are hamstrung in fighting the bosses and advancing the struggle for a just society that puts human needs first, not profits. Our starting point needs to be defending the interests of our class, the working class and its fellow toilers on the land, who have no borders not the interests of "our nation," "our country," or "our company."

Teamsters president Hoffa is leading workers into the trap of ultrarightist politicians like Patrick Buchanan who promote the reactionary lie that workers from other countries should be seen as a threat, rather than potential allies in a fight against the trucking bosses on both sides of the border.

The article "Putting the brakes on unsafe trucks" is itself a chauvinist broadside against Mexican drivers. Readers are reminded over and over that these workers are "unqualified" and "unsafe." They demand that Mexican drivers be subjected to the demeaning drug and alcohol tests that have been forced upon workers in the United States without protest from union officials.

Teamsters officials imply that Mexican truckers are involved in smuggling drugs or transporting unsanitary food. "Inspection gaps provide one more avenue for the flow of illegal drugs into this country, the Team-



Chauvinist picket organized by Teamsters and Amalgamated Transit Union officials at U.S.-Mexico border demanding Washington restrict trucks entering from Mexico.

sters say," states the article. "Two years ago, schoolchildren in Michigan contracted hepatitis from Mexican-grown strawberries — uninspected fruit that can be brought into this country more easily after Jan. 1."

Their contemptuous tone is indicative of their views of all workers. *America@work*, along with Hoffa promote the notion that the deterioration of truckers' pay and working conditions, as well as the outright loss of union jobs can be explained by events other than the trucking bosses' drive for profit. Today they talk of the threat of competition from bosses paying very low wages to drivers from Mexico that soon will be allowed under NAFTA, and urge workers to look to politicians from the two capitalist parties to back off from implementing NAFTA's trucking provisions.

In the 1980s, the threat to truckers was described by union officials as competition from bosses who opened up companies under relaxed rules allowed by the deregulation of trucking. In both cases, Teamster and AFL-CIO officials pay lip service to fighting the bosses but in fact try to divert the ranks toward class collaboration.

Underneath all the demagoguery of protesting abysmal wages, bad working conditions, or laxness in environmental standards, one theme emerges — protect jobs in the United States and buy "Made in America" products.

*America@work's* presentation of the issue of highway safety is also a fake. Workers in the transportation industry do face deteriorating conditions, and the broader public does have a stake in ensuring that trucks, trains and water transport are operated in the safest manner possible. But by scapegoating Mexican workers as the main danger drivers along the roads face, we let the profit-hungry owners of the trucking, rail and shipping companies off the hook.

Along with their chauvinist calls for restricting the entry of Mexican workers, union officials also demand that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) inspectors crack down on Mexican truckers for operating unsafe vehicles. They note that

44 percent of a tiny sample of trucks registered in Mexico were taken off the road by DOT inspectors. They also note that 25 percent of U.S.-registered trucks inspected by the DOT — nearly 438,000 vehicles — were also taken out of service in 1998. Drivers of all nationalities are being forced to operate decrepit equipment. But the nationalist campaign of the Teamster tops undermine the possibility of united action that U.S. and Mexican workers need in a fight for public safety and safer working conditions.

Instead of opposing entry of workers from Mexico, working people should welcome the opportunity to meet, discuss, and fight with fellow workers south of the border and learn from their militant struggles. The ranks of labor need to organize immigrant workers in the United States and collaborate with unionists and unorganized toilers across the border, not try to keep them out.

Over the past summer, truck drivers at the ports of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle waged hard fought strikes to win Teamsters union recognition. A similar fight was waged two years ago at the port of Los Angeles. These workers come from all parts of the globe: Russia, Eritrea, Mexico, India, and elsewhere. They did not ask one another for immigration papers. They recognized their common condition as workers, regardless of national origin, and fought together against the port owners. They sought and won solidarity from unionized longshore and railroad workers.

Fresh from their victory in Vancouver, a group of port drivers tried to travel to Seattle to join a Teamsters rally in Seattle, but were stopped by the same border patrol that Hoffa and the AFL-CIO officials want to strengthen. The drivers won some important victories, including on safety and working conditions. And they remain determined to fight to win a union for all the drivers at the ports. Their example, not the chauvinist anti-Mexican campaign of the union officials, points the way forward for all workers.

Jim Altnerberg is a member of the United Transportation Union in San Francisco.

## Houston cops plead not guilty in killing of Mexican immigrant Pedro Oregón

BY TONY DUTROW

HOUSTON, Texas — On September 28, two fired Houston police officers pled not guilty to federal charges of violating the civil rights of Pedro Oregón, a 22 year-old immigrant worker from Mexico killed July 12, 1998 during a drug raid by six cops.

In the assault on Oregón's apartment, the cops fired 33 rounds. Twelve shots hit Oregón, including nine in the back. No drugs were found there, and the autopsy showed no drugs or alcohol were present in the body.

Former Sgt. Darrel H. Strouse and James R. Willis were indicted September 20 by a federal grand jury convened more than six months ago. The maximum penalty if they are found guilty is 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The two are accused of organizing the raid. The other four cops were not included in the indictment. All six were part of the so-called "gang task force" unit of the Houston police department (HPD).

Last November, in an effort to refurbish the HPD's image, the chief of police an-

nounced that the six were fired for violating department procedures.

A U.S. Magistrate judge who heard the pleas at the arraignment sided with the cops in granting a \$10,000 unsecured bond based on the argument that the two had shown up for previous court appearances and posed no "flight risk."

Lawyers for the cops are expected to file motions to postpone the trial date, set for November 16, and are scheduled to appear before U.S. District Judge Nancy Atlas to make their case. The ruling class in Houston has come under some pressure to address this issue following a sustained, year-long struggle to convict the cops led by the Justice for Pedro Oregón Coalition.

Calls for federal charges came after local courts failed to convict a single police officer. Only one cop was indicted by a state grand jury that hewed to the police version of the event. In a sham trial that ended in March, that cop, James Willis, who was charged with a misdemeanor trespass charge, was found not guilty. The attempt

to sweep the case under the rug, however, was met with renewed protests.

Based on this track record, even four members of the U.S. House of Representatives from Houston felt compelled to write a protest letter to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno calling for an end to the stalling on indicting the cops.

Mexico's embassy also threatened to issue a travel advisory to Mexican citizens warning them of the rash of police killings of Latinos in Houston, citing the Pedro Oregón case as the most prominent.

At a brief informational picket at the federal courthouse September 28, spokespeople for the Justice for Pedro Oregón coalition said they and their supporters will be present for the trial and demanded full prosecution. At the same time they explained they will continue to press for prosecution of all of the cops involved in Oregón's killing. They urged everyone to join their contingent at the October 22 National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality march and rally in downtown Houston.

# Ethel Lobman: an unceasing fighter for New York meeting celebrates communist activity of SWP

BY NAOMI CRAINE  
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEWYORK—For more than 55 years—half the duration of the imperialist epoch—Ethel Lobman was “a conscious, active organizer and inspirer of the forces that will end the last imperialist power on earth,” said Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. He was speaking at a meeting held here October 10 to celebrate the political experience and communist activity of Lobman, who died September 28 at the age of 75.

More than 175 people attended the meeting. Many were members and supporters of the SWP, Lobman’s party from 1943 until her death, and of the Young Socialists. A number of family members, neighbors and friends, and co-workers from the Tamiment Labor Library — where Lobman worked for half a decade until 1986, and continued one day a week until last fall — also attended.

During a reception prior to the program, participants enjoyed a delicious spread of food prepared by SWP supporters in the area. Before and after the speakers, they also browsed and read with keen interest a 13-panel display prepared by members of the SWP and YS in New York and New Jersey. Through photographs, articles from the *Militant*, and other items, the exhibit captured the tumultuous events in world politics that spanned the extensive segment of modern history during which Lobman was an active communist, and the response by socialist workers, including Ethel, throughout this period. (An article reviewing many of these details of Lobman’s life appeared in the October 11 *Militant*.)

The gathering was held at the Dag Hammarskjöld Lounge at the International Affairs School of Columbia University, overlooking the campus. The light of the rainy afternoon coming through three full-windows walls made the atmosphere welcoming.

Participants came from throughout the New York–New Jersey area. Groups also came from Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., and a few traveled from as far as Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Two carloads of members and supporters of the Communist League and of the Young Socialists in Canada drove from Montreal and Toronto. Among those attending were several members of the Young Socialists and others who never had the opportunity to work with Lobman but came to learn more about her life and the movement she was part of.

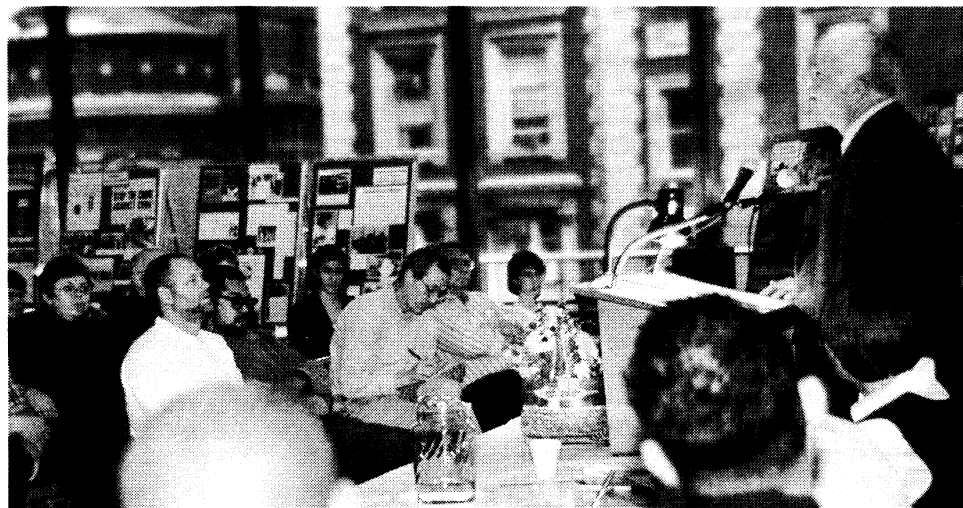
The meeting was hosted by the New York–New Jersey district of the SWP and the New York and Newark Young Socialists. Argiris Malapanis, organizer of the SWP’s district committee, welcomed participants on behalf of the host organizations and introduced Betsey Stone, a longtime SWP cadre who chaired the meeting.

## Women in industry

Ethel grew up in a working-class Jewish family in the Bronx. She joined the party in November 1943, shortly after being driven out of her job, because of her politics, in a plant making wartime components for aircraft and ships. “She was part of that huge army of women drawn into the industrial working class to keep the war industries going,” Stone noted. “Many of you have heard of Rosie the Riveter. Well, Ethel did not rivet, as far as I know, but she was a gear-grinder operator and she knew how to use a lathe, milling machine, and a punch press,” jobs that had traditionally been off limits to women.

When the war ended, the bosses attempted to drive women out of these jobs. Lobman recalled walking into an unemployment office after hitchhiking to Los Angeles in 1945 just as the war was ending. “As I got in line I noticed a handwritten sign on windows where the personnel women who were giving out the jobs were seated which read, ‘All Jobs for Women in the Defense Industry are Canceled.’ It was as blatant as that,” she wrote in an account of her political activities through the early 1950s.

After a stint of waiting tables, delivering soap samples, and working other jobs, Lobman learned to sew and went to work in the largely unorganized garment industry in Los Angeles. She helped lead a rank-and-file attempt to unionize the large Caltex clothing plant, an



Militant/Hilda Cuzco (above)  
**SWP national secretary Jack Barnes (at podium, above) speaking at October 10 meeting to celebrate political experience and communist activity of Ethel Lobman. Ethel is shown on the right, along with her husband Arthur Lobman, also an SWP cadre since the late 1950s, checking and correcting lists of *Militant* subscribers at the Pathfinder building, in summer of 1998. She was meticulous and efficient in carrying out this assignment, as in others. “When you care about what you do, and have a reason for doing it, you can continue to do it for a long time and draw in others,” Barnes said.**

effort stymied by the officialdom of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. When the second wave of feminism exploded in the 1970s, Lobman shared her experiences in industry with a new generation of young women coming into the communist movement, Stone recalled.

Stone read from several of the more than two dozen messages sent by Ethel’s comrades and friends. Tom Leonard, a veteran SWP leader, wrote from Houston, “I first met Ethel Lobman in the early 1950s during the Korean War, while I was still a merchant seaman and a new member of the Socialist Workers Party. She was at the time assigned to youth work in the New York local of the party. She was one of three stalwart young women heading up that important area of political work, and they were doing it under the conditions of an intense factional political debate leading to a deep split in the Socialist Workers Party in 1953.”

## Stepped in fight against McCarthyism

A sizable faction in the party in those years had abandoned hope of building a revolutionary party — recoiling in face of the witch-hunt, and softened by the relative prosperity following Washington’s victory over its imperialist rivals in World War II. Lobman was among the younger cadre of the party who defended the SWP’s revolutionary continuity and argued that communists could carry out public political campaigns, despite McCarthyism and the postwar retreat of the labor movement.

The two young women besides Ethel that Leonard was referring to were Bezie Sideris and Dorothy Johnson. “I clearly remember their names because of the deep impression the three made on me,” Leonard said in his message, “including my first experience of being referred to by one of them — not Ethel — as a male chauvinist. I had never heard that designation before because it wasn’t widely used in the early 1950s. Fortunately, I went out of my way to find out what male chauvinism meant and learned the hard lesson of recognizing the criticism had validity, and that I had a great deal more to learn.

“But the most important thing about my meeting Ethel during the 1950s was the impression made on me at the time — as a worker new to communist politics — that women had both the potential and capacity to be all-sided revolutionary leaders.”

For part of that time Ethel was the youth organizer of the party in New York and a member of the SWP’s local executive committee. (The October 11 article inaccurately stated



that she served as organizer of the New York local executive committee.)

The first speaker Stone introduced was Olympia Newton, representing the national leadership of the Young Socialists. Newton is organizer of the Newark Young Socialists chapter and currently works as a folder operator in the bindery of Pathfinder’s printshop.

## Continuity of communist movement

“The experiences Ethel went through are important for people of my generation. They are part of the history of the working class,” Newton said. “These lessons are available in the books published by Pathfinder, but more important is how these ideas are carried through the living cadre of a movement.”

Newton reported on the “Red Weekend” to organize the YS National Office in San Francisco that was taking place the same weekend (see article on page 5). The Young Socialists is becoming a more proletarian organization, she explained. She described the socialist summer schools that YS members participated in this year, which included studying party history and Marxism, participating with SWP members in reaching out to worker and farmer struggles, and for many YS members getting some initial experience in industry, especially in garment and meatpacking. This helped “revitalize the work of the party-YS fractions in industry,” Newton noted.

These summer schools culminated in caravans of YS and party members and other fighters who drove thousands of miles to Ohio in early August and helped bring alive an Active Workers Conference there. Since then, YS members have joined in teams to coal mining regions, meatpacking plants, textile factories, and elsewhere, and have held several regional educational conferences.

“We’re reinforced by cadre like Ethel Lobman, who help us come to the working class as the force that can change society,” Newton said. She cited a 1952 letter from James P. Cannon to fellow SWP leader Farrell Dobbs, referring to the death of a longtime party cadre. “Did you know that she had been with us since 1930?” Cannon wrote. “The history of her entire conscious life is virtually a history of our movement — that part written in simple deeds by the rank and file.”

What the Young Socialists has to offer those who join its ranks is not just activity and a political program but a link to the proletarian party, the SWP. “When you join the YS you join a movement,” Newton concluded, “with cadre like Ethel Lobman, who encase the liv-

ing history of our class, the living continuity to Lenin and Marx and Engels.”

## District 1 struggle

Some of those who sent messages to the meeting first worked with Lobman during the struggle for community control of the schools in District 1, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Lobman was a leader of this fight. “I was a new recruit to the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) when I first met Ethel in New York City in the fall of 1970,” wrote Sara Gates from Seattle. She recalled hearing Lobman speak to “a thunderous ovation” during a mass meeting of that struggle in a school auditorium.

Stone also read part of another message by longtime party leader Doug Jenness, who was the party’s New York City organizer in 1973, and now is a member of the Steelworkers union in Minneapolis. Jenness recalled an open school board meeting attended by several hundred parents. The racist majority on the board had sequestered themselves in another part of the building and broadcast the meeting via closed circuit television.

The TVs in the auditorium “were soon closed down by flying objects hurled by angry parents who then held their own rally,” Jenness wrote. “One speaker in the course of denouncing the school board made an anti-Semitic remark (some of the school board members were Jewish, as was much of the leadership of the United Federation of Teachers). Ethel soon got the floor, and in the course of reaffirming her support for the struggle, explained the dangerous and divisive nature of anti-Semitism. She said she was Jewish and supported the fight, and there were other Jews who did too, but that even offhand comments could set a tone of encouraging anti-Semitism and derail the struggle....

“Given the charged atmosphere it wasn’t clear when Ethel got up to speak what the response would be. But she knew it would have been a mistake to have remained silent at that moment, even if many disagreed with what she had to say. She knew that as a participant and leader in the fight, and as a communist, she had both an opportunity and a responsibility to help educate other fighters on a life-and-death question for the workers movement.” In fact, Jenness, said, her remarks were met with loud applause.

Stone then introduced Nelson González, a militant in the District 1 struggle, who joined the Young Socialist Alliance — the predecessor of the YS — in 1974, as a result of his participation in those battles, and later joined the SWP.

## First steps toward becoming a Marxist

González, a meatpacker and SWP member in Newark today, recalled that he had been working about six months as a bilingual education teacher in Junior High School 71 in 1973 when he accidentally bumped into a meeting of the Por Los Niños/Save the Children coalition in Manhattan’s Lower East Side and was invited to attend. This coalition mobilized thousands of working-class parents who were Puerto Rican, Black, Chinese, and white against racism in the schools. They were up against not only city and state officials but also the officialdom of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), headed by Albert Shanker.

The coalition advocated bilingual education; the teaching of Black, Puerto Rican, and Chinese history and culture; and parent-monitored affirmative action in hiring and promotions.

In May 1974 a Shankerite slate regained control of the District 1 school board, after a brief period where supporters of community control held a majority. In August the board removed Luis Fuentes as community superin-



# human solidarity

## cadre for over 55 years

tendent of schools, along with 14 other principals and supervisors supported by the parents. More than 1,000 people from throughout the city turned out to protest Fuentes's dismissal, touching off a school year of boycotts and demonstrations.

Every meeting held to hammer out how to press for the coalition's demands was a battle for the political soul of Por Los Niños, González said. Would it remain an independent, mass-based coalition mobilizing thousands as its strategy? Or would it water down its demands in order to become a support group for the Democratic Party? "I began to notice a small group who made sense, who I found myself agreeing with" in these debates, González said. "They always spoke with the clearest voice and supported the demands that would keep Por Los Niños in the hands of the activists in the district."

Ethel Lobman was the most prominent leader of this group, the "District 1 fraction" of the party and YSA in this struggle, González said, and had tremendous respect in the coalition. He recounted the decisive impact on him of a discussion Lobman helped lead — first in the SWP-YSA fraction and then in the coalition — on the September 1975 strike by the UFT against City Hall's demands for layoffs, pay freeze, and longer working hours. It was part of a broadside attack on wages and working conditions.

The teachers union officials had called two reactionary strikes in 1967 and 1968 against Black community control in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district in Brooklyn and against bilingual education in District 1. Parents mobilized to take their children through the picket lines and kept the schools open in response to this racist strike; the SWP took part in this effort and championed it.

So the initial reaction of González and many other community activists was to cross the UFT picket lines in the 1975 strike. "In the fraction meeting to discuss this I got my first political grounding in looking at the world from the point of view of classes and the class struggle," he said.

"Ethel again took the clear lead in those discussions, explaining, 'There is a working class and a ruling class. The working class has its organizations of defense, among them the unions. The unions are run by reactionary bureaucrats that use them against the workers and their allies. Our role is to use any and all opportunities to fight to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments that defend the workers and our allies.'" In this context, González said, Lobman explained that we had to fight to organize parents and activists of Por Los Niños to walk the picket lines, side by side with the teachers, against the attacks the UFT was facing. She was confident that if we stood firm and swam against the current we could win over the parents.

"Through a combination of patient, pedagogic explanations, suggesting readings like Leon Trotsky on the trade unions and other material, being totally firm — never pandering to me — and by carrying out this course in action, I became convinced she was right."

The most exhilarating moment came when Lobman and González helped lead a small march of parents to join a picket line of striking teachers, who initially couldn't believe they were getting support from Por Los Niños, and to discuss with them why they should back the program of the coalition. "I mark this as the moment when I passed over from being just a well-meaning activist to the beginnings of becoming a Marxist."

### "Today we work for Cuba"

The triumph of workers and peasants in Cuba, led by the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army, in toppling the U.S.-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959 gave renewed energy and confidence to working-class fighters around the world. Ethel and Arthur Lobman, whom she married the previous year and who remained her lifelong companion, traveled to Cuba in the summer of 1960. SWP cadres Harry Ring and Priscilla March made the trip with them. In a message to the meeting, Ring noted, "1960 was a pivotal point in the unfolding revolutionary process." The U.S. oil refineries had just been nationalized, or "intervened" as Cuban workers termed it. "On our second day in Havana we watched a con-

voy of U.S. telephone company trucks filled with cheering, chanting workers. Their demand: 'Intervene the phone company.' That night the government announced it had taken over the phone company.

"The next morning Ethel picked up the telephone to make a call and was greeted by the telephone company switchboard operator, who declared, 'Good morning. Today we work for Cuba.'"

In introducing the final speaker, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes, Stone noted that Barnes happened to be in Cuba the same summer as Ethel and Arthur Lobman, though their paths did not cross at that time.

The revolution you live through is your revolution, Barnes said. "Cuba was Ethel's revolution."

He pointed to the concluding paragraph of Ring's letter, which stated, "Our euphoric visit came to an end and we found ourselves waiting to board the plane back to the U.S. Ethel stood there, obviously immersed in thought. She then said, 'I would be willing to stay here.' She paused, shook her head doggedly, and added, 'But it wouldn't be right to live in someone else's revolution.'"

This was a decision many visitors to Cuba had to face that summer, said Barnes. Thousands of revolutionary-minded youth from around the world, including himself, had traveled there, inspired by the example of the Cuban revolution. Every debate within the workers movement was recast by those revolutionary events; every current of thought was represented there.

The Cuban toilers were on a path that by August 1960 would lead over the next few months to the expropriation of the old propertied classes and the establishment of a workers state. It was the opening of the socialist revolution in our hemisphere, Barnes said. "Politics became the activity of millions who had made the country theirs. There you got a greater appreciation for what it meant to be a communist, to be a soldier." Lobman went back to the United States to carry out communist activity there, with the knowledge of what the Cuban revolution showed was possible to do.

### Experience and communist activity

When people asked Lobman why she joined the SWP in the midst of the horrendous slaughter of the second imperialist world war — and stuck with that decision — Ethel would reply, "I had no choice." Recalling her personality and activity, Barnes said, adds to your appreciation of the statement by Frederick Engels, one of the founders of the communist movement, that "freedom is the recognition of necessity." Once you recognize the inevitability the social and economic breakdown if imperialism is not ended, you gain the freedom to organize your life along a course that puts you at the center of humanity's possibilities for a different future. This gave Ethel a certain lightness of being, Barnes said.

He stressed the importance of celebrating both the political experience and the communist activity of someone who had been a party cadre for 56 years.

Ethel did not *endure* those years, the SWP leader said. These were decades of *doing* — not just living in history but realizing, at quite a young age, that you can have an effect on it, and on others.

Political experience is the summation of living and doing. But with age and disappointments that are part of life under capitalism, Barnes said, it's easy sometimes to simply fall back on the experience, on referring to something you studied, or the way you did something, in the past. It's only communist activity that keeps drawing on the experience and in so doing transforms a person together with others. Lobman never told political sto-



Ethel Lobman (top, right) along with friend holding *Capital* by Karl Marx, Dorothy Johnson (bottom, left) and Beezie Sideris, all in the early 1950s. The three young women were among the central youth leaders of the SWP in New York at that time, during the McCarthyite witch-hunt.

ries for the sake of story-telling by a veteran, Barnes noted. They always had to do with what needs to be done next in the struggle.

### Social forces determine attitudes

The period we are living through today — the beginning of the breakdown of the stability of the capitalist world order — is one that most of us have never seen before, Barnes said. But someone of Ethel's experience went through it once before.

Lobman was born into a working-class family. As a young person she was affected by cataclysmic events — the Great Depression of the 1930s, the massive working-class battles in those years, the rise of fascism, and World War II. She had relatives who were part of the two largest currents in the workers movement. At the age of 12 she joined the Red Falcons, a group for very young people associated with the Socialist Party.

"She knew what had happened during those tumultuous years from family and friends who lived through them," Barnes said. "She appreciated what the fight for social security, for human solidarity meant." Drawing on these experiences, Lobman helped in recent years in discussions in the party on how the Clinton

administration's assault on "welfare as we know it" was an initial probe toward a much broader dismantling of the social gains of the working class and of its solidarity.

Workers are inclined toward human solidarity, Barnes noted. They are inclined to help each other to be able to work and survive, because they don't have any property to live off as a substitute. The bourgeoisie tries to solve everything with money. They teach the petty-bourgeoisie that if somebody can't individually solve their problems, it's their own personal failure. But workers tend to know better. When someone's car breaks down, they stop and help them get to work, because they know you can lose your job. "This human solidarity is what Ethel banked on in everything she did."

Lobman joined the SWP at a time when pressure to accept rationalizations for Washington's entry into the imperialist war were very strong within the workers movement, which was dominated by the Stalinized Communist Party and the social democrats. These forces backed the Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt in dragging workers and farmers into the slaughter. Many of Lobman's high school friends succumbed to this pressure and went over to support the

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Participants looking at display at October 10 meeting, depicting the tumultuous events in world politics that spanned the 55 years of Lobman's activity as a communist.

# Ford workers in UK: 'Enough is enough' of company abuse

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

LONDON — Some 2,000 assembly-line workers walked out at Ford's Dagenham Paint, Trim, and Assembly plant October 5, about 80 percent of the workforce. The one-day strike made front page news and national TV. It was the first union action on that scale in 10 years by workers at the plant, located east of London.

The work stoppage was triggered by an incident the previous week in which a senior foreman forcibly pushed shop steward Jaswir Teja on day shift. This added fuel to an already tense situation. In late September cars were damaged and Ford called police when some workers vented their anger at day-shift workers being brought onto the night shift and at having to work on what had been designated a "down" shift.

In a separate dispute, 430 toolmakers held a one-day strike September 15 in protest at not receiving a "recognition of skills" allowance that other workers of the same grade are paid. Also in September, Ford admitted liability in the case of Sukhjot Parmar, a worker from the Indian subcontinent who was subjected to four years of racist abuse, led by a foreman and a group leader, in the company's Dagenham Engine plant.

As they walked out the gate the night of October 5, most workers were in high spirits. "It's about time," one told *Militant* reporters. "I've been here 23 years and we used to walk out. Now things are worse, and we're walking out again." A worker on the Main Line remarked, "It's good, at least we're showing some unity at last." "We're happy, very happy," said a worker from the Front Struts section the next day.

## Response to harassment from foreman

Workers in the area of the Main Line walked off the job almost immediately after Teja was shoved, demanding the suspension of the foreman involved pending an investigation, and refusing to work with another foreman known for bullying. Most of the assembly-line workers are members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU).

Workers from other areas of the plant who joined the meetings on the Main Line that morning had their names threateningly taken down by senior managers. The stoppage halted production in the Paint, Trim, and Assembly plant for about an hour and a half in the morning and an hour in the afternoon, when

workers met with union officials.

All day the atmosphere in the plant was tense, as workers in other sections stopped work and jeered at the second foreman as he went about the plant. Signs went up on the Main Line saying, "Enough is Enough"; "Zero Tolerance"; and "Ford workers demand justice and respect." The foreman who pushed the steward was taken off the shop floor for a few days, but Ford refused to suspend him.

A year ago, a Black worker with many years seniority in the Front Struts section was assaulted by the same foreman, who aggressively pushed a disciplinary letter into his stomach. Ford has claimed there is no case to answer, and dismissed the evidence of the many witnesses as unreliable. The foreman was not suspended, instead the company recently promoted him.

But when a foreman recently accused a worker of threatening him, the worker was immediately suspended (with pay) and not allowed to work for several weeks.

## Union details racist abuse

TGWU officials sent a letter and report detailing the racist abuse against Sukhjot Parmar to all of the union's members at Ford October 1. The report detailed how the abuse began almost as soon as Parmar started work at Ford, much of it by his group leader and foreman. Incidents included:

"a) In response to a request for a toilet break, he was told to 'f — off Paki.'

"b) While eating with a colleague, food was kicked from his hands, followed by the statement, 'if I had control I wouldn't allow Indian food inside.'

"c) He was directly accused by his group leader of deliberately rejecting engines with no fault, an action that could have led to his dismissal. On investigation it was shown that... it was in fact the group leader himself who had rejected the engines.

"d) He was directly threatened on several occasions with serious physical violence if he complained or named the harasser.

"e) He was physically assaulted."

Parmar also related twice being forced by his foreman to work inside an enclosed spray booth without protective equipment until he vomited so violently he needed medical treatment. Ford management either ignored his complaints or refused to get in-

## Teachers wage strike in Yonkers, N.Y.



Some 2,100 members of Yonkers Federation of Teachers struck the public schools in that New York suburb October 1-6. Many students supported the strike, and 1,000 parents attended a pro-union rally. School officials backed off their key demand to immediately and unilaterally reschedule the school day. Above, pickets at Roosevelt High School respond as scab teacher enters on first day of strike.

volved. When the company did agree to an investigation, it refused to suspend either the foreman or the group leader pending its outcome, as is normal with those accused of conduct that could result in a charge of gross misconduct. The company eventually fired the group leader, but only demoted the foreman.

Incidents continued during the investigation and although arrests were made, the Crown Prosecution Service declined to act on them due to "time delays."

"We did think it was really bad," said a worker who is white who showed the letter from the union to his family. About 44 percent of workers in the plant are Black or Asian. Resentment at increasingly thuggish and abusive company tactics has been growing for a couple of years. "People have had it up to here" said one young worker at the plant. Appeals and grievances that workers put into the company system are not dealt with, often for years.

## Auto bosses' profit crunch

The increasing clampdown by Ford against its workforce is part of an effort to cut costs in the context of a European car market where manufacturers' profit rates are falling. In the late 1980s, industry profit margins in the United Kingdom were 11 percent. By 1997 they had dropped to an average of 1 percent. Ford posted European earnings of \$254 million for the first half of 1999. This includes a \$125 million cost for the purchase of Volvo Car and a \$165 million gain from the sale of AutoEuropa and compares to earnings of \$540 million a year ago.

"Restoring our profits in the region will take .... a continued focus on great products, quality, and lower costs," said Ford president and CEO Jac Nasser. The company announced production cuts at Dagenham in September 1998, due to a drop in demand, only running four out of five weekly day shifts and periodically downing other shifts.

Full production has still not been restored. All motor manufacturers in the UK are facing further price squeezes as a government competition commission proposed suggestions to reduce a gap between car prices in the UK and continental Europe by up to 40 percent.

Last November, outgoing Ford chairman Alex Trotman predicted that the world motor industry would shrink to six manufacturers, as a "global dogfight" forced the existing 40 manufacturers to "rationalize." The company, he said, would be stepping up efforts to narrow a 20 percent productivity gap between Ford's UK plants and those in Europe and the United States.

A survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit last August had found that Dagenham was Ford's most productive center in Europe. The survey analyses assembly lines and other production operations.

The company plans to increase capacity at Dagenham from 272,000 to 300,000 a year by early in the next decade — through increased productivity, not hiring. Last year workers in the plant produced 190,000 cars.

The day after the strike, Ford issued a letter to workers threatening that "if [disruption] continues, it will inevitably lead to a situation where layoffs, without pay, will become unavoidable across the Operation." The company made a thinly veiled threat to close the plant.

At a mass meeting attended by the vast majority of workers in the plant October 8, the handmade signs calling for justice and "Enough is Enough" were back, this time stuck up by workers on the speakers' platform. Workers voted overwhelmingly to ballot for industrial action over company implementation of the grievance procedure and equal opportunities policy, and for equal access for all workers to jobs on the Dagenham estate. Whatever unfolds, it's clear the fight isn't over.

Caroline Bellamy is a member of the TGWU at Ford Dagenham.

# Workers suggest bookstores

Continued from Page 4

helpful in placing copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other Pathfinder books in non-Pathfinder outlets here recently. Six copies of the book have been placed in bookstores suggested by fellow workers at Amtrak — two at each of three different stores. One store placed an order for 16 other Pathfinder titles.

I began by telling co-workers that I wanted to make Pathfinder books more available to more people, and that I would appreciate any advice they had to offer. I asked if they could suggest any places where they or their friends buy or borrow books that could be worth approaching.

A laborer suggested one store, an engineer another, and a conductor yet another. In two of these three stores, the worker who suggested the store visited it before I did and told them about having suggested that I go there. One co-worker brought me a business card from a store he had visited with the name of the store's book buyer on it. When I went to the store to talk to the buyer, I pulled out the business card and said "One of your customers gave me this and suggested that you might want to carry some Pathfinder books." That seemed to help start the discussion off on a solid footing.

In all cases, I started by saying that a customer of theirs had suggested that I visit their store, and immediately showed them the Pathfinder catalog, beginning with the sections advertising books whose subject matter was similar to that of books on their shelves, saying, "If your customers are interested in the

subjects represented on your shelves, they would probably also be interested in some of the books shown in the catalog dealing with the same subject. After that brief introduction, I would pull out a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and say something like:

"This is our most recently published book. I am authorized to leave you a couple of copies of this book right now if you'd like. Books with 'millennium' titles have been selling well lately, for obvious reasons. This book has the word 'disorder' in its title, but it doesn't limit itself to just talking about the horrors of life in today's world. It makes the case that there is a basis for hope in the future. It discusses a lot of issues that are being hotly debated in society today, and that will attract readers."

Then I hold a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* up by a single page and say "Pathfinder books are very well constructed. They won't fall apart when your customers browse through them or shortly after they buy them." I have never seen a Pathfinder book fail this test, and when we do it confidently, book buyers realize there must be some basis for our confidence.

At this point, the discussion depends on the response. Buyers will have their own concerns and preferences. One took two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* on the spot and filled out an order form for two other titles, but wanted to take a little more time to review the catalog to see if he wanted to order others. We agreed that I would visit again in two weeks.

# Truckers protest in Quebec

Continued from front page

mile. Trucker Guy L'espérance explained that sometimes they have to wait hours to load or unload, forcing them to put in 60-80 hours a week. After making payments on their trucks and covering maintenance, insurance, and license costs, truckers end up only earning Can\$7-8 an hour (Can\$1=US\$0.67). "Over the years I've lost a truck and two homes. Enough is enough, we have to fight," declared L'espérance.

Other demands include eight hours sleeping time per day when on long hauls, a maximum 10-hour working day, paid statutory holidays, and one month of vacation per year. In Montreal, the truckers have parked their vehicles at the port and at two railway yards.

They are working with the longshoremen's union and the railway unions to prevent the

transportation of goods.

With headlines such as "Truckers starve La Tuque, (a city in northern Quebec) and "Basic necessities begin to be scarce," the daily media has led a campaign against the just demands of the truckers. The Parti Quebecois government says that it refuses to negotiate with the truckers as long as they are "starving the population." In taking their decision to defy the injunction, truckers took into account the Quebec nurses strike this past summer. Nurses defied government anti-strike legislation for 23 days but did not win their demands following an agreement by their leadership to return to work as a condition for continuing negotiations.

Joanne Pritchard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees



# Steelworkers strike Minnesota mill

BY DOUG JENNESS

DULUTH, Minnesota — Despite a public advertising campaign by the management of ME International (MEI) to hire scabs for \$16.08 an hour to replace striking steelworkers here, only a handful have gone through the gates so far. Plant manager Wally Mahnke said October 7 that eight began that day and a similar-sized group is scheduled to start this week.

The strikers, members of United Steelworkers of America Local 1028, walked out on August 25. The strike began after negotiations with MEI broke down when management refused to consider union demands limiting mandatory overtime and ending arbitrary firings over attendance and sudden cancellation of vacations. "We had not even got to the question of economic issues, that is, wages and benefits," Greg Luoma, a member of the negotiating committee, explained. "Management refused to negotiate new language for a justice and dignity clause. They also want us to sign a five-year contract. We've filed two unfair labor practices complaints against them with the National Labor Relations Board."

Luoma said that no union members have crossed the picket line since the strike be-

gan. Management is attempting to keep some production going with supervisors and claims to be operating at 20-25 percent of capacity. Union pickets outside the gate say the figure is probably much lower.

The plant, located in the Gary section of Duluth, produces alloy castings that line the inside of mills used to grind and crush rock in the mining industry — including iron, copper, gold, and silver mining. At the time the walkout began, 143 production workers worked in the plant. ME International is owned by the Charlotte, North Carolina-based GS Industries.

The strikers have received broad support, which increased after the company's ads for scabs appeared. On October 4 some 200 strikers and supporters rallied outside the plant gate. Unionists from the taconite mines on the nearby Iron Range came, as did public employees, Northwest workers from the Duluth airport, carpenters, and others.

Supporters continually drop by the picket line to bring food or firewood, to get the latest information, to drop off checks, or to simply express their solidarity.

The strikers have four-hour shifts on the picket line, which is maintained around the clock. Some strikers have taken temporary

## Dominican gov't arrests strikers



Working people in the Dominican Republic began an indefinite national strike October 12 against inflated gas prices. Industrial and rural workers and others took part in the action. Above, soldiers are deployed in the capital, Santo Domingo, to respond to the strike. More than 2,500 people were detained throughout the country. Undercover cops burst into the houses of organizers and arrested those they found.

jobs, of which there are many in the Duluth area, and others are collecting \$100 a week in strike benefits.

Luoma said, "This is only our third contract," he stated. "The union has been here only about eight years. We think they provoked the strike to try to break the union."

A representative of the National Labor

Relation Board was in Duluth the first week of October investigating the unfair labor practice charges. The charges center around company harassment of Luoma after he was elected to the negotiating committee.

Doug Jenness is a member of USWA Local 9444 in Roseville, Minnesota.

## Students in New Zealand protest high cost of education

BY RUTH GRAY

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Around 200 students at the University of Canterbury maintained a round-the-clock sit-in at the registry building October 5-7 to demand no fee increase for the year 2000. Prior to the occupation 3,000 students had rallied outside the registry to oppose the University Council's proposal to abolish the flat fee and to raise fees by as much as 45 percent for some students.

In 1999 all students at Canterbury University paid a maximum annual fee of NZ\$3,410 (NZ\$1=US\$0.52) for a full-time course. Under the new system courses that require more resources would be more expensive. Arts and social science students would pay NZ\$3,410 while engineering and forestry students would have to pay NZ\$4,210.

Defending the fee increase, Vice Chancellor Daryl Le Grew claimed that the university needs to produce an operating sur-

plus of 10 percent. On the second day of the student occupation Le Grew suggested reducing the operating surplus to 8 percent with a general fee increase of 30 percent. This offer was rejected by the students, who gathered outside in the rain for the news cameras chanting, "We are here to stay!"

The following evening students voted to end the occupation and continue to fight the fee increase by other means. This was after the University Council agreed not to raise fees again in future years. Under this settlement the university still retains the right to increase fees to account for inflation, changes to the exchange rate, or government policy. A national education forum was also agreed to. This is to be held in November prior to parliamentary elections with the goal of discussing fees, loans, education quality, and access to education.

University of Canterbury Student Association president Darel Hall said the occupation ended "because we believe we

achieved everything we could achieve at this point in time. We got important concessions from the vice chancellor." Other students reported they had received a lot of support from university staff and some local businesses sent free food for those occupying the registry.

A number of people interviewed by the *Militant* said this action was built on an occupation about a month ago. About 50 students took part in the earlier protest, and many continued to work together to organize the October 5 rally and occupation.

Following the meeting and vote to end the occupation, one student told the *Militant* he thought "the main achievement has been the solidarity of the students." He is studying law and plans to work for a bachelor of science degree next year that will cost him an extra NZ\$900. Other students echoed his comments.

Other students around the country have organized protests against rising student debt and tertiary fees. In Wellington there

was a rally followed by an overnight occupation of the registry by 100 students at the University of Victoria. Student Association Welfare vice president Alice Revell told the *New Zealand Herald* October 7, "We are here to support Christchurch students and protest against the rising cost of education and the indication that our fees will be set after the term break, when we will not be here to speak out about it." The protesters also said their action was in support of university staff preparing to strike over the university's demand for a wage freeze.

On October 12 more than 50 students occupied Auckland University for one night. One week earlier, some 50 students at Massey's Albany campus protested at an election meeting where the National Party government's tertiary education minister, Max Bradford, spoke. Students in Dunedin and Palmerston North have also taken protest action in recent months.

University courses for most students were virtually free until changes that began under the Labour Party regime in 1990. An official scheme of interest-bearing student loans for course and living costs was established by the National Party government in 1992. Government funding per student has fallen by more than 25 percent since then.

Student debt is now at a record high of NZ\$3 billion nationwide. Today 10,634 students owe more than NZ\$35,000 each, and 619 owe more than NZ\$60,000. Interest rates on student loans are currently set at 8.2 percent — higher than home loan interest rates, which are as low as 5.95 percent for floating rate mortgages. Recent studies show that male graduates will take an average of 17 years to pay back their loans, while female graduates will take a staggering 52 years.

Ruth Gray is a member of the Engineers Union.

## Extradition hearing held for Irish prisoners

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

SAN FRANCISCO — Lawyers representing Irish political prisoners Terence Kirby, Kevin Barry Artt, and Pol Brennan told a panel of judges from the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals September 28 that the three men should not be extradited to Northern Ireland because their original convictions were tainted by anti-Catholic bias in the British courts.

Kirby, Artt, and Brennan were among 38 nationalist political prisoners who escaped from the notorious H-Block of the Maze (Long Kesh) prison near Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1983. Along with a fourth prisoner, Jimmy Smyth, they made their way to the Bay Area.

They were arrested and jailed by the U.S. government in the early 1990s, and proceedings were opened to send them back to the United Kingdom. Supporters in the United States of the Irish freedom struggle launched a campaign to block the extradition of the men, who became known as the H-Block Four.

Smyth was extradited to Northern Ireland in 1996. He was later released from prison under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. In October 1998, the remaining H-Block Three won an appeal of their extradition order and a second trial. At that time, the appellate court judges ruled that federal judge Charles Legge may not have allowed a thorough enough investigation into the possibility that British courts may have a political or religious bias against Catholics.

The U.S. Justice Department, representing the British government, asked for and received a hearing on that decision, which was held

here September 28.

More than 100 supporters of the H-Block Three attended the hearing. Lawyers for Kirby, Artt, and Brennan answered a number of questions and presented numerous examples of anti-Catholic abuse the men had received during their arrests, trials, and incarcerations. Artt's attorney, James Brosnahan, cited the use by a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) of Catholic rosary beads to taunt his client during an interrogation. Artt was then struck by the RUC cop. The RUC is the pro-British police force in Northern Ireland.

Justice Department attorney, Sarah Criscitelli, argued the interrogator might

have been appealing to Artt on a moral plane when the offer of the rosary beads was made. She attempted to answer the defendants' argument that the British judicial system may be anti-Catholic. "The U.S. government does not enter into treaties with governments that torture their own citizens," she asserted.

The H-Block Three remain free on bail until a decision is made by the court to uphold the appeal and move forward with a second trial, or to overturn it and order their immediate extradition.

James Altenberg, a member of United Transportation Union Local 1732, contributed to this article.

## Locked-out Steelworkers picket in Illinois

Continued from front page

cents-an-hour wage raise, while increasing the cost of health insurance. Tim Brown, a member of USWA Local 1063, told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that "he now pays \$50 a month toward health insurance for his family. Under the rejected contract, the insurance would have risen to \$85 immediately and gone up \$5 each year after that."

"They make money hand over fist," Peggy Smith told *Militant* reporters. "We want to make equal pay with the other steel mills. We are not asking for much." She has worked at American Steel for 14 months. The average wage is \$13 per hour.

Bruce Mason said new hires "are not first-class citizens like the rest of us." They start at \$8.40 an hour and have a 90-day probation. When

Mason started working there the probation was 45 days and there was no two-tier wage scale. In 1995 the union agreed to a company proposal to pay new hires less with the promise that it would be given back in the next contract. Mason, who runs a heat crane, has worked at American Steel for six years and makes \$13.86 an hour.

Bill Fisk, who has also worked there for six years, said, "More than one-third of the workforce has worked at the foundry for less than five years. There should be equal pay for new hires. You should get equal pay when you are in the union." Fisk said they regularly work six days, 12-hour shifts, and have no paid sick days.

"There is a lot of history behind this," said picket Jeff Lewis. In the early 1980s the

union agreed to concessions to keep the plant open. In 1982 the plant shut down and reopened in 1989. The union accepted a three-year wage freeze. "We need to stand strong," Lewis said. "The company is used to the union folding if they threaten us."

American Steel Foundry is more than 100 years old and is owned by Amsted Industries of Chicago. Amsted's profits in 1998 were \$83.5 million. They have plants in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The foundry melts steel and molds it into parts for undercarriages and small parts for rail cars.

Shelton McCrainey is a member of USWA Local 9014 at Hussman in Bridgeport, Missouri; Alyson Kennedy is a garment worker in St. Louis.

# Ethel Lobman: unceasing fighter for 55 years

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government's war effort. Barnes pointed to a letter one of Ethel's friends had written her prior to the war, opposing Washington's entry, and a second letter after the war broke out supporting the imperialist war.

The reality that big social forces will decide what a lot of people initially think was a fact that took Ethel some time to come to grips with. For a long time she thought many among the ranks of the Communist Party could be convinced of a revolutionary course, if you could only get them to listen long enough and explain things clearly enough. One of Ethel's deepest political attitudes, and strengths, was that no individual is out of bounds to collaborate with in the struggle for common ends. Her word was her bond, and her deeds went along with her word.

But she learned to face the reality that years of justifying betrayals of revolutionary struggles, collaboration with capitalist parties, and repression of workers and farmers made it impossible for the overwhelming majority of individuals who went through membership in the Stalinist-led CP to be won to communism.

Barnes described Lobman's response to a report he presented at an SWP convention in 1991, in the early stages of the political polarization that is deepening today. On the way to the convention he had read *Right from the Beginning*, the recently published autobiography of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, who was a few months away from launching his first campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. In the convention report, without explicitly mentioning Buchanan, Barnes explained how as the deepening crisis of capitalism unfolded in the 1990s, fascist ideas would unexpectedly gain a hearing.

A handful of people in the room who lived through the 1930s and 1940s — who had directly faced American fascist groups like the Silver Shirts and the demagogue Gerald L. K. Smith — listened more intently than others and took what was presented more seriously as a question of current politics. Lobman was among them. At the end of the meeting, Ethel went up to Barnes and asked, "Who were you talking about?" Barnes told her about Buchanan's book, and she responded, "Thanks," and went away to read.

The new horrors being bred today come not from the malfunctioning of the capitalist system, but from its functioning, Barnes said. The capitalists, in competition with each other and in their drive against the working class to cut wages and dismantle social security, increase

political polarization.

There is no road to reform of this system, he said. There is no road forward short of organizing in a disciplined, revolutionary party in which workers and farmers with the greatest inclinations to innovation and imagination voluntarily submit to the discipline of a proletarian party that makes it possible for humanity to organize to end this scourge. This is the conclusion Ethel reached very early, and acted on her entire life.

Barnes pointed to Lobman's habits of caring about what she did, of taking responsibilities seriously. Many of the messages to the meeting noted this, including in the meticulous attention she gave over the last decade to organizing the subscription list for the *Militant*. She did the same earlier in the 1960s when at 116 University Place, where the party headquarters were located at that time, Lobman and other comrades operated a big machine that pounded metal, letter by letter, to print address labels for the *Militant*. "When you care, and you know the reason for doing something, you can continue doing it for a long time, and draw others into it," Barnes said.

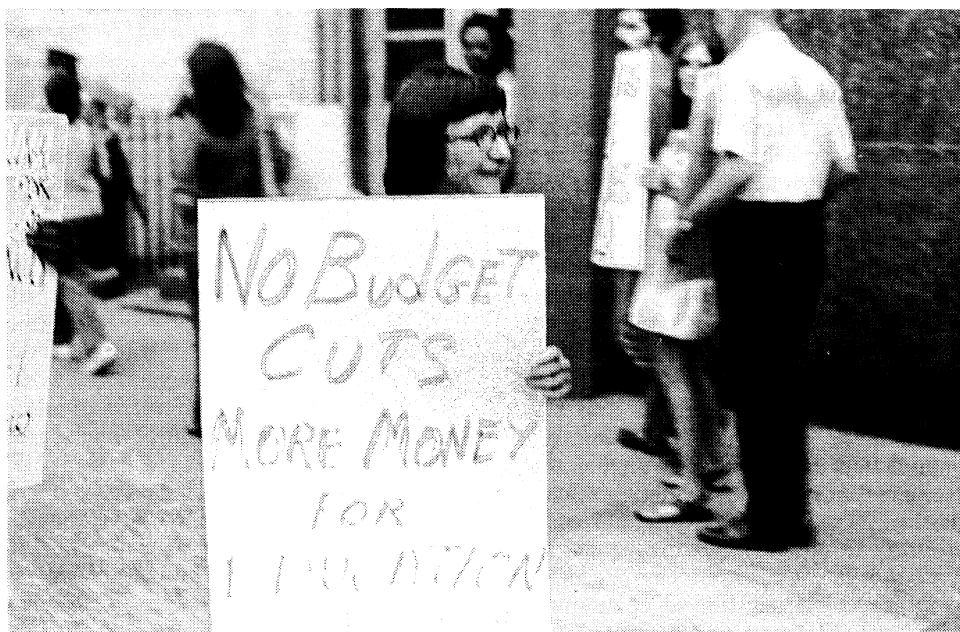
Lobman believed that after a certain amount of hard work to accomplish something like this, you earn the right and the opportunity to really have fun, Barnes added.

## Interesting times

Lobman wrote in the account of her life that she joined the communist movement in "interesting times," Barnes noted. She meant that literally. In the summer of 1945, Ethel and her friend Beezie, who she had recruited to the party when they worked together at Bell Labs, hitchhiked together from New York to Los Angeles. Ethel wrote later that her favorite song at that time was "Don't Fence Me In." She had wanted to go to Los Angeles for years, to see more of the country and get away from home. At the same time, it had been hard to decide to leave the warmth and familiarity of her family in New York.

As the two young women traveled, they listened on the radio as the coal miners walked out on strike in defiance of the Roosevelt administration's antilabor legislation. They heard the reports from Washington's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and as the true horror of that act began to be revealed.

Arriving in Los Angeles, instead of the Hollywood image that even these two young communists had somewhat imagined, they found a city marked by Jim Crow segregation. It was a place where high school students in her own organization were helping lead a fight against



Militant/Michael Baumann

**Ethel Lobman in 1973 at picket line before school board meeting during New York District 1 struggle. The struggle united parents in fight against discriminatory practices by board.**

fascist thugs led by former Silver Shirts member Gerald L. K. Smith and assaults on Jewish organizations.

Barnes recalled a national SWP conference in the early 1990s where a list of the languages participants spoke was to participants in the gathering. Yiddish had been left off the list, even though at least one participant — Ethel — had indicated she spoke it fluently. Ethel protested, sending a letter to Barnes. He replied with a letter to the party pointing out the error and why it was so important to correct it. When Ethel had joined the movement, Yiddish was the first language of a large number of Jewish workers. The SWP published literature in Yiddish. This was not a personal crotchet about Yiddish, he said, but followed Ethel's bent that you weaken yourself if you give up any part of the traditions that come together in the party. "We value every strength and every accomplishment that makes it possible to be who we are," Barnes stated.

Barnes recalled meeting with Lobman when he first moved to New York in the early 1960s. Before he left Chicago, Bea Hansen — who had been a close friend of Ethel's in the New York SWP in the 1950s — had told him to make sure to meet with Ethel and ask her to stand again for election to the party's branch executive committee. You need people like her to help take the next steps forward, Hansen had remarked, in the transition in the party

leadership that had begun with the recruitment of a new generation from civil rights struggles and support for the Cuban revolution.

Ethel responded that she had decided not to take that kind of responsibility again, but she guaranteed she would continue to be active. "This was a great shock to me and a great help to me," Barnes stated. "To recognize the different degrees of responsibility, the different decisions which people make in their lives, which you accept and work together along the same road. Ethel had a capacity to teach you never to fall into the mistake of resenting what someone else wasn't going to do. But to take whatever a person has to offer and work together with them, asking only that they be a soldier in what they set out to do."

Ethel was also always truly an internationalist, Barnes explained. This accounted for the tone and character of the messages from comrades abroad, he said, pointing to letters sent to the meeting from members of the SWP's sister organizations in Canada, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

## 'Love at first sight'

Barnes read a portion of a letter given to him by Ethel's family that she received a few months ago from Beezie, the young woman

Continued on Page 14

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**50 Years of the Chinese Revolution.** Speakers: David Feld, Socialist Workers Party; Luis Rivera, Young Socialists. Fri., Oct. 22, 7 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

**New Revelations of Massacre of Korean Refugees by U.S. Troops.** Speaker: Margrethe Siem, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 22, 7:30 p.m. 683 Washington St. Codman Sq. Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

## CALENDAR

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**Pathfinder Fund Meeting. Puerto Rico: The Fight for Independence Today.** Speaker: Migdalia Jiménez, Young Socialists. Sat., Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. For more information, call: (515) 288-2970.

### CANADA

#### Toronto

**A Young Socialist/Communist League Class Series on Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium.** Class held every Sunday at 11 a.m. Pathfinder Bookstore, 851 Bloor St. W. For more information, call (416) 588-4324.

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# Imperialist trade conflicts and the myth of a united Europe

The following selection is an excerpt from "The vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 elections revealed," a talk presented by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes in New York City on Nov. 7, 1992. It appears as the fourth chapter 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

The prospect of a breakdown in world trade is slowly but surely increasing as interimperialist conflict sharpens today. During this year's election campaign, Clinton competed with Perot and Buchanan to be the most aggressive-sounding candidate on ques-

## from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

tions of international trade. Clinton expressed doubts about signing the so-called North American Free Trade Agreement, at least before doing some arm-twisting and renegotiating with the Mexican and Canadian governments "to level the playing field." And Clinton's backers in the trade union officialdom, and among bourgeois political figures who are Black such as Jesse Jackson, were among the most vociferous in opposing what they called a "fast track" of "American jobs" to Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, U.S. imperialism's protectionist assaults against its trade rivals have bipartisan support. Just this month, for example, the Bush administration threatened to levy a 200 percent import tax on white wine and other European Community products in order to force the EC, especially the capitalists in France, to back off subsidies on soybeans and other agricultural products. These are aggressive, unilateral acts by Washington. They will be repeated in one form or another over and over again. The U.S. rulers' European rivals may well back off this time, but crises like this will recur in the deflationary, depression conditions the capitalist world has entered. The stability and the patterns of world trade will be threatened. No one is in control of the pressures that erupt in these conflicts. Unilateral acts are taken in reaction to the perceived national interests of powerful capitalist classes that come into conflict with the national interests of competing capitalist classes. No one plans these clashes, and no one can ultimately prevent them.

No one plotted six months ago, for example, that a dispute over soybean oil would pose a

threat to patterns of world trade that have been built up by the capitalist powers through negotiations since the end of World War II. But the conflict shaping up between Washington and Paris and other European imperialist powers is no joke. Carla Hills, the chief U.S. trade representative, is standing in front of TV cameras and saying, in essence, "Cheat us on soybeans and we'll zap your white wine!"

### Conflict of imperialist rivals

Why is all this happening? The big-business media offers an explanation. From reading the papers and watching TV, you would think the dispute is about farmers. The problem is that farmers are being voraciously greedy — especially dirt farmers in France, who are portrayed as having more power than any social force on earth. They have supposedly pushed the entire French government to the wall. They have the European Community on the run. Working farmers in France, some of whom can barely eke out a living, are threatening to bring world trade to its knees!

But this is all demagogic camouflage. The dispute over soybeans and white wine is a direct conflict between some of the most powerful interests of rival national capitals — not a clash between debt-burdened independent commodity producers on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. France is today the number-two exporter of farm products in the world, following the United States. The profits are raked in by giant French commercial trusts that monopolize trade and banking both — not by working farmers. U.S. capitalists are the world's largest traders of soybeans, accounting for close to 63 of the 86 million tons produced worldwide. So, there are big stakes for some of the largest monopolies in both countries.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the threatened tax on imported wine is less an assault on the French ruling class than it is a broadside by both Washington and London against the German ruling class, Paris's partner in the conflict. We should not forget what Bonn did a month or so ago. In September, the world's financiers, including those in Germany, decided to treat the pound sterling like a two-bit overvalued currency and crammed it down the Tory government's throat. That was after finance capital had squeezed the pound for years, helping to precipitate the deepest and most prolonged recession in Britain since the Great Depression of the 1930s, one it is just now beginning to come out of. The German government and banks, however, teamed up with the French rulers to prevent the same thing from happening to the French franc. So, when Wall Street and Washington take aim at Paris over trade and financial policy, they often have locked Bonn in the cross hair as well.

### Explosive development of world capital

These conflicts between rival national capitalist classes and governments are blowing apart the myth of a "united Europe" at an accelerating pace. Since the end of the so-called Cold War, bourgeois politicians and commentators have had trouble coming up with phrases to describe the world balance of power. They talked about a New World Order for awhile, but that did not seem to fit so well in light of the outcome of the Gulf War, the permanent crises in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, and the onset of depression conditions. So some of them began talking about "the tripolar world" — the United States, Europe, and Japan were the three poles. But that description of power relationships in today's world has already bumped up against a big problem — *there is no Europe pole.*

How long ago was it that many ruling-class figures in Europe (especially in Bonn, and to a lesser degree Paris) were insisting that the European imperialist powers — whatever their problems and frictions — were on the road toward political

unity? Members of the European Community would pool their funds — so the story went — and give some money to Ireland, to Portugal, to Greece, and even a little bit to Spain, so these countries could catch up and narrow the economic and social gap with the rest of capitalist Europe. They would adopt common social welfare rules, labor standards, and pollution controls. Eventually they would converge toward a common foreign and military policy. They would smooth out differences in productivity and eventually all agree to use the same tokens as a common currency. And then, this new and united Europe — with class differences slowly but surely disappearing for all practical purposes — would emerge big, powerful, and competitive with the United States and Japan.

The opposite has actually happened over the last decade, however. Despite all the talk about unity, the evolution of world capitalism has increased uneven development across Europe and made its character more explosive. And not just between the weakest capitalist powers in southern Europe and the rest. The gap has also widened, for example,



Worker in Colombia packing bananas. Earlier this year hostilities erupted over the banana trade when Washington demanded that its capitalist rivals in Europe open their markets to products from U.S.-owned companies.

between rates of capital accumulation and economic development in Britain and other, more powerful capitalist countries in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After wresting further concessions from Ottawa and Mexico City, Clinton did put NAFTA on the "fast track" for ratification by Congress, which did so in a bipartisan vote in November 1993; the trade agreement took effect in January 1994. Opposition to NAFTA also cut across bourgeois party lines, involving forces on the far right of the Republican party such as Buchanan; much of the so-called labor-liberal-civil rights coalition in the Democratic Party; and Perot and his supporters.

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. government withdrew its threatened import tax later in November 1992, when Washington wrested a concession from the European Community — over protests by Paris — on cuts

in EC agricultural subsidies. In mid-1995 Washington threatened to impose a 100 percent import tax on thirteen models of Japanese-made automobiles until Tokyo agreed to "voluntary" quotas increasing the purchase of U.S.-made auto parts.

<sup>3</sup> According to a study reported in the May 14, 1996, issue of the London *Financial Times*, total manufacturing output in the United Kingdom between 1973 and 1992 grew by only 1.3 percent, compared to 16.5 percent in France, 32.1 percent in West Germany, and 68.6 percent in Italy. Over the same period, industrial output expanded by 68.9 percent in Japan and 55.2 percent in the United States, according to the same study.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### 35 CENTS THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

**October 25, 1974**  
HOUSTON — About 200 delegates and observers assembled in the ballroom of the Whitehall Hotel here on the weekend of Sept. 21-22 for the statewide convention of the Texas Raza Unida Party (RUP).

In addition to running Ramsey Muñiz for governor and Fred Garza for railroad commissioner, the Chicano party is fielding candidates for 35 local offices in 16 different counties. This includes 16 candidates for state representative and candidates for such county offices as commissioner, clerk, judge, and treasurer. In addition, the party is running three candidates for constable and 10 for justice of the peace.

A small group of CAP [Congress of African People] activists has been campaigning for Raza Unida in the Black community.

Any significant support by Blacks for Raza Unida is a new phenomenon, and the party leadership has been considering the ramifications of this development for Raza Unida.

In his speech to the gathering Muñiz said, "When we talk about the Blacks and ourselves, the proposal will not be for a Black and Brown coalition, because we must first have a Brown coalition of our own people. And the Blacks also have to have their own coalition. However, we can get together to talk about something we both have in common."

At one point in his speech, Muñiz commented on Raza Unida's relationship to the liberals. "We are the terror of the liberals who have used our people for their own ends," Muñiz said. "Raza Unida is showing liberals that we will never be used again and we are showing them that we can speak for ourselves. If the liberals are so concerned about us, then let them follow our

leadership."

### THE MILITANT

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

**October 24, 1949**

Friday, Oct. 14, 1949, will go down as a black-letter day for civil rights in America. The conviction on that day of 11 Communist Party leaders in the political trial at Foley Square struck a hammer-blow against the democratic liberties of the whole working class.

We are irreconcilably hostile to Stalinism. But we recognize that the trial and conviction of the 11 gives a green light to the government witch-hunters, the book-burners, all the storm troops of reaction.

The war against the Bill of Rights, launched in 1941 when the government used the Smith Act to convict 18 Trotskyists in the Minneapolis Labor Case, has assumed blitzkrieg force with the conviction of the 11 Stalinists under the same Smith Act.

In his charge to the jury, Judge Medina cynically said: "Books are not on trial here.... It is not your function to pass upon the relative merits of communism or capitalism or any other 'ism.'" It was not even charged, he said, that the defendants "personally" have actually advocated forcible overthrow of the government or that the "Communist Party as such" has so advocated. The "crime" was that the defendants had "conspired" to advocate.

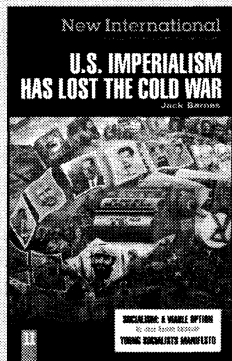
But the very wording of the charges made plain that what was on trial were precisely books and ideas — and specifically the books and ideas of Marx and Lenin. The defendants were accused of building a group "dedicated to the Marxist-Leninist principle of the overthrow and destruction of the Government of the United States by force and violence."

for further reading

### U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

New International no. 11

Because of the weight of the U.S. economy in the world and the increasingly integrated character of world capitalism, the next downturn can trigger major recessions in other imperialist countries. It will accelerate the already intensifying competition and protectionist conflicts among the major imperialist powers. \$14



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# Stop the deportations!

Continued from front page

capitalist system. He transforms the divide-and-rule tactics of the rulers into a tool for inspiring and mobilizing confused and demoralized social forces to his incipient fascist banner.

This same question confronts the labor movement in every imperialist country. Anti-immigrant demagoguery was one of the main campaign points of Jorge Haider, whose ultranationalist and rightist Freedom Party took second place in recent elections in Austria.

The ruling class in the United States profits mightily from the exploitation of the resources and labor of the Third World. One statistic — the fact that a person in Africa has a life expectancy an average 26 years less than a person in North America — speaks volumes about the consequences for such countries. Such disparities, and the high rates of unemployment in many semicolonial countries, lie behind the decision of many working people to emigrate.

The bosses cannot stop the mass immigration that is changing the face of the United States and other imperialist countries. Nor are they trying to choke off this source of cheap labor. Their brutal policies are aimed at keeping this layer of the working class less secure and, they hope, less insistent on its rights. The employers try use this as a weapon to drive down the value of our labor power. That way, they pay us all less.

But immigration brings new forces with a wealth

of experiences into the labor movement. It internationalizes our class, links us more to the world, and lays the basis for a labor movement that will increasingly be not “America first,” but internationalist in its composition and its program.

There is a growing confidence among immigrant workers today that is reflected not only in protests against *la migra*’s raids but in union struggles. From the textile mills in Kannapolis, North Carolina, to the port of Seattle, workers born in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have been in the thick of fights to unionize.

It is becoming easier — and increasingly necessary — for workers who were born in the United States to view fellow workers who are immigrants not as competitors or as victims but as fellow fighters in the struggle against the employers.

Clinton and the class he represents are beefing up the defense of their borders. But his rhetoric notwithstanding, these are not “our” borders, and working people should have no part in such efforts. That is why participating in actions such as the October 16 march on Washington is important.

We should demand:

Equal rights for immigrants!

No to deportations and factory raids — no human being is illegal!

Jobs for all — shorten the workweek, with no cut in pay!

# Lobman: unceasing fighter

Continued from Page 12

Ethel recruited during the war.

“You have influenced my own life in many important ways,” Bessie read. “Just by bringing me to the party you changed my whole way of seeing the world. You’ve always been there when I needed you — lending money, lending time, lending an ear... I think of that first day you walked into Bell Labs, wearing outlandish flowered beach pajamas, and how the whole atmosphere of the shop changed from dull and quiet to fun, laughter, and friendliness for everyone there... I know the years haven’t basically changed you.”

“This is to me,” Barnes said, “the best example I’ve ever seen of ‘love at first sight,’ of the character of the solidarity working people find in each other, and in other women.”

Lobman wouldn’t like to be called a role model, Barnes added. “She was careful to teach me that no one should try to be a role model. Because no one can be. You have to find out who each person is, and then help them gain confidence as they discover over time that all types of human beings join a revolutionary organization and together accomplish what none of them as individuals thought they could do before.”

Every one of us can draw strength and joy from the activity of a person who as teenager became a citizen of world and a citizen of time, Barnes said. He pointed to several conversations with Ethel about the accounts of her political activity, which, she told him, she concluded she had basically written for herself. After read-

ing over these accounts a couple of times, Lobman said that in looking back at her life and revolutionary activity “I wouldn’t change a thing.”

Ethel Lobman, Barnes concluded, “remained an unceasing fighter for human solidarity and an uncompromising soldier of the socialist revolution.”

At the end of the program, *Militant* staff writer Brian Taylor asked for contributions to the Pathfinder Fund. Participants in the meeting honoring Ethel’s lifelong commitment to building the communist movement donated more than \$7,000.

# Mumia Abu-Jamal

Continued from front page

charges of killing a Philadelphia cop in December 1981. Since then his eloquent and steadfast denunciation of the death penalty has become an emblem among many in the fight against state sponsored murder and the racist character of the U.S. cops, courts, and prisons.

Abu-Jamal has exhausted all state court appeals. His lawyer, Dan Williams, said he will file a federal appeal on October 15 that will cite 29 constitutional violations in Abu-Jamal’s 1982 common pleas court trial, which lasted only five hours before he was convicted.

# Young Socialists Red Weekend

Continued from Page 5

tions today.

Over the course of the weekend, teams were deployed to set up socialist literature tables to build an event at Barnes and Noble Booksellers in Berkeley where *New Internationalist* editor Mary-Alice Waters, who has written or edited several books on the Cuban revolution, was to speak October 11. Socialists also participated in a demonstration demanding the U.S. government pull its naval forces out of Vieques, where it uses the Puerto Rican island for live target practice and simulated Marine invasions. The protests targeted “Fleet Week,” a series of patriotic events in support of the U.S. Navy.

“With the collaboration of the party we made this

Red Weekend a real success,” Kern said late Sunday evening.

“This will help deepen our collaboration with the party on our common campaigns, from selling *Capitalism’s World Disorder* to the YS fund drive. We took a step forward in YS leaders in San Francisco and Santa Cruz working together as part of the YS national leadership and the possibilities for having the strongest YS national office possible.”

*Greg McCartan is a member of the Union of Needletrade, Industrial and Textile Employees and the SWP’s Trade Union Committee. Jason Alessio is a member of the YS in Santa Cruz.*

# Why is Giuliani trying to censor Brooklyn Museum?

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

An editorial in last week’s *Militant* rightly denounced the New York City administration’s attack on the content of a special exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art as an assault both on freedom of expression and on government funding of the arts. But it failed to answer a key question: Why is New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani carrying out this attack?

Some think Giuliani is an exceptionally reactionary figure in New York and national politics. He is even labeled by some of his opponents as a “dictator,” rising above the established government and imposing his will.

Signs carried by some protesters against censorship outside the museum October 1 read “Adolph Giuliani” and depicted the mayor with a Hitler mustache. Liberals, social democrats, and activists with an ultraleft bent sometimes denounce Giuliani as a “fascist” to explain his probes against democratic rights.

# DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

These and other opponents argue that his Republican Party politics make him qualitatively worse than Democratic politicians.

Giuliani is a liberal Republican politician, not a fascist or strongman-type politician. His positions on a range of social questions are comfortably within the framework of the liberal wing of the Republican Party today — from opposing a federal ban on late-term abortions to marching in the Gay Pride Parade and voicing opposition to some of the most draconian aspects of the anti-immigrant legislation signed by President William Clinton. And, like other liberals, he states that welfare is “necessary” while supporting the Clinton administration’s sharp curtailment of welfare and pushing for the expansion of “workfare,” which forces people to work for subminimum pay at what should be union jobs.

The Giuliani administration, like those in cities around the country, has put thousands of new cops in the streets. His government has campaigned for a number of policies that — in the name of fighting crime and increasing the “quality of life” — target democratic rights, from the right to assemble to freedom of speech. It has aggressively defended the police in face of public outrage over the vicious brutality routinely dished out by the cops against working people in New York. It has pushed to cut funds for public education, museums, and other public institutions.

It’s important to note, however, that the relationship of class forces today places sharp limits on what the Giuliani administration has been able to accomplish, from its failure to bar the Million Youth March to the outrage over police brutality that forced the city authorities to prosecute the cops who tortured Abner Louima.

The problem cannot be reduced to a particularly “evil” politician. Giuliani, together with the City Council and the state and national governments, carries out the bipartisan policies of the ruling billionaires. Replacing him with a Democratic politician won’t help working people one bit.

The New York mayor’s attack on the Brooklyn Museum of Art is one piece of the overall offensive being carried out by capitalist politicians, both Democratic and Republican, to weaken and begin to dismantle the social conquests the working class has won over decades. They are driven to do this by the declining profit rates of the capitalist system as a whole. As the employers pursue their more than two-decade drive to lower real wages, extend working hours, and intensify those hours of labor, the guardians of the capitalist system in both parties seek to roll back the already inadequate social safeguards workers won through the labor battles of the 1930s and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s. They also seek to curtail freedom of speech and expression, which working people need to freely debate and chart a political road to defend our class interests.

On a national level, Democratic president William Clinton has spearheaded this effort. A hallmark of the Clinton administration was eliminating the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program — or “ending welfare as we know it” — abolishing for the first time a portion of the 1935 Social Security Act. That step has been followed by probes against universal entitlements such as Medicare and Social Security.

Clinton has also led the way on measures that encroach on democratic rights and civil liberties. The first Democrat to win the presidential endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, Clinton brags about having hired tens of thousands of more cops. His administration has overseen the expanded use of the death penalty, passed brutal immigration laws and stepped up the deportation of workers, and pumped \$1.1 billion into new “antiterrorist” measures. And Clinton, while giving lip service to the civil rights of homosexuals, signed the reactionary Defense of Marriage Act, banning recognition of same-sex marriages.

This bipartisan course has put wind in the sails of ultrarightist and incipient fascist forces in U.S. politics today, such as Buchanan. Demagogically feeding on middle-class insecurities bred by the capitalist social crisis, Buchanan plies the politics of resentment, both against the two-party “Establishment” — including politicians like Giuliani — and against layers of the population — immigrant workers, gays, women raising children by themselves who depend on welfare, and Jews — who are scapegoated for the ills of the capitalist system.

In contrast with traditional bourgeois politicians, Buchanan seeks to recruit cadres to build a radical street movement that can some day be used to smash trade unions and other workers organizations with physical force.

This is not what Giuliani is organizing or can organize. He is trying to defend the brutal status quo within the bounds of bourgeois democracy. To label him “fascist” apologizes for the savage nature of the capitalist system as it is. But the anti-working-class actions of the Giuliani administration as well as Democratic politicians do help open the door to ultrarightist forces.

To oppose the offensive being led by Giuliani in New York City — as well as any probes by ultrarightist forces — we must fight the anti-working-class and anti-farmer policies of the employers and all their parties.



# Convenience store strikers reach out for solidarity

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 happening in your union, at your work-

striker in a wheel chair and another with a broken hand were pointed out to the unionists as victims of police abuse on the picket lines. Five strikers were also arrested the day before the rally and charged with criminal trespass for handing out strike support leaflets at a Delaware County mall.

The limited number of strikers, many of whom are picketing 12-hour shifts, and the number of stores,

cap on its contributions for health-care premiums, along with a board demand to increase the standardized work hours, both daily and yearly.

At a school board meeting the day after the strike began, parents demanded that negotiations resume. Two days into the strike, high school seniors joined the picket line to show support. Teachers on the picket line said they believed the board to be stalling, awaiting enforcement of a state law that orders teachers back to work if their strike would mean ending the school year after June 15. The members of the Haverford Township Education Association and the school board will vote on the tentative agreement within two weeks.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

place, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

PHILADELPHIA — One week after 280 delivery drivers and other workers struck the Wawa convenience store chain, more than 600 Teamsters joined a strike support rally here October 10. It is the first strike in the company's 97-year history.

Wawa, a growing operation with more than 500 stores in five states, forced the drivers, and dairy and warehouse workers, to strike by demanding they give up time-and-a-half pay for Sunday work. This is a contract provision they have had for some 30 years, strikers explain.

"Get the news media to explain that this is not something we're asking for — it's something we have that they're trying to take away," interjected New Jersey striker Ron Williams from the floor at the October 10 rally and news conference. "We drivers work up to 60 hours a week away from our families. We want time and a half for Sunday!"

The strikers are members of Teamsters locals 463 and 473. Injunctions limiting pickets were issued in Pennsylvania counties and Delaware, even including a three-minute time limit on pickets talking to truckers at the main dairy and warehouse center in Wawa, Pennsylvania.

At the spirited Sunday rally, which was addressed by union officials and four Philadelphia city council members, speakers who addressed the "overactive judiciary and police department," as Teamsters Joint Council 53 president John Morris put it, received an enthusiastic response. A

sharply poses the question of union solidarity. The strikers' goal is to shut down deliveries to the stores, as well as to convince the public not to shop at Wawa. The company has hired scabs to drive some of their trucks and to work at the main plant. Teamster members are even making deliveries to the struck stores if there are no pickets in front for them to honor. After the rally, Teamsters who work at other companies signed up for picket duty.

At the main plant's picket line in Wawa during the third day of the strike, driver Steve Hunter said, "If we could get every working man and woman to observe our lines for a week, we could win." As he talked, a school bus drove by with a boy hanging out a window, cheering and holding a handmade sign that said, "Boycott Wawa."

Matt Hansell, a worker in the general warehouse, had picketed the day before at the store by the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He praised the maintenance workers at the school, who are members of Teamsters Local 115.

"They were great," he said. "They came before their shifts, after their shifts, and during their lunch break. They relieved us for breaks, they made copies of flyers for us — they kept our morale up all day."

### Pennsylvania teachers reach tentative contract

HARVERFORD, Pennsylvania — A strike of 330 teachers here ended October 8 with a tentative agreement, four days after they walked out. It was the first strike in the school district's history. The main issue was a school board proposal to continue a

### Scotland postal workers resist union busting

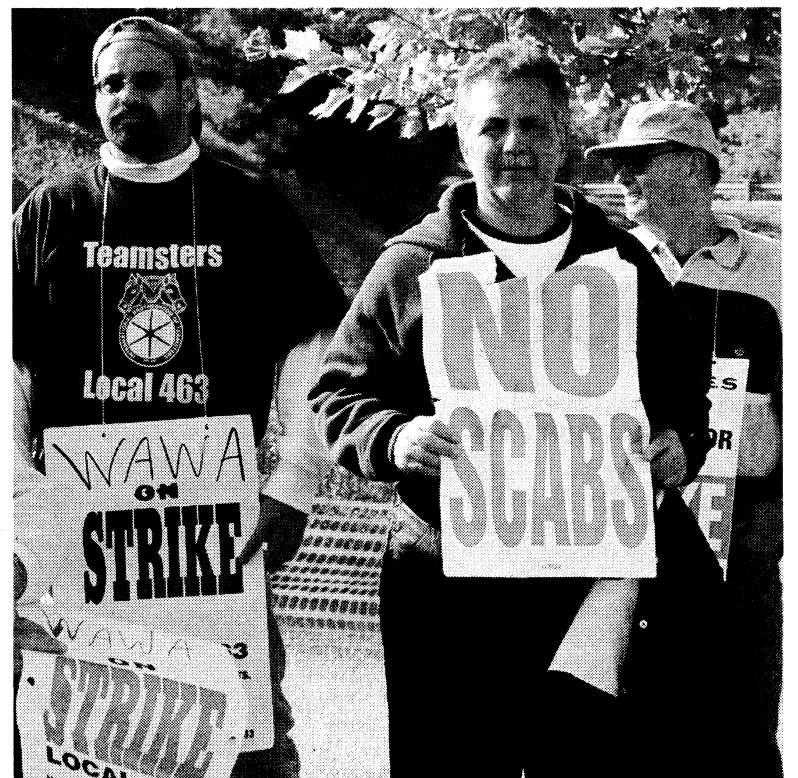
LIVINGSTON, Scotland — One hundred and forty workers at Livingston Royal Mail Delivery office here walked out on unofficial strike following the sacking of their union representative, Willie Colquhoun. On October 7 they were joined by a wildcat action by 2,000 workers throughout the Lothians, Fife, and Central regions of Scotland following company rejection of Colquhoun's appeal.

The strike has affected around 1.7 million deliveries to 400,000 homes and businesses, including Edinburgh, the Scottish capital.

The strike has turned into a struggle to fend off company attempts to weaken the union. It has attracted major media attention in Scotland. A recent agreement between national Communication Workers Union (CWU) officials with the Royal Mail, called "The Way Forward," had been rejected 60-40 in a union ballot last month. The agreement provided for an 18 percent rise in basic wages in exchange for the introduction of new working practices.

At Kircaldy in Fife and at a sorting office west of Edinburgh, the strikers had gone home confident that there'd be no strike-breaking. At the Livingston delivery office, the strikers have organized a 24-hour picket. There were 20 pickets when *Militant* reporters visited the line on October 8.

Sacked union representative Willie Colquhoun explained that the dispute started with the introduction



Militant/Nancy Cole

Teamsters picket Wawa plant in Wawa, Pennsylvania, October 6.

of new working practices at the Livingston office. The company was trying to increase the workload of the delivery staff by speeding up the delivery of heavy cable and satellite TV magazines. An agreement hammered out over years providing for a delivery time of about a week would be replaced by the three-day deadline, Colquhoun explained.

They refused to agree to this, he went on, but in breach of agreement the company said it would implement the proposal anyway. Colquhoun was sacked for delaying the mail. "This was a clear attempt to break the union," he added. A picket said, "it was no coincidence that the person they sacked was the union representative."

Picket lines are being organized 24 hours a day. This had been initially a localized strike in Livingston after the union representative's firing. Workers returned to work pending an appeal against the sacking. They went out after the appeal was turned down.

Long-term attacks by the Royal Mail bosses on wages and working conditions of postal workers throughout the United Kingdom has been met by a militant response by the CWU

members in the Lothian region and at Livingston in particular.

Over the past years, new area managers came to try to roll back the union. Three years ago the new area manager prompted a walkout 35 minutes after he arrived on the job with his statement that there would be no negotiation with the CWU. The strike has spread to other sorting offices in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath, and Lochgelly.

Company spokesman Durkin said, "We will be making contingency arrangements to make sure that special deliveries are made as soon as possible". The bosses are the only ones making deliveries now in an attempt to break the strike. "Look, he is using my van," said one picket, who did not want his name used, pointing to a manager. "He would not do that job before the strike."

Nancy Cole and Connie Allen in Philadelphia; Paul Galloway, a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union in Manchester, England, and Jim Spaul, a member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers in London; contributed to this column.

## —LETTERS—

### New York prochoice rally

Chanting "Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide," 75 supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion rallied outside the Ambulatory Surgery Center of Brooklyn in a heavily Latino neighborhood of Sunset Park in the early morning of October 9. The Brooklyn Pro-Choice Network initiated the rally, which was supported by the National Organization for Women and the National Abortion Rights Action League.

The rally was in response to a mobilization by Helpers of God's Precious Infants who were assembling on their 10th anniversary of a daily presence outside the clinic. Some 150 people demonstrated against a woman's right to choose.

Students from New York University, Barnard College, and Columbia University led chants for the two hours that the right-wing demonstration lasted. "Your presence has made a difference," said Frank Monck, administrator of the clinic, as he thanked the rally participants. He noted that 10,000 abortions are performed yearly at the clinic. Distributing a bilingual brochure with the headline, "Every Woman's Right to Choose," activists from the Brooklyn Pro-Choice Network signed up people for clinic escort service.

Nancy Rosenstock  
Glova Scott  
Brooklyn, New York

### Brooklyn Museum

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is attempting to cut off funding to the Brooklyn Museum because of an art work he claims is an example of "Catholic bashing." In this effort he has gained the support of numerous government officials and members of the press. We might recall that many of these same people condemned another act of censorship which occurred a few years ago.

On Feb. 14, 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who headed the Islamic Republic of Iran, issued a *fatwa* "religious decree" which called for the execution of Salman Rushdie who wrote the book *The Satanic Verses*.

Many of those same people who criticized the Iranian government for its fatwa against Rushdie are now supporting Mayor Giuliani's act of attempted censorship of Chris Ofili's painting "Holy Virgin Mary."

Steve Halpern  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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## U.S.-NATO forces tighten grip on Kosova, heighten ethnic tensions

BOBBIS MISAILIDES  
AND NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS, Greece—Tens of thousands of working people, youth, and others have participated in rallies and marches in Belgrade and other cities throughout Serbia in recent weeks, demanding the resignation of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. Meanwhile, the U.S.-led NATO forces have taken further steps to consolidate their hold on Kosova, exacerbate the ethnic divisions promoted by the Milosevic regime there, and eventually move to partition the province.

The latest round of daily protests began September 21, when tens of thousands rallied in Belgrade and 19 other cities across Serbia, including Novi Sad, Nis, and Kragujevac calling on Milosevic to resign.

On September 29 about 20,000 demonstrators marched in Belgrade and attempted to cross a main bridge to reach the neighborhood where Milosevic lives. The police stopped the march and forcefully dispersed the demonstrators. The next night, a crowd of 40,000 protesters came out on the bridge in a second attempt to reach Milosevic's residence. This time they were attacked by the heavily armed police and forced back. Twenty-one people were arrested and more than 60 were hospitalized, some with serious injuries. "Now I know how Croats, Bosnians and Albanians felt under Milosevic's iron fist," Ljubica Micic, a 28-year-old nurse who was beaten by the cops, told the Associated Press.

Zorica Trufonovic, a leader of Women in Black, described this renewed police violence and moves to limit democratic space in a phone interview from Belgrade. Women in Black has combated the chauvinist policies of the Belgrade regime for a decade. "There are 23,000 cases pending against people who refused to go along with the war in Kosovo, many of them soldiers," she said.

Organizations like Women in Black, Nezavinost (a union independent of government control), and the Student Union of Yugoslavia have a record of efforts to extend a hand of solidarity to the Albanian toilers of Kosova who were fighting Belgrade's repression.

The daily newspaper *Glas Novosti* was banned from publication for 15 days for publishing a bulletin distributed at anti-Milosevic rallies. For the first time, police visited the offices of the Student Union of Yugoslavia for a "routine check."

Workers also face stepped-up intimidation on the job, according to Christina Ranic, a worker at the Zastava auto plant in Kragujevac and a member of Nezavisnost. "We are afraid to say anything to the supervisor," said the unionist. "You can find yourself on the street the next day."

### Protesters press for democratic rights

Protests against the Milosevic regime halted during more than 11 weeks of bombardment of Serbia by Washington and other imperialist powers earlier this year. That assault devastated most of the industry and infrastructure of Yugoslavia, killing or injuring thousands of people and leaving hundreds of thousands without work. The bombing raids destroyed bridges, hospitals, schools, and houses.

With the lifting of martial law and the end of the US-NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia in June, working people and youth took advantage of the opening to express their outrage against the Belgrade regime and its policies that led to the prolonged war and press for democratic rights. The protests peaked August 19 when a crowd of between 100,000 and 150,000 people demonstrated in front of the parliament building in Belgrade. Since that protest, the participation has been less.

"Lots of workers are individually participating," says Ranic in a phone interview, "but our union itself has not endorsed the marches." Neither has the Student Union of Yugoslavia, though many students participate individually.

Many workers and youth participate in demonstrations and protest rallies despite their



NATO soldier searching Serbian family on their way home to Mitrovica, Kosova, August 18. The U.S.-led occupation force is consolidating its hold on the Yugoslav province.

being called by pro-capitalist opposition parties—such as the Alliance for Change led by Zoran Djindjic—who they do not support or see as an alternative to the policies of the Milosevic regime. Djindjic and other opposition leaders blame Milosevic for the draconian sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia by Washington and other imperialist powers. At the same time they advocate the integration of Belgrade's economy with the world capitalist market, especially with that of Europe.

Djindjic and Vuk Draskovic, leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement, have supported Milosevic's national-chauvinist policies and oppressive measures against Albanians in Kosova, while blaming Milosevic for the loss of "our" Kosova to "a greater Albania." Draskovic, while initially supporting the protests, recently has backed off, insisting that such protests "could trigger a civil war."

The pro-capitalist opposition parties call for "free and fair" early elections after Milosevic resigns. "Key to conditions for free elections are 2 million people on the streets," the equivalent of the population of Belgrade, said Djindjic in a meeting of several opposition parties on September 30. But his expectation of as many as 100,000 people for the protest rally of the previous night fell short.

### Devastating effect of U.S. bombing

Working people continue to confront the devastating effects on their daily lives of the massive imperialist bombardment. The Milosevic regime has taken a few steps to rebuild the country and improve the situation of working people. For example, the oil refinery in Pancevo, a city near Belgrade, began to function again September 28, four months after its bombing by NATO.

But these steps are far too little. The Yugoslav ambassador, Dragomir Vusinevic, stated at a September 27 press conference in Athens, that more than 600,000 workers continue to be unemployed as a result of the destruction of factories, while 2.5 million do not have essential means to get by. The total cost of the destruction by NATO's bombing is over \$100 billion, Vusinevic said.

According to the Federal Statistics Bureau of Yugoslavia, a family of four needs a monthly income of 2,877 dinars (\$270) to get by—double the average monthly salary workers receive. Many workers are not paid at all, or irregularly. Milk, meat, medicine, and gasoline are among the goods hard to find and are hoarded on the black market.

"We are still only getting 20 Dmarks [US\$11] a month," said Ranic, one of the workers of the destroyed Zastava automobile manufacturing complex, which at one time employed 38,000 people. "You need more than 300 to feed a family."

Both Washington and the capitalist governments of the European Union (EU) have expressed their support to the opposition parties' efforts to bring down Milosevic, making it easier for the regime to accuse those protesting of being "traitors" and "NATO lackeys." In a joint statement in the beginning of September, the foreign ministers of the EU appealed for the EU to support and send "humanitarian aid" to the local governments in Serbia controlled by the opposition parties. Clinton administration officials had previously also made similar promises of releasing some funds to cities where mayors are part of the opposition forces, at the same time as Washington maintains its sanctions against Yugoslavia. "We expect them to assume the lion's share of the reconstruction and development effort," said U.S. deputy treasury secretary Stuart Eizenstat referring to the EU.

### U.S. forces fan chauvinist divisions

The U.S.-led NATO occupation force (KFOR) is sinking its roots deeper into Kosova. Washington and its imperialist allies/rivals have carved Kosova into five sectors, each under U.S., British, French, German, or Italian command. This has been done with the acquiescence and participation of the bureaucratic rulers in Moscow.

The occupation of Kosova began after the murderous bombing campaign of Yugoslavia. During that imperialist assault, Serb paramilitary forces, as well as special military forces loyal to Milosevic, brutally expelled more than one-half of Kosova's Albanian population. Thousands of Kosova Serbs who disagreed with Belgrade's "ethnic cleansing" campaign fled as well. Most of the Albanians have now returned to the bombed-out villages and homes.

The imperialist military operation is further fanning the chauvinist divisions among working people promoted by the Milosevic regime. This has provoked the exodus of Serbs, Gypsies, and others from Kosova. Most of the 200,000 Kosova Serbs have been pushed out. Kosova Serbs have accused the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) of carrying out attacks against them with the cover of the imperialist occupation forces. Just in the week ending September 26, KFOR spokesman Roland Lavoie reported 10 killings. Serbs organized a blockade that week of the central East West road in Kosova after two persons were killed and 40 wounded in a mortar attack near Kosovo Polje.

After a meeting with U.S. general Wesley Clark, head of NATO forces in Europe, UCK leaders Hasim Thaci and Agim Ceku signed an agreement September 20 to form a 5,000 strong police force auxiliary to NATO, called Kosova Defense Corps. The armed force will ultimately police Albanian toilers and others who will resist NATO's occupation. The U.S.

government is pressing for the UN office in Kosova to have the right to issue travel documents to Kosovar residents.

The struggle of Albanian toilers throughout the region of formerly federated Yugoslavia for self-determination and national rights has for the last decade included a battle against plans to privatize Kosova's mines. Washington is pushing for the swift privatization of the rich Trepca mine, several power plants, and the local cellular phone network. Meanwhile last month the German mark was given the status of official currency in Kosova.

### Imperialist aims in Yugoslavia

Washington's military intervention in the Balkans aims to further establish its supremacy in Europe, deepen its military confrontation with the workers states in Eastern Europe, including Russia and Yugoslavia, and create conditions that will eventually allow it to reimpose capitalist social relations in this region. The Yugoslav workers state was forged by a powerful workers and farmers revolution in the 1940s that overthrew landlord and capitalist rule and imperialist domination and established the Yugoslav federation.

European imperialist rivals of Washington—including Britain—as well as Moscow initially rejected the conversion of the UCK into a police force, but backed down under Washington's pressure. "Specter of Independent Kosovo Divides U.S., European Allies," read a headline in the *Washington Post* September 28. "Instead of European nations serving as a model for Kosovo, there is increasing concern on the continent that Kosovo's troubles might somehow serve as a prototype of Europe's future," the article stated.

"Both the European allies and Russia are alarmed by signs of readiness in the Clinton administration to envisage Kosovo as an independent ethnic Albanian state" under Washington's domination, stated an article in the October 1 *International Herald Tribune*. Washington's imperialist rivals in Europe "assert that the Clinton administration has started accommodating a blueprint long nurtured by leaders of the UCK to make Kosovo the core of a greater Albania," said the article.

Milosevic's government denounced the UCK-NATO agreement and warned that it will "resist by any means at any cost the violation of the national sovereignty" of Yugoslavia. The agreement was also denounced by Djindjic, who declared that "the international community cannot convert terrorist groups into a regular army."

Meanwhile, Nikola Kabasic, head of the Serbian National Council based in the city of Mitrovica, warned that if the UCK-NATO agreement is not annulled "Serbs also will form a parallel defense body." Dozens of Kosova Serbs blocked Kosova's main road on September 26 protesting the confiscation of their weapons by NATO's forces. They lifted the blockade after representatives of KFOR promised that NATO's forces will protect them against UCK.

Two days earlier hundreds of Kosova Serbs protested in a rally in Mitrovica against the imperialist occupying forces' inaction in face of UCK attacks. They demanded the dissolution of the UCK armed forces. Mitrovica is a center of a mineral-rich region that includes the Trepca mine. Since August Kosovar Serbs are being pushed and concentrated in the region of Kosova north of Mitrovica, adjoining Serbia, raising fears of a de facto partition.

Bernard Kouchner, founder of the France-based organization Doctors Without Borders and now head of the imperialist occupying forces in Kosova, claimed that he needs more police forces to provide protection for the Kosova Serbs. So far 1,200 policemen from several countries, including Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Russia, and the United States are part of the planned 3,100-strong international police force. "But I have asked the UN Security Council to increase the force to 6,000" declared Kouchner.