

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Campaigns to sell and fund socialist publications begin

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Thousands march against cop brutality

Working people bring their fights for justice to Washington

BY KATHIE FITZGERALD AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON—They came from Valdosta, Georgia; Bridgewater, New Jersey; Alexandria, Virginia; New York City; Albany, New York; and other cities and towns from around the country. Thousands of people, some carrying signs with hand-painted slogans, others with pictures of victims of police violence, converged on the nation's capital August 26 to demand an end to cop brutality and harassment.

The march, which drew between 10,000 and 15,000 people, was the first nationwide protest called against police brutality. Initiated by Alfred Sharpton, president of the National Action Network, and Martin Luther King III, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the "Redeem the Dream" action was also a commemoration of the historic 1963 civil rights march led by Martin Luther King Jr.

Many saw the rally as an opportunity to garner solidarity for struggles in which they have been involved in their areas. Members of local coalitions against police brutality in many cities around the country were present, such as the People's Tribunal in Valdosta, Georgia; the Michael Anglin Coalition in Jersey City, New Jersey; and Enough is Enough in Annapolis, Maryland.

A number of those marching, relatives of young people killed by cops, have been fighting for justice for years. Doreen Sheldon from Albany, whose son Corey was found hanged in his prison cell in 1991, said that although no charges were filed in her son's case, she was "keeping the case alive by participating here today to say the police are not judge or jury. They won't change if we don't fight for it."

Betty Harris and Stacey Bridges, mother and cousin, respectively, of Kenny Harris, were the center of an energetic group of about 10 people carrying signs and handing out flyers who spent the entire day tell-

ing anyone who would listen the facts about their case. Harris was a young Black man killed by the police in Alexandria, Virginia, during a routine traffic stop in 1997. Harris

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UNITE joins Charlotte Labor Day



Recently organized members of UNITE garment and textile union marched in Labor Day parade in Charlotte, North Carolina. See article on page 12.

Meat packers defend union at NLRB hearing

BY BECKY ELLIS

MINNEAPOLIS—The owners of Dakota Premium Foods challenged the recent union-organizing victory by meat packers in that plant in nearby St. Paul at a hearing

before the National Labor Relations Board that began here August 28.

The packinghouse workers voted July 21 by a resounding vote, 112 to 71, to join United Food and Commercial Workers

(UFCW) Local 789, in an election run by the NLRB.

The company has claimed that the majority of workers at Dakota Premium voted for the union because they were intimidated. They charged that union "agents" offered to pay workers \$10,000 each, that the union threatened to tell the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) the names of workers who did not support the union, and that the union had organized a "ruckus" outside the voting area to pressure the meat packers into voting for the union.

On the first day of the hearing, company lawyers called Miguel Olvera as a witness. They hoped his testimony would help their allegation that Local 789 officers had organized the campaign for union recognition from the outside and told workers what to do from the outset.

Instead, the testimony of Olvera, a worker in the boning department and one of the main leaders of the union-organizing drive, dealt a blow to the company's charges that he and other workers acted as "agents" of the union officers.

Workers undermine company charges

Referring to the seven-hour sit-down strike that workers carried out June 1, during which they launched the fight for union recognition, Olvera explained, "We organized a sit-down strike because the line

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Dockworkers lead Labor Day event in S. Carolina

BY LAUREN HART

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Close to 3,000 people turned out for the fourth annual Labor Day rally and picnic this year. Many were members of International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422. Members of several other unions and supporters of workers' rights turned out as well. The mood at the rally was festive, with entire families attending the event, which was held at a state park. The large majority of participants were Black.

For the last nine months, the 800 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in Charleston have been in a fight to defend union rights. In December, the Nordana Lines shipping company began to use nonunion stevedores to unload its ships here, at substantially lower wages than what ILA members receive.

On January 20, some 600 cops assaulted hundreds of ILA members on the docks who were demonstrating to defend their union. The cops, media, and state officials went on a campaign to smear the workers as violent. Nevertheless, after months of further protests, gaining broader public support, the ILA won an agreement with Nordana to resume hiring ILA members May 1.

Five longshore workers remain under indictment on federal charges of "instigating a riot" stemming from the January 20 police attack. These workers, expected to go on trial in October, face draconian restrictions such as a 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. curfew, according to ILA Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley. They can only be outside their homes at night if they are working or at a union meeting, and are restricted from

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Clinton pushes U.S. military escalation in Colombia

BY HILDA CUZCO

U.S. president William Clinton went to Colombia August 30 to promote Washington's \$1.3 billion military aid to the "counternarcotics" program of the government in that South American country.

He spent much of his eight-hour visit arguing that, despite widespread public skepticism, the sharply escalated U.S. presence there does not mean U.S. military intervention.

"We have no military objective," Clinton insisted in a televised speech to Colombians the day before his trip to officially release the military aid.

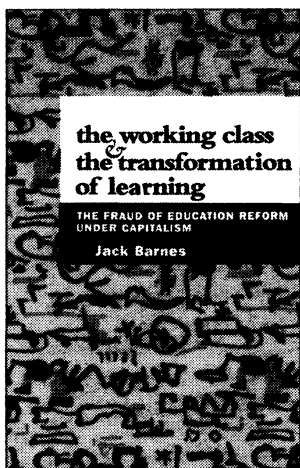
"This is not Vietnam, nor is it Yankee imperialism," he declared in a press conference in the city of Cartagena, in response to criticism.

Surrounded by a massive deployment of riot police and other "security" forces, Clinton arrived with a bipartisan delegation of U.S. legislators who voted to back the funding plan, including Dennis Hastert, the Republican Speaker of the U.S. House of

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By Jack Barnes

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Farmers hold nationwide 'milk dump' protest — page 3

Protesters: U.S. Navy threatens health of residents of Vieques

BY TIM CRAINE

VIEQUES, Puerto Rico—More than 150 residents of Vieques and supporters of the struggle to oust the U.S. Navy from their island gathered on the evening of August 19 for a weekly vigil just outside the gate to the Camp García naval base.

A dozen members of the Puerto Rican police stood in front of the main gate, silent and stone-faced. These cops have been standing guard since May 4, when FBI agents, U.S. marshals, and marines removed hundreds of protesters from the Navy bombing range, where they had set up civil disobedience camps for the previous year.

The protests against the U.S. military occupation of Vieques exploded in April 1999, when a U.S. warplane on training exercises dropped a bomb that killed local resident David Sanes. In an attempt to quell this movement, colonial governor Pedro Rosselló signed an agreement in January with U.S. president William Clinton accepting the resumption of U.S. bombing practice on Vieques along with a planned referendum by local residents on whether the Navy should leave the island by the year 2003.

At the lively and spirited August 19 action, demonstrators gathered around a stage directly across from the gate to listen to music, poetry, and speeches. On three occasions, protest leader Robert Rabin called for everyone to spill out into the street to picket, as they chanted "*Vieques sí, Marina no! Que se vaya, que se vaya, la marina que se vaya!*" (Navy get out!).

The scene was repeated the following afternoon, when 20 people on horses gathered there to hold a special "horseback picket."

In the evening, solidarity greetings were given by visitors to the camp. Participating this week were six members of the group All Connecticut with Vieques, two students from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, a group of medical interns from the Bronx, New York, a group of poets from

New York, and a delegation of 10 people from the newly formed Vermont-Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee.

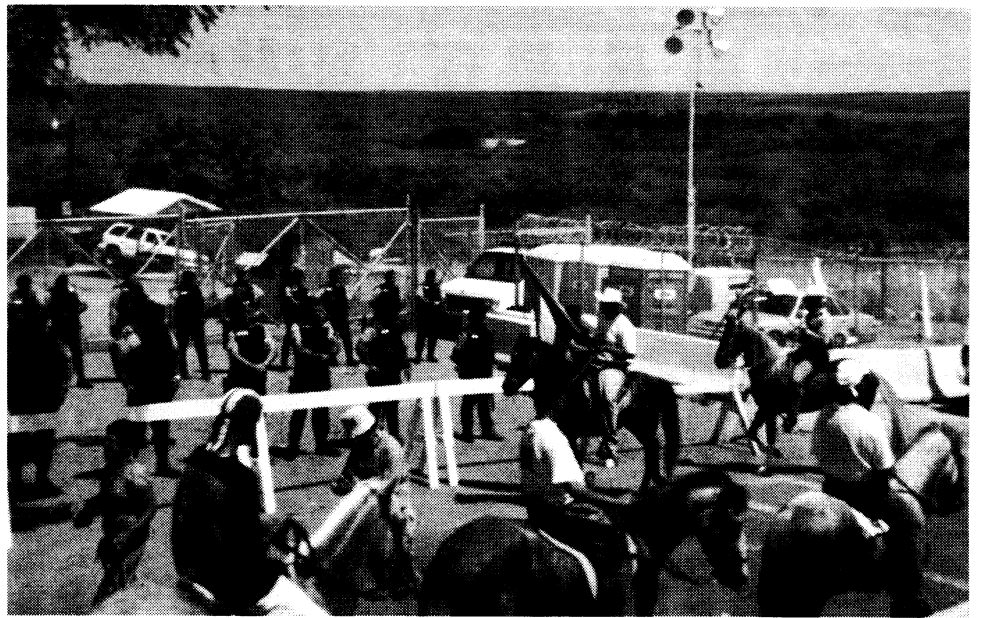
The Connecticut delegation was given a tour of the island by Mirta Sanes Rodríguez, sister of David Sanes, and her husband. They also met with Dr. Rafael Rivera Castaño, a retired epidemiology professor at the University of Puerto Rico, who described the effects that decades of Washington's bombing have had on the health of the island's 9,500 residents.

Abnormally high cancer rates

The cancer rate for Vieques residents is 27 percent higher than that on the main island of Puerto Rico, Castaño reported. Children have been tested and found to have abnormally high levels of heavy metals in their bodies. Members of the Connecticut delegation described the case of one such child, a five-year-old from Vieques who has been brought to Hartford, Connecticut, for further testing and treatment for her damaged liver and gall bladder.

A major concern is the U.S. Navy's use of depleted uranium to harden the casings of its shells used to bomb Vieques. Depleted uranium was used by Washington in its 1991 assault on Iraq and may be responsible for the "Gulf War syndrome" as well as affecting the health of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians. While much of the depleted uranium remains on the ground in the bombing range or in the waters off the coast of the island, some radioactive particles become airborne and are carried from the bombing range at the eastern end of the island to the populated region in the center.

The U.S. visitors also met Carlos Zenón, a fisherman who has helped lead the protests against the Navy since the 1970s. Zenón explained that the presence of the Navy has had a devastating effect on local fishing. It is impossible, for instance, to set lobster traps in areas patrolled by the Navy since the lines to the traps are cut when the Navy ships pass through. The bombing has



Militant/Tim Craine

Members of Vieques youth group hold horseback picket line August 20 at entrance to U.S. Navy base on the Puerto Rican island, with cops standing in front of gate.

destroyed many of the reefs that provide habitat for marine life.

Over the years the lack of opportunity in fishing has led many Vieques residents to leave the island. Today there are more *viequenses* living on the nearby island of Saint Croix, Virgin Islands, than on Vieques itself. Between 60 and 70 percent of those remaining on Vieques are forced to rely on U.S. food stamps.

Zenón described a public hearing called a few days earlier by the mayor of Vieques and a representative of the colonial government to discuss a "development plan" for the island. Local residents were outraged that this plan had been drawn up without their knowledge or input and dozens showed up to protest. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. and lasted until 3:00 a.m. Thirty-four people took the floor to denounce the plan. At the end the officials had to be escorted out by the police after promising to "study the matter further."

Zenón said the so-called development plan was one "written by the Navy." It calls for a continued U.S. military occupation for at least six or seven years, as opposed to the three years stipulated in the Clinton-Rosselló deal. It provides for building housing for retired naval officers, a move *viequenses* see as designed to displace them and dilute their voting power in local elections. And it calls for the construction of luxury tourist hotels that will enrich a few businessmen but not lead to economic development for the community. Already one such facility is under way at Point Martineau on the north side of the island. It is surrounded by a high wall, blocking its beautiful beach area from local residents.

Navy counteroffensive

Meanwhile, opponents of the U.S. military have continued to enter Camp García since the May 4 evictions. When arrested they are transported to the main island and charged with trespassing. At the vigil, Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, described plans for ongoing protests. These include actions by the fishermen in September and a mass demonstration at Camp García in October when the next major round of bombing practice is scheduled.

At the same time, the Navy has under-

taken a propaganda counteroffensive. In an extensive interview published in the August 20 issue of *El Nuevo Día*, a major San Juan daily, Navy admiral Kevin Green attempted to smear the pro-Vieques campaign, stating, "I have heard that our friends in Vieques are fed up with the fact that people from other parts of Puerto Rico, other parts of the United States, and including foreign countries, come to Vieques to cause problems with the Navy, to make a lot of noise, to hold the police hostage and cause an uproar, when all they want is to live their lives in peace." Green neglects to point out, of course, that the vast majority of the people protesting outside Camp García are Vieques residents.

The following day, *El Nuevo Día* reported the response of Guadalupe and Rabin, who characterized the admiral's statements as "an insult to the intelligence of our people."

In a related development, the Navy is pressing to allow its personnel stationed on Vieques to vote in any referendum related to the future of the island.

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda

In two interviews, Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domi-

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THE MILITANT

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Editor: MARTÍN KOPPEL

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Greg McCartan, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ELENA TATE

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Dairy farmers hold nationwide 'milk dump'

BY CHARLES DUFFY

BLOOMER, Wisconsin—"We keep on being pushed to buy more cows and produce more milk. However, the price of milk [to farmers] stays lower than at any other time in the last 20 years. We have to get rid of the idea that prices for milk should be set the way they are now."

This is how Steve Siverling, a dairy farmer, explained the aims of the Labor Day "milk dump" action that dairy farmers carried out around the country.

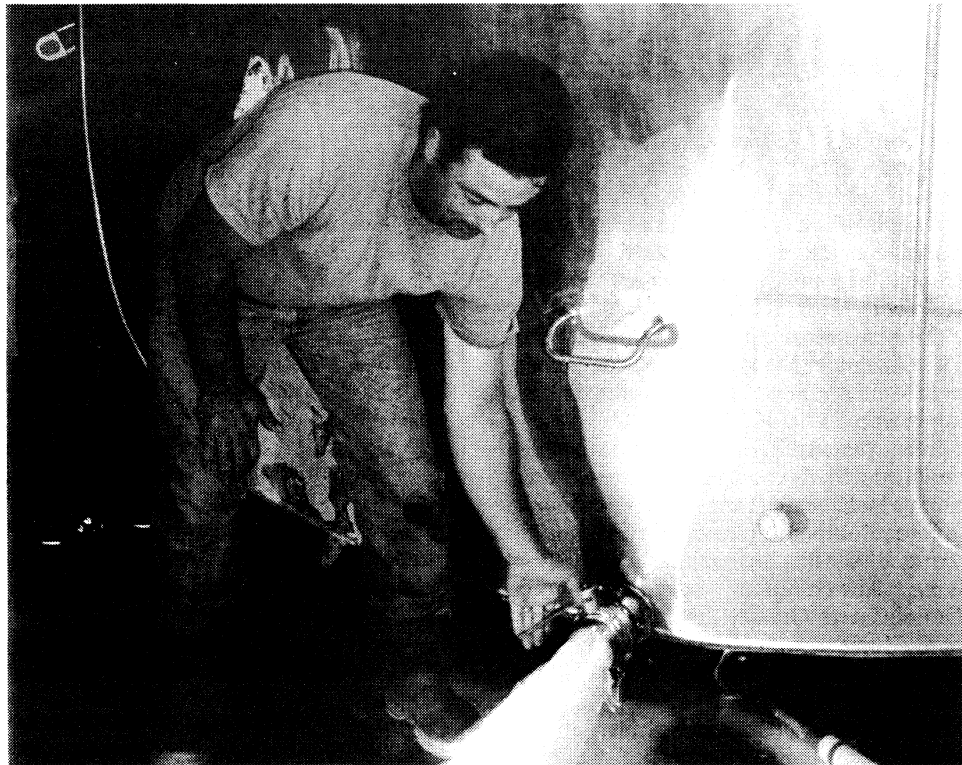
Siverling was speaking at a gathering of 30 dairy farmers outside the town of Bloomer, a half-hour drive north of Eau Claire. Several local farmers had put together their milk production from the previous day and dumped it on the ground to dramatize their demand that the federal government guarantee a base price of \$14.50 for a hundredweight of raw milk. Several of the protesters said that the milk prices dairy farmers receive do not cover production costs. They often get only 85 to 90 cents of the \$3 to \$4 a gallon paid by consumers, with capitalist owners of processors and stores pocketing the bulk of that amount.

According to Siverling, about 3,000 farmers were confirmed to be participating in the September 4 milk dump across the country. He stated that more than 23 million pounds of milk would be spilt by the end of the day, amounting to 6 percent of one day's milk production in the United States.

Siverling explained to those gathered how the action could be part of organizing resistance to the squeeze on incomes dairy farmers face today. "Any action by farmers to change the pricing system is better than no action at all. With the milk strike we can affect the most people by keeping our milk off the market."

He reported on his recent visit to dairy farmers in California, where he spoke to a meeting of 250, who discussed the need to organize stronger farmers' organizations.

The milk dump action here was held at the farm of Harold Berg. Farmers Don and Ilene Moos were key organizers of the pro-



Militant/Elizabeth Lariscy

Javier Avila dumps milk at his dairy farm as part of Labor Day milk strike protest

test. A milk hauler in the area donated the use of two trucks to haul the milk to the Berg farm.

Attending the milk dump were some meat packers involved in the fight to organize a union at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota. Among them were Miguel Olvera and Amy Roberts. Roberts told the farmers there, "We are here in solidarity with your fight and your action today."

Don Moos and other farmers there listened intently to the story of the fight by the workers in the beef slaughterhouse. Afterward, Moos stated several times, "We are glad you came. Workers and farmers are both getting hurt. We have to stick together."

After joining the action and talking to the farmers, Miguel Olvera said in an interview,

"I used to have a different view of farmers in the United States. I thought that they were all rich. But the man who owns this farm is probably in debt to a bank."

California farmers fight for living income

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

ESCALON, California—Dairy farmers here joined the nationwide Labor Day milk strike. Sixty farmers, family members, supporters, and news reporters attended the milk dump at the Faria Dairy, one of several that took place in this state. Other farms participating in the milk dump included the Tosta Dairy in Tracy, Avila Dairy in Hanford, DaSilva Dairy in Escalon, Simoes Ranch in

Gustine, Ferreira and Silva Dairy in Tracy, and Bob Borba's Livestock in Atwater. Other farmers in the state participated in the action by donating their milk.

The Faria family dumped 4,500 gallons of milk at two of their farms. Frank Faria described how prices paid to dairy farmers have hit a 26-year low while milk prices in the grocery store continue to climb.

Joe Faria said, "I have worked as a dairy farmer for 35 years and have had my own farm for 10 years. I have 300 cows. It is a 24-hour-a-day job. We don't make enough money to live off the farm. My wife has a good paying job in a winery in Modesto. She is union member and has good benefits."

Many farmers explained that dumping milk down the drain is not an easy decision. "Farming is a lot of hard work. All we want is to make a living," one woman said. "We are farmers because we want to produce food for people. We had to do something to let people know what we face."

More than 200 dairy farmers met in Turlock August 31 to discuss their participation in the national milk strike. "Never in my life did I think I'd be talking to a crowd and talking about strike," Frank Faria told the meeting. "I met some folks from the Midwest who are facing the same things we are, just trying to make a living."

"I hear this word 'compete' all the time. I don't want to compete. I want to work with you guys to make prices better for everybody—in the Midwest, East, and West," said Steve Siverling, a farmer from Wisconsin. This is not a problem of mother nature, but a man-made problem because of greed. It's a man-made problem that needs to be fixed."

Deborah Liatos is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Illinois dairy farmer 'not intimidated by politicians'

BY CAPPY KIDD
AND CLAUDIA HOMMEL

DAVIS, Illinois—Don Brown Jr., who milks 55 head here, has been organizing meetings of farmers in his area and in Wisconsin since April.

"Most dairymen can't make a living from their milking operations. Eighty percent of farmers in this region have to rely on some off-farm income," Brown said.

There is more participation nationally in this round of dumping than the dumping that took place on the Fourth of July weekend, he said. "The sense of urgency is there and we need to hear more of it."

After he started speaking out, he noticed a marked increase in inspections of his operations. "We have a lot of strength but we have to stand up and use it. I have learned not to be intimidated by politicians, co-op managers, and educators."

UMWA wins demands against Peabody

BY JACK PARKER

KAYENTA, Arizona—The 650 coal miners who work at the Black Mesa and Kayenta mines in northeast Arizona, the Seneca mine in Colorado, and the Big Sky mine in Montana voted August 30 to ratify a proposed contract settlement with their employer, the Peabody Group. The workers, members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), won their contract without striking.

The settlement followed the victory of a recent strike battle by the UMWA against Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. at mines in New Mexico and Wyoming. There is little question the victory against P&M made Peabody think twice about taking on the union, a view expressed by many miners here.

All four of the Peabody operations are surface mines, producing 17 million tons of coal per year. Peabody is the world's largest coal company.

With the settlement, the company withdrew its earlier demands for a 12-hour day and for overtime pay only after 40 hours of work in a week.

Peabody had also proposed that workers at Black Mesa and Kayenta—mines located on the large Navajo reservation here—give up their company-paid health care and instead use the federally funded Indian Health Services. Because of a Native American hiring preference policy won by the union, almost all the miners at these two mines are from the Navajo or Hopi tribes.

This attempt to undermine the workers' health-care coverage was withdrawn during negotiations when it became clear the miners were making preparations to strike. Eugene Badinoe, financial secretary and official spokesperson for UMWA Local 1924 at Kayenta, explained, "The union members have been getting ready since last July by paying bills and saving up money."

The agreement includes a wage increase of 32 cents an hour each of the five years of the contract, continued 100 percent company payment for medical costs, and a substantial increase in retirement benefits. This increase in miners' pensions will put them on a par with miners covered by the

UMWA's contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, a national employers group.

Badinoe noted, "We are the only mines left in the Western coal surface agreement who still have 100 percent health care. This in itself is a big victory."

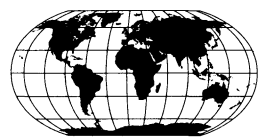
Kayenta, with 342 workers, is the biggest of the four mines. It produces close to 700,000 tons of coal per month. Black Mesa is the next-largest with 201 workers.

The settlement the Peabody miners ratified closely matches what the miners at P&M's McKinley mine—also on the Na-

vajo Nation—won through their strike. The unionists at that company beat back a similar attempt to impose 12-hour workdays and other concessions.

"The P&M strike helped us," Badinoe explained. "We supported them because we knew what they got would be what we would get. We helped picket and financially helped. We cannot afford to stand-alone today. We have to support our brothers."

The growing solidarity throughout the West with the UMWA strike against P&M was a decisive factor in pushing back the bosses' assault on the union.



LABOR BRIEFS

NLRB rules against ConAgra

In another decision, the NLRB ruled August 21 in favor of a complaint by the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) against ConAgra Inc. The board said there is evidence backing the union's complaint that the food giant has illegally obstructed organizing efforts in its Omaha meatpacking plant.

The company videotaped workers engaged in organizing activities, prevented them from handing out union flyers in nonwork areas, and threatened to confiscate union literature. The UFCW, in conjunction with a group of local church organizations, launched a drive in mid-June to organize several large packinghouses in the Omaha area. ConAgra has refused a settlement offered by the NLRB, and a trial appears likely.

'Temporary' workers win rights

In a decision that creates big opportunities for the labor movement, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a ruling August 30 that removes a legal obstacle to unions organizing workers classified as "temporary." It stated that many such workers can join a union at their workplace without having to gain the permission of the

temporary employment agency that assigned them the job.

The NLRB wrote that workers it described as part of a "contingent workforce"—as employers view them—"are being effectively denied representational rights guaranteed them under the National Labor Relations Act." Relying on a pool of workers with fewer rights allows bosses to lower wages, speed up production, and weaken unions. Many of the coal miners killed in mine disasters have been "contract workers" forced to work under unsafe conditions.

Stephen Bokat of a pro-employer National Chamber Litigation Center, complained that "the ruling may eliminate some of the cost advantages of using temporary workers," according to the *Washington Post*.

There are 35 million such workers in the United States today. The number has doubled since 1990.

Rubber workers reach contract

On September 4 Steelworkers officials and Bridgestone/Firestone Inc. reached a tentative contract agreement covering nine factories in eight states. It will now be voted on by the 8,000 union members. The contract reportedly stipulates a wage raise of at least \$2.25 per hour over the three-year term,

including cost-of-living adjustments that are no longer tied to meeting company production goals. Hourly pay rates under the old contract ranged from \$9 for new hires to \$19.

Workers won increases in monthly retirement pensions and some improvements in job conditions. They recovered some of the deep concessions made in previous years. Bridgestone/Firestone reached the settlement at a time when it has been forced to recall more than 6.5 million unsafe tires. The recalled tire models have been linked to dozens of fatal automobile accidents.

Maine shipyard workers strike

Around 4,800 shipyard workers on strike at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, voted down a contract offer September 3. Some emerged from the voting with clenched fists, chanting "Strike! Strike!" The workers are members of International Association of Machinists Local S6, the largest union in a workforce of 7,600.

The company, a subsidiary of the General Dynamics Corp., builds Navy destroyers. Pensions, health benefits, job classifications, and wages are major issues in the dispute.

—PATRICK O'NEILL

Washington workers fight to keep hospital

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—"The people who want to close this hospital act like life is a commodity," explained Charles Carmon at an August 31 rally outside D.C. General Hospital. Carmon has worked in the hospital as a trauma surgery assistant for seven years. Workers took turns during their breaks throughout the day setting up an informational picket line to win support for keeping the hospital open.

An estimated 80,000 uninsured, mostly Black workers, in this city depend upon the hospital for care. The city's only public hospital, D.C. General is also an advanced trauma center that treats gunshots, stabbings, and other emergency cases.

Under the guise of "responsible fiscal management," Congress and the White House appointed a financial control board to oversee the city's finances in the mid-1990s. Early this year members of Congress and the board stepped up pressure on the hospital to "live within its budget." All items in the city's budget are subject to approval by Congress and the Financial Control Board.

Paul Thomas, who has worked in the hospital's warehouse for 29 years, said that they haven't had a raise in 10 years. "This hospital has been underfunded for years," Thomas explained. Many workers added that much of the funding is inefficiently used by highly paid managers.

The Public Benefit Corp. oversees the hospital's plans to lay off 550 workers, eliminate the remaining 250 beds, and convert the hospital into an emergency care facility. Following treatment, patients would be transferred to other, private, hospitals. Many workers like Barbara Smith, who works in the infant care unit, pointed out that "no one has said how they will pay for those transfers."

The board held an August 25 meeting with staff and workers at the hospital. The room was packed, even though most workers had to attend on their breaks. Many, like Smith, were angered as it became clear that the decisions had already been made. Lay-off notices are anticipated to take effect in late September. Board members announced that lists of positions to be cut have already been drawn up.

Board officials have said they will contract out the services provided by D.C. General to private hospitals. Geraldine Thomas, a nurse for eight years at the hospital, explained that uninsured Black workers are often mistreated and turned away from pri-

vate hospitals. "Patients come here because they know they won't be turned away and we will save their lives," she explained.

Joseph Bilikha is from West Africa and a graduate of Howard University Medical School. "It's not just about our jobs," he explained. "I can get another job tomorrow. If this place closes, many patients will die, it's that simple. Everyone here is dedicated to care of the poor and uninsured in this community."

In an August 27 *Washington Post* article, Paul Tuft, chief executive of Doctors Community Healthcare Corp., which now owns Greater Southeast Community Hospital, admitted that this hospital has a reputation in the Black community of not welcoming the uninsured. Greater Southeast is one of the facilities to which the city may be contracting out health care for workers who are uninsured.

Bruce and Lisa Brown had just left the hospital with their two-year-old daughter. They passed up the bus they had been waiting for in order to explain the broad effects closing the hospital would have. "They're going to close the HIV care unit, and the OB1 and OB2 units that care for mothers before and after pregnancy. I have family members who are living with the AIDS virus and my daughter was born here," Lisa Brown explained.

The hospital also operates eight satellite clinics, which the board claim will remain open for now. It also operates the school nurse programs throughout the city. Working people imprisoned in the city jail are also treated at the hospital.

Beverly Harris stopped for a moment with her granddaughter to talk to workers on the

Ohio Steelworkers join Kentucky workers in union fight at AK Steel



Militant/Salm Kolis

Some of the 500 workers who marched August 28 in support of the contract fight by 900 members of Steelworkers Local 1865 at AK Steel's Ashland Works in Kentucky. Among the marchers were 80 members of USWA Local 169 from Mansfield, Ohio, who have been locked out by AK Steel for a year. Negotiators for the Kentucky local announced a tentative agreement September 1.

picket line. "I don't know how we will provide care for my granddaughter when the TADF runs out for us," she explained. TADF is Temporary Assistance to Dependent Families, which replaced welfare programs ended under the Clinton administration. Under TADF a mother could no longer receive some forms of assistance after five years. Harris explained she and her daughter have jobs but neither of them provide health-care benefits.

Workers said that they will continue the picket lines outside the hospital and will rally at the mayor's office on September 8 at 10:00 a.m. Plans are also underway for a large turnout at the City Council meeting on September 27.

Sam Manuel is a member of the United Transportation Union and is the Socialist Workers candidate for D.C. Delegate to the House of Representatives.

Marchers in Australia defend refugees

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Some 800 people marched on the Villawood Detention Centre August 26 to protest the treatment of refugees being held in such jails across the country.

Chants rang out of "Free the refugees now!" and "Ruddock has got to go!" referring to the federal immigration minister Philip Ruddock. Many carried their own hand-painted placards such as "Fleeing persecution is not a crime," "Full rights not temporary visas!" and "Australia: remember signing the UN refugee convention?" Refugees arriving in Australia without visas are

detained, often for years, in remote camps.

The big majority of people at the demonstration were immigrants from the Middle East, organized through the Muslim Refugee Support Group. Contingents came from mosques around Sydney. Sheik Tajaldin El Hilali, the Mufti of Australia, spoke at the rally outside the gates of the prison, calling on the government to "apply the laws with full respect for human rights and dignity."

Other speakers included human rights lawyer Nick Poynder, who pointed out that currently there are less than 10,000 refugees in Australia, compared to over a million refugees in Pakistan. In Australia, refu-

gees are "kept locked up while waiting for legal process," he said. "The great turnout today shows the across-the-board support for asylum seekers."

Ray Jackson, from the Indigenous Social Justice Association, told the rally that like refugees, Aborigines face mandatory sentencing. "We say to refugees 'Welcome!' on behalf of Aboriginal Australia."

Among the refugees taking part in the protest was a group of four young Iraqis who had just been released from the Woomera prison in remote South Australia. "These protests are very important for the prisoners," said Azhar. At the Woomera Detention Centre, they were "allowed no interviews with immigration officials or lawyers. We had no human rights. No Red Cross visits were allowed." Azhar had been involved in the mass breakout from Woomera that took place in June, in protest at the conditions and length of imprisonment due to delays in immigration processing.

On August 28 the government reacted with force against a new protest at the Woomera prison, using tear gas and water cannons against refugees who were protesting the erection of a new barbed wire fence inside the main perimeter fence. The federal government is now looking at tougher penalties to be used against refugees.

Linda Harris is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia.

Striker: 'I'm not a slave anymore, I'm outside'

BY BENJAMIN CHAND

SYDNEY, Australia—Workers at RNJ Sicame set up a picket line in front of their workplace to protest unhealthy working conditions, discrimination, and for the right to be unionized. RNJ Sicame produces electrical components and employs about 30 workers, including 21 women and 9 men.

Eighteen of the workers have been on strike since August 17 and all of them have joined the picket line that was set up a few days later. In retaliation, the company has threatened to lock out the unionists for twice as long as their strike lasts.

The workers are concerned about safety in the factory. "Ultrasonic sound waves that fuse the plastic together cause headaches and hearing damage. But there are no warnings or ear protection," said Stephen Lynch. There are no windows in the place and only a small vent in the roof," he added, even though fumes from the rubber are toxic and workers are not issued protective equipment. "There's no occupational health and safety." In the past, workers who have expressed concern on these matters have been fired.

Elsie Dixon, a union co-delegate at the factory, explained the sexual harassment workers face. A female worker was hurt when a supervisor pulled on a scarf around her neck. "They try to intimidate you, especially the quiet ones," said Dixon. "We want to stop the intimidation." Workers at RNJ hail from the Philippines, Samoa, New Zealand, and Fiji. Supervisors are racist towards many of the migrant women, calling them names such as "monkeys." At the company Christmas

party, the boss openly boasted to his wife that "these are all my slaves."

The workers only unionized three months ago, gaining recognition from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. "Some of us have never experienced this before," said Dixon. "The boss said 'you get in that union and you're going to get the sack [fired].'"

"Money is not the issue" explained Lynch. "All we want is a bit of respect." The intimidation of these workers has brought them together in the fight for dignity. "Before the strike we didn't know any of the ladies," said Winston Debilda, explaining

the segregation of men and women into manufacturing and assembly respectively. He explained that they were not even "allowed to talk" to each other.

Underestimating the workers' militancy, the boss told them: "You're sheep, you're easily led, at the click of a finger I have control." The solidarity of the workers has proved otherwise. "We all came out and we all stick together," said Dixon. "I'm not a slave anymore, I'm outside," added Jocelyn Sims.

Benjamin Chand is a member of the Young Socialists in Australia.

Sydney hotel workers protest firing of 'casuals'

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

SYDNEY, Australia—More than 50 workers formed a spirited picket line at the Gazebo Hotel in Sydney's Kings Cross suburb on August 27 to protest the sacking (firing) that morning of all 15 casual housekeeping workers. The casual workers were backed up by a walkout by 10 co-workers with permanent jobs. Workers from at least five other hotels joined in to show support. These workers are members of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union.

Pickets carried placards saying "When the boss plays dirty, the rooms stay dirty!" and "Casino and hotel workers fighting for respect and dignity in our workplace." One of the sacked workers, Barbara Wilson, ex-

plained the bosses had announced they would close the hotel sometime after the Olympics. The housekeeping department has 10 permanent workers—that is workers with benefits—and 15 casual workers. All of the casual workers were given job applications to fill out from a contracting agency hired by Gazebo.

Like many of the casual workers, Wilson has been a housekeeper at the Gazebo for years. She said that they all decided to refuse to apply for the agency jobs. They turned in their applications with "No!" written in big red letters on the front, demanding a meeting with company representatives. The workers believed the company was trying to avoid paying any of the casuals redundancy (layoff) entitlements. Instead, they

were fired. Wilson said about the protest, "They already sacked us, we have nothing to lose. I'm not afraid any more."

Elisabeth Vega who works in the housekeeping department of another hotel had come along to the picket line to show support. She said, "Everyone has human rights. Management can't just keep forcing us to do this, do that. We have the right to say our opinion too. We need leaders, like the workers here today. Maybe just a few began this fight, but everyone else is joining. Members need to be strong for ourselves. You have to defend yourself."

Joanne Kuniansky is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia.

U.S. socialist candidates visit Australia

Trowe, Perasso pledge to spread truth about Aboriginal rights and union struggles

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Two Socialist Workers candidates from the United States spoke to Aboriginal rights fighters, locked-out metalworkers, university students at Sydney and Wollongong University campuses as well as other youth, and wharfies (longshoremen) and other workers on a tour stop here before heading for campaign engagements in New Zealand.

Vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe and Jacob Perasso, the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in New York, brought their fighting working-class and internationalist perspectives to many more people through a number of interviews in the local media. Two youth participated in the campaign activities and decided to join the Young Socialists during the tour. Tom Leonard, a retired seaman and veteran socialist, accompanied Trowe and Perasso on their visit and presented several classes in the days following Trowe and Perasso's departure.

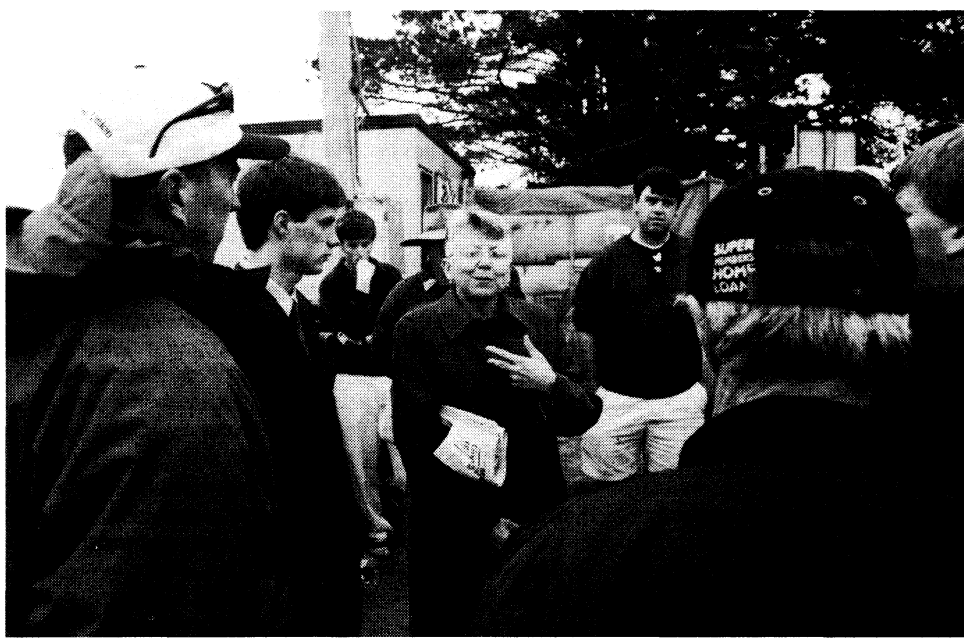
Some people at these discussions expressed surprise that someone so young was standing against Hillary Clinton, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in New York. Perasso, 24, is a leader of the Young Socialists and a packinghouse worker. Trowe, a meat packer from Austin, Minnesota, said she found an immediate interest from workers here, both because of the common conditions they face as a result of the employers' offensive and the renewed resistance to these assaults on the working class and the unions.

Aboriginal Tent Embassy

The socialist candidates were warmly received August 23 at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy where they held a discussion over coffee with indigenous activists. Trevor Close, an Aboriginal man, explained how they had set up the scores of tents in Victoria Park adjacent to Sydney University.

Close said that Aboriginal rights protests were planned, including a September 15 march on the Olympic Stadium in Sydney, just before the games begin. "Aboriginal people are tired of being pushed around. This is our land," he said. "That is what the Tent Embassy is about. We want the war [against Aborigines] to stop, and the government to sign a treaty and to recognize our sovereignty. We're doing this for indigenous people all over the world." Trowe added, "and for workers and farmers." Close said, "and for refugees."

Trowe said that a "land reform is needed to guarantee land rights to Aboriginal people and to guarantee to working farmers the right to farm their land without fear of foreclosure." We also need to transform relations in the factories and mines, she said, "to guarantee workers keep their lives and limbs." Trowe explained the efforts of her campaign to build an alliance between workers and farmers, as part of the revolutionary struggle to establish a workers and farmers government in the United States.



Militant/Ron Poulsen

SWP vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe, center, and Jacob Perasso (wearing tie), senatorial candidate from New York, talk with Joy Mining Machinery pickets.

Over dinner that evening at a supporter's house, the candidates and campaign supporters talked with young people interested in revolutionary politics. In answer to a question by Greg, a university student, Trowe said the socialists are "standing in the elections to explain how we can win. That is, how to build a working-class leadership capable of leading a massive movement of workers and farmers that can win because it is prepared and determined to fight for governmental power and wants to learn from history's defeats and victories in order to accomplish that goal."

Trowe also talked about the bipartisan moves led by the Clinton administration to bolster U.S. military might, the most important weapon in the hands of the imperialists both at home and abroad. Trowe pointed to the antimissile system targeting China, Russia, and other workers states that Washington is driving to set up, and the North American Military Command, which "in practice, will be used against urban insurrections and working people at home."

The next day Trowe and Perasso drove a couple of hours to the South Coast, an industrial and mining region south of Sydney. The two candidates gave an interview to reporters from the *Illawarra Mercury* before bringing their campaign to students at Wollongong University. Then after a further hour's drive to Moss Vale, Perasso and Trowe were welcomed to the picket line at Joy Mining Machinery by David Turner, the chief shop steward for the locked-out unionists. (See article on union fight on page 15). They spoke to the embattled workers in front of a journalist from the *Southern Highland News* and a reporter from WIN TV, based in Wollongong. The two papers ran stories on the visit by the two Socialist Workers candidates.

Perasso was asked why he and Trowe would come to this industrial dispute in a small town halfway round the globe. "Our

campaign points to fights like yours as the most important thing going on in the world," Perasso said to a group of workers on the picket line, "where the most important thinking is going on about what we need to do to change society."

Rod Duff, a 33-year-old boilermaker and quality controller, explained the workers' fight against the union-busting lockout by Joy Mining Machinery. "All we want is to keep what we've got. The company wants to take us back 20 years. They're up to the stage of trying to sue us individually for loss of profits, and they locked us out." Lee Carey, a welder of similar age, and afternoon shift charge hand, laughed. "We've got no intention of losing. We're waiting to be sued. They can have half of what I've got. Half of nothing is nothing!"

Duff stated that he thought he and the other workers at the company did "pretty high-quality work, not making farm gates" and should be paid well for it. Trowe raised that the bosses up the gap between high- and low-paying jobs as a means to divide working people and perpetuate their social system, which is based on exploitation and oppression. "Every worker, whether making farm gates or sophisticated machinery, 'skilled' or 'unskilled' needs a decent wage," Trowe said. Duff agreed. There was also a murmur of assent from the listening workers as Trowe pointed out the desperate situation of many dairy farmers, both in Australia and the United States, who face losing their land and livelihoods. The socialist candidate explained that neither workers nor farmers, but "only the capitalists were profiting from high prices."

At an informal discussion with some wharfies on August 25, Paul, a newer worker, told the visiting socialists that "from the moment this government came in, they've been on a vendetta against union rights and conditions." He expressed his view that labor laws were needed to force

companies to provide safer places of work. Trowe agreed, pointing out that behind the speedup, intensification of labor, and setting aside of safety procedures, is the profit drive by the bosses. "Safety is a crucial question for the labor movement, not only on the job but for society as a whole," Trowe said. It takes conscious, united action of workers and our unions to demand safe working conditions, production of safe goods, and protection of the environment, Trowe said.

That evening 18 people attended a public meeting to hear the Socialist Workers candidates at the Communist League premises in Redfern. The resistance by workers and farmers fighting for dignity, unions, health and safety, and against racism and police brutality, and in defense of immigrant rights, Trowe said, is the leading edge of what will become "a powerful social movement of millions that can take power, establish a workers and farmers government, and begin the construction of a society by and for the immense majority of humanity."

Nick Rawson, a young carpenter active in the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, asked if the candidates weren't overly optimistic, since from his experience on the job, workers had a wide range of consciousness about union and political questions, and were still quite divided. Perasso welcomed the question, since it posed "what can change people from the dog-eat-dog competitiveness bred by capitalism" towards an understanding "that only social, not individual, solutions will address the effects of the growing crisis of capitalism."

Perasso pointed to the growth of union resistance and other struggles as providing the answer to how people change through the experience of collective struggle. He said that the Joy picket line he had participated in was similar to many he had joined in the United States, in which the question of human dignity was a central question.

On August 26, the Socialist Workers candidates joined an 800-strong protest against government attacks on the rights of refugees. They marched on the Villawood Detention Centre.

Trowe was interviewed by Australian Associated Press, a wire service, by phone before her arrival, and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Radio, a government multicultural station, on August 23. Both candidates were also interviewed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) Canberra radio station 666 and by John Highfield on ABC radio's *The World Today* program.

As Trowe told the *Illawarra Mercury*, "The brutal drive of the capitalists for profit is producing something in addition to profit. It is producing the gravediggers of capitalism, right there in the plants, in the mills, in the mines and in the streets and cities across the United States." Their experience showed that this is extending across the world.

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

Campaigning to get Harris and Trowe on the ballot

Minnesota
New Jersey
Utah
Washington State
Florida
Iowa
New York
Louisiana
Wisconsin
Colorado
Washington, D.C.
Rhode Island
Mississippi
Vermont

On ballot
Petitioning completed
Still petitioning

Harris: 'We advance interests of working people'

The following article appeared in the August 24 issue of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the city's main daily, under the headline "Decatur worker pushes socialism in presidential bid."

BY SAEED AHMED

Like most third-party candidates, James Harris harbors no illusions of winning the White House in November. But in his case, he says it's because he doesn't want to, since real change is never effected through votes.

And yet here he is, traversing the country—on leave from his job as a garment worker in Decatur—and calling on workers to overthrow the capitalist system in favor of a socialist state.

Harris is the presidential candidate for the Socialist Workers Party, which espouses a brand of politics fashioned after Cuban leader Fidel Castro's style of Marxism.

"It serves the purpose of the rich capitalist class to entrap workers in the two-party system," he said, of his decision to run. "We are the independent alternative, advancing the interests of the working people."

For 52-year-old Harris, it's his second run at the White House. In 1996, he finished 10th in the general election, garnering 8,500 votes—about 0.01 percent.

This year, he hopes to do better, even though he's on the ballot in only 11 states—the same ones as the last time. Georgia, with its tough ballot access laws, isn't among them.

Still, Harris is making a three-day swing through the state this week, capping it off with a rally at Valdosta State University this afternoon.

"Women's rights, civil rights and the end of apartheid didn't happen because they were put to a vote—they started on the streets," he said. "That's why we are going to states where we aren't on the ballot to build up a groundswell because we know we won't be voted in."

The Socialist Workers Party, which started in 1938 as a splinter group from the Communist Party, has fielded candidates for president in every election since 1948. In recent years, it has been in electoral decline, capturing a dwindling number of votes.

The party's platform calls for basic hu-

man rights for all, such as universal health care, redistribution of wealth and free education. It touts Cuba as a model socialist state, and calls for dismantling the military and arming farmers.

Add to the mix, the Socialist Party—which preaches the same liberal doctrine but is staunchly anti-Communist—and parties with similar sounding names, such as Socialist Equality Party, Socialist Labor Party, and even Nationalist Socialist White People's Party, and it's easy to see why Harris' campaign has to strain to be heard.

Nevertheless, Harris, a Cleveland State University graduate who works blue-collar jobs as part of the party mandate to better organize workers, is confident about his chances of bringing about change through his campaign.

"I don't think I will give a big speech and all of a sudden there will be an explosion of activity," he said. "But workers won't take this brutal assault by the wealthy minority forever. They are being pushed to the limit and they will fight back, and we're an adjunct to the participants to spur it on."

Meat packers defend union at NLRB hearing

Continued from front page

speed was too high." That day, when the company agreed to meet with protesting workers in face of that action, 14 workers were elected to meet with the plant manager before they would all go back to their jobs. The meeting resulted in an agreement by the company to limit the line speed and other important concessions.

"I don't know how it happened," Olvera testified, "but when we came out of the meeting, I found union representatives had been there and people were signing cards. That is how the union came in. But we started this fight," he said, emphasizing the word "we."

Olvera was questioned about the *Workers' Voice*, a newsletter published in English and Spanish by meat packers involved in the organizing drive to answer the company's antiunion propaganda. Olvera explained that he, along with others, helped

edit and distribute the newsletter in an effort to make sure that all the workers in the plant received accurate information.

William Pearson, president of UFCW Local 789, testified three days later, confirming and adding another side to Olvera's description of the events. "On June 1," he stated at the hearing, "I was sitting in the union hall a little before noon, when a worker walked in and said, 'We have a problem over at Dakota Premium.'"

Pearson reported that union representatives later found out that workers had conducted a strike inside the plant and had elected a committee to meet with management about the speedup of the line. He said that when the workers began leaving work that day, dozens had signed union cards. He added that some went to the union hall to get help in organizing themselves and to hear from a lawyer about their rights during a union-organizing drive.

Since that day, Pearson testified, groups of workers have gone to the union hall every evening to discuss their fight. He explained that the composition and size of the meetings varies from day to day. "Decisions are made by democratic debate. It's different than what I am used to," he remarked. "I am used to looking at things and acting."

Refute intimidation charge

Throughout the first several days of the hearing, company lawyers tried to prove that the elections took place in an atmosphere of chaos and intimidation, with no one in control and workers were threatened with deportation or promised large sums of money by union representatives. The NLRB requires that union elections be conducted under "laboratory conditions."

At the company's insistence the election was held late in the workday on a Friday—payday—in the plant lunchroom. Jennifer

Swanson, the Local 789 organizer who negotiated the specifics of the election, testified, "I had requested that the election take place at a neutral location, on a non-payday," so the process would be smooth and avoid any hint of intimidation of the workers.

Company supervisors asserted at the hearing that one worker ran around the boning department, as groups of workers were gathered to go vote, whispering "*Dile que sí—sí se puede*" ("Tell them yes—yes we can"). They also testified that, before the vote, some workers on the line were banging their tools and chanting "Sí se puede."

Shouts of "Sí se puede" and chanting have taken place on the production line in the plant since the June 1 sit-down.

A worker who served as an observer for the company during the election testified she had seen "a Black man just outside the voting area during the election" and added that during this time she had heard a voice saying "Sí se puede." She testified that Samuel Farley, one of only six workers at Dakota Premium who are Black, is one of the leaders of the union-organizing drive.

This attempt by company lawyers to paint Farley—and by extension other pro-union workers—as a thug and intimidator backfired, however. Under cross-examination, the same worker testified that Farley is always respectful and friendly with other workers.

Also during cross-examination it was revealed that three of the company witnesses are subject to special pressure by the company. One is on probation from a jail sentence and must be able to keep his job. Another rents a house from the company personnel director. A third is granted regular overtime on Saturdays while most workers are not getting 40 hours of work. Other witnesses for the company included a supervisor and a quality control employee.

The latest issue of the *Workers' Voice*, published the opening day of the NLRB hearing, explained the process of the hearing and urged workers in the plant to keep up their fight, which aims to secure a contract.

"The company is only going to negotiate when they decide they can't afford not to. They will come to the negotiations table if we keep building the union by actively defending ourselves and taking on their daily abuses," the newsletter said.

The company called all its witnesses over the four days of the first week of the hearing. The union was just beginning to call its witnesses at the end of the week. The testimony by union witnesses resumed after the Labor Day holiday.

British Columbia poultry workers rally

BY DERRICK O'KEEFE

COQUITLAM, British Columbia—"This is great," said striking poultry worker Sukjinder Gill at an August 22 rally of 400 union members and their supporters on strike against Superior Poultry. "I wish we could have this many people on the picket line every day." Gill and his co-workers are fighting for their first contract with the company after voting in the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

Unions sending representatives to the rally included the Teamsters, Machinists, and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, as well as those representing auto workers, nurses, longshoremen, government employees, hospital workers, bricklayers, and others. About a dozen UFCW Local 1518 members, locked out by Fletcher's Foods in nearby Vancouver, also attended. One of them, Ian McLean, observed that the Superior workers were subject to "incredible exploitation" by the company. Workers at Fletcher's and Superior belong to the same amalgamated local.

Workers won union certification at Superior Poultry last fall and struck on July 23 in response to the company's refusal to negotiate.

The bosses have indeed benefited from conditions of superexploitation of the entirely immigrant workforce. Wages start at the provincial minimum of \$7.15 and rarely reach \$10 an hour, even for workers with years of experience. They work 12-14 hours a day, six days a week, suffer constant abuse from the employer, and have no seniority rights.

Speakers at the rally included Michael Fraser, the Canadian National Director of the UFCW; Brooke Sundin, president of UFCW Local 1518; and Jim Sinclair, president of the British Columbia Federation of Labour. Ramparkash Sharma, a Superior Poultry striker, also spoke—in both Punjabi and English. "Our fight will continue until we get good working conditions and good wages," he said, appealing to the 40 or so workers who have been crossing the picket lines. "Join with us and together we will build a bright future."

Company uses thugs to intimidate

The company has hired security guards to try to intimidate and provoke strikers. The hired goons have had a constant presence, videotaping strikers around the clock and following them home. The guards speed past the picket line and through the plant gates in their fleet of minivans. The union has petitioned the provincial Supreme Court, seeking an injunction against the company for "attempting to incite violence on the picket line." In another example of the company's aggressive attempts to break the strike, they have placed large newspaper ads in a Vancouver daily, *The Province*, describing Superior as a "business under siege," citing an alleged death threat against a scab.

The strike for a contract at Superior Poultry is part of an upsurge in labor resistance in British Columbia, with strikes by longshoremen, hotel workers, and meat packers.

After more than a month on the picket lines, the Superior strikers remain firm. "I want rights, benefits, and honor," said Gill. "I am 100 percent certain we can win." Several strikers expressed interest in visiting the Fletcher's picket lines. Mark, a woodworker



Some 400 strikers and supporters rally August 22. In face of low wages, 12-14 hours a day, and company abuse, they voted in UFCW and are now fighting for first contract.

Militant/Monica Jones

in a nonunionized plant, came to the rally "to learn more about how to make a union."

Originally from Burma, he stated that the obstacles to workers organizing in unions show that "Canada is not really 100 percent

democratic, it doesn't have real freedom."

Derrick O'Keefe is a member of the Young Socialists and the UFCW. Steve Penner contributed to this article.

Teamsters at Pepsi score contract gains

BY CHARLES DUFFY

BURNSVILLE, Minnesota—After a 12-week strike, 440 members of Teamsters Local 792 approved a new contract August 28, winning gains from the Pepsi Bottling Group. The strike was solid, with only one worker crossing the picket line in three months at Pepsi's only organized plant in Minnesota.

Workers voted 257-114 to accept the two-year contract, returning to work the next day. At issue were wages, pensions, and health care.

One of the strikers' major demands was to establish an early retirement plan of "30 years and out," instead of having to wait until age 62 before being eligible for a pension. Under the new contract, workers who are 55 have the right to retire after 30 years with benefits. Strikers told the *Militant* this was a big issue because of the long hours and backbreaking nature of the work. One worker explained that in six years at Pepsi, he had two knee surgeries due to job-related injuries.

On wages, the union had asked for 4 percent, and obtained just under 3 percent, which comes out to an increase of 45 cents an hour each of the two years. Workers also beat back a company attempt to weaken employer contributions to health benefits.

One thing that motivated the strikers was the fact that workers at a nearby Coca-Cola plant, also organized by Local 792, do the same work but had a better contract. The contract at Coca-Cola includes a full "30-and out" clause.

Del Donaker, a Pepsi merchandiser driver, said, "When you have Coca-Cola just sit-

ting there, you figure you deserve a comparable contract."

Teamster pickets readily discussed the contract and the strike on the afternoon before they voted. Many expressed their concern about the wages and pension plan. Others spoke about the positive impact the strike had on them. One worker, who identified himself as Tom, said, "Before the strike I would just pass co-workers in the hallway. We would never talk to each other. Now, having seen everyone on the picket line, we are very good friends."

During the strike, workers at Pepsi reached out and won solidarity from other workers. They held a picnic and rally that drew 500 people, including several meat

packers from Dakota Premium Foods who recently organized themselves into the United Food and Commercial Workers union and are fighting for a contract. Workers from many other unions visited the picket lines, including auto workers, other Teamsters, and Machinists.

Strikers used ambulatory pickets, following scab drivers and throwing up picket lines wherever they delivered. Other union drivers often refused to cross these pickets.

Striking Pepsi workers also visited picket lines of hotel workers who were on strike. They leafleted the Minnesota State Fair and other fairs to inform other working people about their strike and encourage them to boycott Pepsi products.

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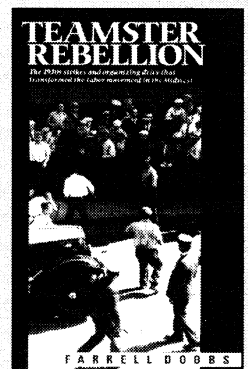
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Lessons from the labor battles of the 1930s



'Militant' subscription campaign kicks off

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

With this issue the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are launching a nine-week international campaign to win new readers to the two socialist periodicals. The drive includes sales of Pathfinder's newest title, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes. The goals of the campaign are to sell 1,000 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 350 *PM* subs, and 1,500 copies of the pamphlet. The pamphlet is available for \$1 to anyone purchasing a subscription to the *Militant* or *PM*.

The drive offers a great opportunity to campaign for the socialist alternative in 2000—James Harris, Margaret Trowe, and dozens of other working-class candidates challenging the Democrats and Republicans in the elections.

Socialists workers, Young Socialists, and other partisans of the *Militant* are mapping out plans for the drive that include regional teams, day-long tables at college campuses, special weekend mobilizations, sales to co-workers, and going door-to-door in working-class neighborhoods. Supporters will be participating in protest actions and other events, like the Latino book fair in Los Angeles where this past week a team sold \$700 worth of literature, including eight *Militant* and *PM* subscriptions and several copies of the new pamphlet.

James Harris, the Socialist Workers can-

didate for president, spoke at the Labor Day rally of 2,000 in Charleston, South Carolina. A campaign team there sold two *Militant* subs and six copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. In California, Deborah Liaotos, socialist candidate for Congress, participated in an August 26 march and rally of 2,000 people. The action demanded amnesty and union rights for undocumented workers. Sales there included 4 copies of the new pamphlet, 10 *PMs*, 3 *Militants*, and 1 copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

Elizabeth Lariscy, a partisan of the *Militant* and *PM* in Los Angeles, said she joined with dairy farmers who carried out a milk dumping protest action in Corcoran, California. "One dairy farmer who brought her children to the action bought a copy of the *Militant* and *Capitalism's World Disorder*" by Jack Barnes, said Lariscy. "She wasn't dumping milk but wanted to show solidarity with the action."

Participants in the circulation effort in Australia are also gearing up for the drive. During a visit of Socialist Workers vice-presidential candidate Margaret Trowe they sold five *Militant* subs, all with the special offer that includes the new Pathfinder pamphlet.

Another warm-up action for the sales campaign was the August 26 national march on Washington against cop brutality. Campaigners for the socialist press sold 14 *Mili-*



Militant/Chessie Molano

Tomato workers look over the *Militant* at August 26 celebration in Arizona of victory by United Food and Commercial Workers in organizing Eurofresh, Inc.

tant subscriptions, 230 copies of the paper, and 38 pamphlets at that demonstration. results reflect the growing opportunities to substantially bolster the paper's readership and recruit among youth and workers repelled by increasing cop violence meted out against the working class and its allies.

Farm workers buy 'PM'

BY NED MEASEL
AND ELIZABETH LARISCY

FRESNO, California—A team of three socialist workers from Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Francisco attended the 15th constitutional convention of the United Farm Workers union here September 2 and 3. They observed the convention and through sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books and pamphlets introduced other participants to the Socialist Workers presidential campaign ticket of James Harris and Margaret Trowe.

Over the two days, 11 new subscribers to *Perspectiva Mundial* and 2 to the *Militant* signed up. Convention participants also purchased 45 books and pamphlets, totaling \$425. Among them were two copies of *New International* no. 8, titled "Che Guevara and the Road to Socialism," and six copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

Sales to coal miners

BY JACK PARKER

TSE BONITO, New Mexico—"Here is \$1.50," a miner said after he stopped his car and rolled down the window at the main gate entrance to the McKinley mine here. "I know how much effort you put into getting out your paper."

That coal miner was one of 32 who bought the *Militant* at a plant-gate sale held here September 2. That Saturday was an overtime day and not all of the 320 union members at the mine were working.

Many of those who stopped wore United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) hats showing support for their union.

The miners at McKinley just won a hard-fought 12-week strike against Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co., which the *Militant* covered on a weekly basis.

"We would like to get an extra paper to show around inside," one miner said as he and his friend handed one of the *Militant* salespeople a \$5 bill. "We'll take one apiece and show the other to our friends."

"I would like to get the latest *Militant*," some miners said, explaining that they already had the issue with the coverage of their settlement. A couple of other unionists stopped to wish the sales team well and say they were subscribers to the paper.

Toward the end of the sale, one of the leaders of the strike stopped his car to say hello to the members of the sales team, several of whom he had previously seen on the picket line. He took a subscription blank and reached into his wallet for a \$10 bill. "I'll get a subscription to the paper," he said. "Now that we are back to work I have some money. I want to keep up with what is happening with other unions."

UMWA miners at the Kayenta and Black Mesa mines in Arizona bought 17 copies of the *Militant*. On Sunday morning the team met over breakfast with one of the McKinley miners. The team also sold 10 copies of the *Militant* going door to door in Window Rock, Arizona. Altogether the team sold 59 papers and one subscription to the socialist paper.

Fund for socialist press is under way

BY DEAN MICHAELS

NEW YORK—As the first week of the 10-week drive to raise \$110,000 for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* gets under way a little over \$7,000 has already been received.

The response that the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* is receiving from working-class and farm militants is eloquent proof of the potential for raising money from working people who value these two socialist publications.

An account on this page describes the response of coal miners in Arizona, already familiar with the *Militant's* coverage of their own recent strike battle, and who find the paper's broader world view useful.

Another report points to the interest in *Perspectiva Mundial* among those attending the United Farm Workers convention in Fresno, California. Some farmers involved in the Labor Day milk dump actions around the country have expressed their appreciation for the socialist press as well.

Approaching militants such as these, together with the broadest possible numbers of working people and others who have a stake in the continued regular publication of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, is the key to achieving the goal.

Not only longtime subscribers, but many of the newer readers will be glad to contribute to the fund. Seth Galinsky, a member of a team in New York campaigning for the Socialist Workers presidential ticket of James Harris and Margaret Trowe, reports that "in addition to selling a subscription to the *Militant* and several copies, we collected about \$14 in a donation can without even asking anyone."

Taking the time to sit down with co-workers and others who are readers of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* and to explain how these periodicals are funded exclusively by working people can make a difference in securing additional pledges and donations.

Holding public fund-raising meetings in the next few weeks—meetings that take up key questions in the class struggle—can help become a focus of political work that attracts others to join the effort.

Local quotas do not add up to the \$110,000 goal. The gap needs to close over the coming week with new areas taking goals, and some others raising them.

Contribute to Militant and Perspectiva Mundial Fund			
	Goal	Paid	%
United States			
San Francisco	\$10,000	\$2,170	22%
NY Garment Dist.	\$5,000	\$915	18%
Houston	\$6,500	\$1,000	15%
Charlotte	\$2,800	\$400	14%
Seattle	\$9,000	\$770	9%
Birmingham	\$3,200	\$201	6%
Boston	\$4,000	\$220	6%
Washington	\$3,000	\$100	3%
Chicago	\$7,500	\$230	3%
Brooklyn	\$3,800	\$100	3%
Atlanta	\$4,600	\$100	2%
Newark	\$3,000	\$55	2%
Los Angeles	\$6,000	\$100	2%
Detroit	\$3,750	\$50	1%
Philadelphia	\$2,500	\$25	1%
Allentown	\$1,200		0%
Chippewa Falls	\$600		0%
Des Moines	\$1,800		0%
Fort Collins	\$1,400		0%
Fresno	\$200		0%
Miami	\$2,300		0%
NY Upper Manhattan	\$3,000		0%
Pittsburgh	\$4,000		0%
St. Louis	\$1,800		0%
Twin Cities	\$3,500		0%
Cleveland		\$13	
Other		\$175	
U.S. Total	\$94,450	\$6,624	7%
United Kingdom	\$870	\$30	3%
Canada	\$5,000	\$101	2%
France		\$320	
Iceland		\$30	
New Zealand		\$30	
Sweden		\$20	
International Total	\$100,320	\$7,155	7%
International Goal	110,000		

Subscription Campaign to win new readers September 9-November 12			
	Militant Goal	PM Goal	Pamphlet Goal
Canada			
Montreal	15	5	30
Toronto	25	6	35
Canada Total	40	11	65
United Kingdom			
London	30	10	60
Manchester	18	2	
UK Total	48	12	60
United States			
Allentown	18	3	35
Atlanta	20	8	20
Birmingham	35	2	50
Boston	25	8	50
Brooklyn	60	30	175
Charlotte	15	5	30
Chicago	45	15	50
Chippewa Falls	15	10	20
Cleveland	30	30	6
Des Moines	35	20	
Detroit	20	5	20
Fort Collins	20	1	20
Fresno	10	6	6
Houston	50	20	75
Los Angeles	40	20	60
Miami	30	15	60
NY Garment Dist.	65	35	110
NY Upper Manhattan	67	25	100
Newark	55	25	85
Philadelphia	25	5	50
Pittsburgh	35	2	50
San Francisco	35	20	75
Seattle	30	10	75
St. Louis	25	9	45
Twin Cities	55	25	110
Washington	30	10	11
U.S. Total	890	364	1388
International Total	978	387	1513
International Goal	1000	350	1500

Socialists build on two-year effort to deepen party's integration in worker, farmer struggles

BY STEVE CLARK
AND GREG MCCARTAN

NEW YORK—"We are an integral part of the resistance and struggles by a growing vanguard of workers and farmers," said Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, "a vanguard we are involved in and whose increasing scope we have recognized and understood for several years."

Presenting the opening report to an expanded meeting of the SWP National Committee here, Barnes said that socialist workers "have greater opportunities opening up to us today than at any time in many years to regroup these proletarian fighters, and the most committed young people repelled by the horrors of capitalist society, together in a revolutionary workers party."

In order to be on the soundest political footing to advance these efforts, Barnes said, "We are working to strengthen a proletarian party whose members work *together*, as worker-bolsheviks, from within the plants, mines, and mills, and who do so as dependable militants of the fundamental defense organizations of the working class, the unions."

In addition to National Committee members, others taking part in the September 2-3 SWP leadership meeting were a leadership delegation from the Young Socialists, members of the party's Trade Union Committee and steering committees of its national union fractions, organizers of party branches and branch organizing committees, and international guests.

Participants reported on their involvement in organizing drives under way by meat packers and other food workers from Minnesota to Massachusetts, and from Nebraska to central California and Arizona.

They described their experiences across the country alongside workers in garment shops—and together with these workers in protest actions outside the workplace—in face of the employers and immigration cops.

They recounted their participation in struggles by coal miners resisting the operators' assault on safety and job conditions, from Pennsylvania to the Western coalfields, and from Illinois to Alabama. They told of their involvement with working people in coal communities supporting miners' strikes, as well as fighting company and government efforts to deny them their health and human dignity.

They noted the accelerated social and political impact of the transformation of the composition of the working class, as con-

centrations of immigrant workers grow up in cities and towns across the United States.

And in an election year when other organizations calling themselves socialist or communist are fielding fewer candidates than for a long time, participants in the New York meeting celebrated the results of the petitioning drives by party members, Young Socialists, and their supporters to get Socialist Workers candidates on the ballot in 13 states and Washington, D.C.

Through all these efforts, they are reaching out broadly to win fighting workers, farmers, and youth to the ranks of the communist movement.

Fighters join together

Two years ago, in mid-1998, the SWP leadership initiated a concentrated effort to transform party branches, branch organizing committees, and industrial union fractions in order to join with other workers and farmers resisting the brutal and intensifying profit drive by the employers and their government. The party extended its geographic spread, as socialist workers reached out to the factory proletariat and exploited farmers wherever fights were taking place.

Like other working people being thrust into conflicts over conditions on the job and off, Barnes said, party members needed to gain experience in acting effectively and dependably as part of a broader vanguard of fighters. This was necessary not only to help realize the potential of the new rise in militancy, but above all to be part of broadening the political scope of the militants themselves.

In the process, the party has revitalized the turn it made in the mid-1970s to deepen the proletarianization of its branches and center the work of the big majority of its cadres in the industrial working class and unions. Such a "party effort must be a universal one," explained a 1978 National Committee report adopted by a party convention and later published in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes. It must be "the goal of every single branch [and] every single individual in the party."

Two years ago when the party recognized the opportunity to strengthen its union fractions and proletarian orientation, Barnes said, doing so began by necessity "as a vanguard effort within the party." Since then, through the inspiration of spreading worker and farmer resistance, experience as part of these struggles, and discussion in party branches and union fractions, socialist work-

ers have expanded and broadened this effort.

Initiative by union fractions

Over the past several months, national meetings were held of socialist workers in each of the party's industrial union fractions: the International Association of Machinists (IAM); Union of Needletrades, Industrial

reminded the National Committee, there were fewer than 10 party members each in the UNITE and UFCW fractions in a handful of branches, and the party no longer had a single working coal miner.

In deciding at that time to make a special effort to reinforce these three union fractions, Barnes said, the party was acting on the logic of what had begun developing in



Above, residents of Man, West Virginia, rally July 24 to oppose the closure of local hospital. Socialist Workers Party leadership meeting took up party's campaign to deepen its work in coal-mining communities, among garment workers, and in packinghouses. This is where resistance to the capitalists' profit drive is currently most advanced, both in the union movement and on a broader social level.

and Textile Employees (UNITE); United Auto Workers (UAW); United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); United Mine Workers of America (UMWA); United Steelworkers of America (USWA); and United Transportation Union (UTU).

In late July the members of the steering committees elected by each of these national union fractions met at the culmination of an Active Workers Conference in Ohio. They drew on the political lessons from the conference, assessed the results of the four fraction meetings that had occurred between late April and mid-July, and made plans for the three remaining fraction meetings in August.

Building on the decisions of those meetings, Barnes said, a growing number of branches and branch organizing committees in recent weeks have taken steps forward as part of "a universal political effort in which every party unit can recognize itself in all others, regardless of their varying sizes, composition, or location." The basis has been laid for a true campaign to structure the party through mass work.

Acting on logic of politics

Participants in the meetings of each of the union fractions discussed how they could advance the party's efforts to deepen its integration in the growing struggles of workers and farmers. They reviewed in some detail the character of the employers' attacks and defensive skirmishes by workers in their own industries and unions.

At the same time, each of the fractions paid special attention to the party's campaign to deepen its work in coal-mining communities, among garment workers, and in packinghouses. This is where resistance to the capitalists' profit drive is currently most advanced, both in the union movement and on a broader social level; where immigrant workers are having among their greatest impact on the labor movement; and where the political experience of vanguard workers has been the richest.

It was in the unions that are key to these sections of working people—the UMWA, UNITE, and the UFCW—that the party's fractions had been reduced the most during the retreat of the labor movement throughout much of the 1990s. In mid-1998, Barnes

politics and the class struggle. Had the party waited to do so "until the evidence was in," worker-bolsheviks wouldn't have been in these unions and industries as the fights began spreading.

What has happened over the past two years is confirmation of the course discussed and adopted by the party's National Committee at a meeting held in Chicago in October 1998, Barnes said. "And flesh and blood has been put on what we described in broad strokes at the joint party-YS conference in Los Angeles a few months later in December," he added. Barnes's summary presentation to that conference has been printed under the title, "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics," as the first chapter of the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

Since that time more and more of the party's cadres have gotten jobs in garment shops, meatpacking plants, and coal mines. This is a great accomplishment of all seven of the party's union fractions, Barnes said.

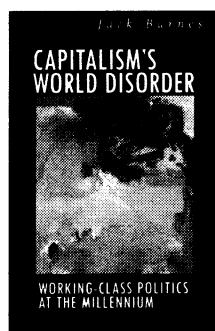
Party policy in the unions

At their meetings over the spring and summer, the UAW, IAM, USWA, and UTU national fractions meetings discussed and resolved important policy questions to guide the activity of socialist workers in these unions. They reaffirmed the party's course of having its members at the center of production in these industries, with two or more of them employed in the same workplace with the same union and common co-workers.

The fraction meetings adopted goals to get the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and revolutionary books and pamphlets into the hands of other workers in these unions. They discussed recent and ongoing struggles by workers in the UAW, IAM, USWA, and UTU.

At the Steelworkers fraction meeting, for example, there was substantial discussion of the effort by USWA-organized rubber workers at Bridgestone/Firestone, whose contract had expired, to hold off further concessions and regain some of what they had lost in 1994. On the day after the SWP National Committee meeting concluded, the USWA announced a tentative contract with the company, which union members will be

FROM PATHFINDER



Capitalism's World Disorder

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

Jack Barnes

The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are the inevitable forces unleashed by capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store for us can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. Also available in French and Spanish.

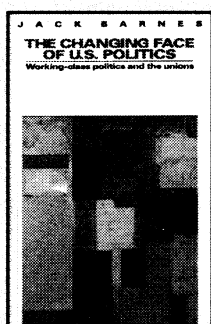
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The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Jack Barnes

A handbook for the new generation coming into the factories, mines, and mills as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism today. It shows how millions of working people, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions and other organizations, and all of society. Also available in Spanish and French. \$19.95



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voting on this month.

Each of these fraction meetings also decided that their members would continue joining jobs-search efforts to strengthen the party's presence in workplaces and unions decided by their branches and branch organizing committees. A number of them either have already gotten jobs in garment shops, meatpacking plants, or coal mines, or are well on their way to being hired.

Cadres from the generations that led the party's turn in the 1970s and 1980s, Barnes said, are joining with those from younger generations won to the party in the 1990s in a collective effort to strengthen the party's proletarian course.

During the discussion, SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters pointed out that over the past three months "since the sit-down strike by meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, we have been through a radical learning experience that is strengthening our continuity not only with the turn to industry but with the struggle for a proletarian party that shaped the modern communist movement decades ago.

"We are conquering the understanding that our effort to revitalize the turn is not about just transforming the industrial union fractions," she said, "but above all about the transformation of the party and of our movement as a whole."

Party supporters

An early signal of the political opportunities to strengthen the party came more than two years ago, Barnes said, with the initiatives of party supporters to help the communist movement respond to new openings. They were inspired by the example the socialist revolution in Cuba was continuing to set in world politics, and by the shifts they and others were just beginning to see in the U.S. working class and labor movement.

In their work to aid the party, Barnes said, these supporters are drawing on the training and discipline they previously gained over decades when many of them were SWP members.

On the second day of the leadership meeting, Norton Sandler reported on the increased work of the party supporters in turning books and pamphlets into digital files ready for production in the printshop of Pathfinder Press.

The numbers of volunteers actively involved in this international reprint project continues to grow, as does their experience and the resulting productivity of their efforts. Seven titles were completed and turned into Pathfinder in August, a new high for the project, Sandler said. Eight books were formatted during the month, also a record. Thirty-seven supporters participated in indexing, which had become a production bottleneck.

The supporters have a solid start on their goal of completing an additional 30 titles by January 1, 2001, and having 50 percent of Pathfinder's titles completed by next May Day.

The New York leadership meeting also launched international campaigns, beginning September 9 and running through November 12, to sell 1,000 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 350 to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 1,500 copies of the new pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*. A \$110,000 goal for a fund drive for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* was also set (see article, page 7).

Recruitment to the party

An important test of the party's course, Barnes said, is how it organizes to meet the new opportunities before it to recruit workers, farmers, and revolutionary-minded youth. This includes winning to its ranks working people with leadership experience in class battles who have come to consider themselves socialists and agree with more and more aspects of the party's program.

Some of these militants who join the party, Barnes said, will live and work in areas where there is currently no SWP branch or branch organizing committee.

The party must embrace the new political opportunities to expand the geographical reach of the communist movement in this way.

Intensified labor in coal

Frank Forrestal, a coal miner from Pennsylvania, reported that the prolonged upswing in the capitalist business cycle in the United States, and the still-accelerating energy "crisis" worldwide, have led to increased demand for coal and hiring at coal mines across the country. Coal-fired plants produced 52 percent of U.S. power needs, making it the most important single source of electrical power generation.

Forrestal said that the coal bosses are maintaining and in some cases intensifying their many-year-long drive to boost profits—to "increase productivity"—by assaulting health and safety, pensions, conditions on the job, and the UMW itself.

The expanded use of contracting companies over the past decade to provide crews for work in the mines, including union mines, is one example. From 1990 to 1998, some 181 workers employed by contractors died while working on mine property, according to figures compiled by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration. Half of those killed were in West Virginia.

Jan Miller, a coal miner from Colorado, described the victory rally August 13 in Tse Bonito, New Mexico, of mine workers, their families, and supporters at the conclusion of a successful three-month strike against the Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. (P&M). That victory strengthened UMW members at Peabody coal company, who a week later, on the eve of a strike, faced down the company and beat back its demands—similar to those of P&M—for a 12-hour workday, as well as cuts in health and pension benefits.

Tom Morris, from eastern Pennsylvania, explained the conditions facing some 2,000 workers in the anthracite coal mines in that area. "Union miners in the anthracite coalfields do not have the same health benefits as those in bituminous mines," he said, "and their pensions are only \$90 a month."

Many are subject to long periods of unemployment every year. In one mine the company unilaterally stopped paying health insurance premiums, Morris said, leading to protests by workers. At the same mine, workers staged a work stoppage when the boss shorted their pay by eight hours. In both recent cases the company gave in.

"A number of workers make a conscious effort not to succumb to pressure to speed up, such as not driving haul trucks too fast," Morris said. "This is the kind of push-and-pull that is going on in anthracite."

In his report Barnes pointed out that CONSOL Energy, Inc., a leading U.S. producer of bituminous coal, had more than doubled its fourth-quarter earnings, with its share price shooting from \$10.12 in April to \$15.75 at the end of June. A company press release bragged that production jumped to 47 tons per man-day, up 16.5 percent from a year ago.

"Where do these profits come from?" Barnes said. "They come from gratuitous deaths in the mines, increased use of contract miners, doubling the levels of coal dust miners breathe in the mines, and intensification of work, including lengthening of the workweek. That's where the profits come from."

"In face of the resistance coal operators have already seen to their efforts to shove further concessions on miners," Barnes added, "and given the growing demand for coal, companies are also deciding to settle strikes or not to take a strike right now."

Participants in the meeting discussed ways to expand their work among coal miners, from fielding teams to sell the *Militant* and *PM* and meet miners and other working people in the coalfields, to reporting for the socialist press on developments among UMW and nonunion miners, to responding to the hiring possibilities.

A report from a team of socialist workers and Young Socialists in New Mexico and Arizona was received during the meeting.



Militant
UFCW union members Miguel Olvera and Amy Roberts, workers at Dakota Premium packinghouse in Minnesota, meet dairy farmer Steve Siverling (right) in Bloomer, Wisconsin, where farmers joined in a nationwide Labor Day milk dump protest. "It is important for workers in this industry to reach out to farmers, who face devastating conditions," said Norton Sandler at SWP leadership meeting.

The team had sold 60 copies of the *Militant* to coal miners and others in the area, 50 of them at mine gates.

Struggles by meat packers

Numerous struggles by packinghouse workers were discussed at the National Committee meeting, as well.

In meat packing too, Barnes said, some of the largest employers are raking in record profits. He pointed to the example of Smithfield Foods, which had just reported quarterly earnings of \$44.6 million, up more than 600 percent from a year earlier. Smithfield's share prices had jumped from \$16 in early March to \$27 at the beginning of September.

Tony Galiano from Boston reported that an organizing drive has begun at a meat processing plant in Massachusetts, spearheaded by workers—many of them originally from Central America—who have been part of previous attempts to win a union there. Workers are taking steps to counter the company's divide-and-conquer tactics.

"Finding ourselves a part of this fight, and acting accordingly as a branch, is putting us on a footing—for the first time—to join in the effort that many other branches and branch organizing committees have already begun," Galiano said.

"We've now set out on a different course from our past routine, one that affects everything we do: where we work, how we use our time, and the way we think about the location of our headquarters."

An organizing drive in a number of packinghouses in the Omaha, Nebraska, area is facing determined resistance from the giant ConAgra corporation and other packing bosses, said Joe Swanson from Des Moines, Iowa. Socialist workers from that city have been traveling to Omaha to keep in touch with the fight and get to know some of the workers involved.

A few days after the SWP leadership meeting, Swanson found out during a return visit to Omaha that one of the organizing drives he had described—at an IBP plant in Norfolk employing some 600 workers—had been successful. After more than 50 percent of the workers signed union authorization cards, IBP—only 16 of whose 48 plants had previously been union—announced it was recognizing the UFCW.

At the Swift packing plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, six workers on the kill floor walked off the job, protesting that not enough workers had been assigned to the crew, which is supposed to have eight. Their action quickly led to the line being shut down, forcing the bosses to add two more workers to the crew. The six received written warnings for their action, but no other penalty.

Becky Ellis reported that workers at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul are

standing up to the company's moves to overturn the results of a representation election there in July, in which workers voted 112-71 for the UFCW. The determination to win a union, the democratic methods of workers leading the drive, and the refusal to be intimidated by the bosses have all left the company without much of a leg to stand on, she said.

"These workers are also reaching out to other fights in the area, such as the Pepsi workers, who recently ended their strike after scoring significant gains," Ellis said. "Such mutual solidarity between workers involved in fights strengthens the labor movement."

Blow struck to ConAgra

Norton Sandler pointed to a recent ruling against ConAgra by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which upheld a union complaint that the company improperly limited union organizing activities at its Omaha meatpacking plant. The NLRB proposed the company post notices at its plants for 60 days acknowledging the violation and promising not to do so again. ConAgra refused and is appealing the ruling.

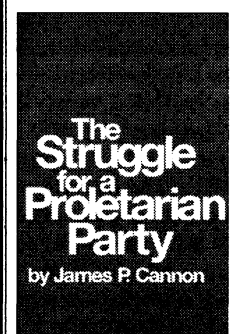
"The common conditions workers face in meatpacking plants across North America make this a politically rich and powerful struggle," Sandler said. A meeting of social-

Continued on page 10

from Pathfinder **The Struggle for a Proletarian Party**

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party



defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as

Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II. \$19.95

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Continued from page 9

ist workers in the meatpacking industry across North America will take place in St. Paul September 16-17, he said.

In addition to deepening their involvement in this growing fight, Sandler added that "it is important for workers in this industry to reach out to farmers, who are facing devastating conditions. We need to make connections with the farmers who sell their cattle and hogs to the meatpacking companies." He pointed to the expansion of so-called contract farming and other methods used by big capitalists to increase their exploitation of working farmers.

The day after the National Committee meeting, a number of packers involved in the fight to organize a union at Dakota Premium traveled to Wisconsin to strengthen their mutual links with dairy farmers taking party in nationwide "milk dump" actions on Labor Day. The farmers were protesting the ruinously low prices they are being paid for their milk by big processing companies.

The SWP National Committee approved a proposal that the party's trade union leadership organize training for party and Young Socialists members who want to get jobs on the kill and cut floors in meatpacking. Lessons on how to handle a knife and keep it sharp—in order to prevent repetitive-motion injuries—as well as training in other safety measures will be provided to every socialist worker prior to getting hired.

Participants in the meeting also reported on their work with tomato workers in Arizona who recently won a union election by a 116-70 vote and are now represented by UFCW Local 99. This is the first union election ever won by agricultural workers against growers in Arizona, of whom there are 56,000 statewide.

'Temps' can join union

In his report, Barnes pointed to the significance of a recent NLRB ruling establishing union rights for temporary workers. The decision authorized these workers to join the same union as permanent workers they are laboring alongside without first obtaining permission from the agency that got them the job.

"One front in the employers' speedup drive

and intensification of labor has just been breached," Barnes said. "The great American trusts have been relying on the expansion of what they sometimes call a 'contingent work force' that can be hired and fired at will as the basis of their 'miracle' economy—as their chief banker Alan Greenspan is so proud of reminding U.S. imperialism's competitors around the world."

Some 1.2 million people are employed by temporary agencies, and it has been one of the fastest-growing sections of the workforce, registering a six-fold increase from 1982 to 1998. A quarter of U.S. workers work for contracting firms or temporary agencies, hold part-time jobs, or are on call.

"The NLRB ruling weakens capital's ability to blackmail this growing section of labor in the United States," Barnes said, "objectively accelerating the opportunities and potential of union organizing campaigns across the country."

Bosses need 'la migra'

"Short of a deep recession, the U.S. employers today have a great economic need for a large-scale increase in immigration," Barnes said. "That is the only way they have left to draw millions more into the workforce to keep churning out profits."

"Throughout most of Latin America unemployment continues to rise. Workers and peasants are being pushed out of their countries because of the conditions they face. And they are simultaneously being drawn into the fields and factories in the United States."

"Why didn't the bosses at Swift just fire the six workers in Iowa who walked off the kill floor and shut down the line?" Barnes asked.

Part of the answer lies in the labor shortage in many parts of the country. In Iowa, for example, unemployment stands at 2 percent. A governor's commission recently proposed Iowa become an "immigration enterprise zone." Another, related part of the answer is that the packing bosses in Iowa and across the Midwest are beginning to get a taste of the kind of resistance they can set in motion when they press just a little too far.

That's why, concurrent with this immi-

gration flow, Barnes said, the employing class will "increase its use of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Border Patrol, the hated *la migra*." They need to police and intimidate immigrant workers to the best of their ability, to try to keep them from acting in their own interests and as a growing part of the vanguard of the U.S. union movement.

Federal government statistics show that the number of immigrant workers in the United States jumped to 15.7 million last year, up 17 percent from three years earlier. This represents 12 percent of the workforce. (These figures do not include many, many workers who do not show up in the official statistics.) These workers are very often relegated to the hardest and lowest-paying jobs.

But the organizing drives and determination of these workers are having an impact on these conditions, Barnes said. He pointed to the recent agreement by two greengrocers in Manhattan to pay \$100,000 in back wages to a mostly immigrant workforce. This settlement came after a state attorney general's investigation, prompted by UNITE, found that workers were routinely receiving \$200 in pay for 72-hour workweeks.

Fights in garment shops

Marian Russell, a garment worker and UNITE member in St. Louis, and Lisa Potash, a garment worker from Chicago, both reported on resistance by workers against often degrading conditions and low wages inside garment shops. The drive by the garment bosses to intensify labor—reinforcing the brutal piece-work system, and extending the workday and workweek with no overtime pay—is laying the basis for more such struggles throughout the industry.

Building fractions of socialist workers in garment shops in coal mining regions is part of becoming involved in the social movement growing in those areas, Potash pointed out. Potash had recently returned from two trips to meet with Western coal miners who were involved in the strike at the P&M mines in New Mexico.

The coming struggles in the garment industry will have a social character, as well. This can already be seen in the number of garment workers taking part in actions to defend immigrants rights, for example. And it was registered in the size and militant spirit of the May Day marches a few months ago, which were larger in New York and some other U.S. cities than celebrations of this international workers' holiday have been for many years in the United States.

Elena Tate, a leader of the Young Socialists, said her experience working in a garment shop in Brooklyn over the summer would help her political discussions with fellow students when she returns to school at Hunter College this fall. It would help her make a convincing case, she said, that the problem is not sweatshops in other countries, which some students get drawn into campaigning against as part of the U.S. rulers' reactionary protectionist policies.

The child labor she experienced in the nonunion shop where she worked—with some in their early teens working alongside her—underlines in a strikingly graphic manner the need for organizing drives and strong unions in garment right here in the United States, Tate said.

Work among farmers

Experiences in joining with farmers fighting to defend their land and livelihood were addressed by a number of participants in the meeting.

John Benson, a packinghouse worker from Fresno—in the center of one of California's main agricultural areas—spent a good deal of time during the National Committee meeting talking with other participants about plans for the Labor Day protests by dairy farmers. Withholding the product of their labor from the market, they planned to dump milk or turn it over to be processed into cheese for use in local food banks (see articles on page 3).

Nan Bailey from Los Angeles described how socialist workers there and in the San Francisco Bay Area have reached out to dairy farmers in the state in recent months.

Eva Braiman said socialists in Cleveland organized an event for farmers to meet Mike Fitzsimmons, a garment worker and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Ohio. Nine farmers attended, and there was a wide-ranging discussion and back-and-forth on the causes of the crisis facing working people.

"Farmers in Texas and parts of Oklahoma face the worst drought conditions since the Great Depression," Barnes said.

"There's nothing 'natural' about farmers reaching out to trade unionists," he said. "They tend at first to look for solidarity and leadership to other independent commodity producers and to small businessmen. They're vulnerable to crank ideas that interest rates and the banks—not the profit system and the capitalist class—are the source of the crisis facing working people."

"But tens of thousands of farmers, confronted with deepening indebtedness and foreclosure, are more and more facing the proletarian condition," Barnes said. "They start to see the social power of the workers movement and the unions, recognize a common interest, and get connected to them."

Expanding the work of every branch and branch organizing committee among farmers and other working people in rural areas is an essential part of building a proletarian party, Barnes emphasized.

There will be no successful revolutionary struggle for a workers and farmers government, he said, unless the communist vanguard in the working class and unions has won the political confidence beforehand of large numbers of fighting toilers on the land.

Pressure on wages

"Since the early 1970s real wages of most workers have stagnated or gone down," Barnes noted.

A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute confirms what most working people know: there is a growing gap between the income of working people and that of better-off layers of the middle classes and the rich. The national poverty rate in 1998 was 12.7 percent—after the longest upswing in the history of the U.S. business cycle, just one tenth of a percentage point less than in 1989 and higher than in 1979!

"Class polarization is continuing in Europe as well," Barnes said. "The recent 'tax reforms' in both Germany and France are

Continued on page 13

Immigrants on Long Island counter chauvinist campaign



Immigrant workers demonstrated on Long Island August 31 in Farmingville, New York, as the Suffolk County legislature held a hearing on a proposal by legislator Joseph Caracappa to sue the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), demanding it arrest undocumented workers in the name of "public safety." The overflow crowd at the hearing was polarized between supporters of the anti-immigrant measure, led by the rightist group Sachem Quality of Life, and dozens of immigrants who rallied against it, carrying Mexican flags and signs declaring "No human is illegal" and "Stop racism." Among them were representatives of the Tepeyac Association of New York. The proposal was voted down 9-8.

The anti-immigrant campaign has targeted day laborers who are picked up at street corners by construction and landscaping contractors. Sachem Quality of Life thugs have picketed the day laborers every Saturday in Farmingville, calling for their arrest and accusing immigrants of causing crime, disease, and other social ills.

Last year Caracappa proposed a measure to prohibit contractors from stopping their trucks on the streets to hire workers, which was defeated, and another anti-immigrant ordinance limiting the number of people who may occupy a rental house, which was passed. Many immigrant workers are forced by high rents to live crowded together in homes.

Socialists protest attack on bookstore in Des Moines

BY SIMONE BERG

DES MOINES, Iowa—On the morning of September 4, volunteers for the Iowa Socialist Workers Campaign, arriving to gather books and newspapers before going to the Labor Day parade, found that the Pathfinder bookstore had been attacked. Pigs' feet had been shoved through the mail slot. A plastic tub of chicken livers had been splattered along the wall next to the door. And one of the big display windows on the side of the building had been pelted with a dozen eggs. The incident was reported to the police.

"This attack is not going unanswered," said Edwin Fruit, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in the Fourth District here and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149. "We are telling other working-class fighters and supporters of democratic rights about it. We are seeking their support in speaking out against this assault on an establishment whose purpose is to tell the truth about the fights of workers, farmers, and the oppressed here and around the world."

Supporters of the Iowa Socialist Workers Campaign used this campaign headquarters in their successful effort to get Fruit, along with James Harris for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president, on the ballot in Iowa. There have been public meetings here to speak out for immigrant rights, as well as to protest police brutality and the racist murder of Charles Lovelady by security thugs hired as bouncers at a local nightclub.

As we go to press, supporters of the *Militant*, who sponsor the Militant Labor Forum every week at the Pathfinder Bookstore are planning a press conference on September 8 to condemn and bring attention to this attack.

Thousands march against cop brutality

Continued from front page

was pepper-sprayed, then shot eight times. "The Justice Department review [of the case] said it was justified," Betty Harris said. "Why? When it comes to the police, there is no justice unless you have a video camera." Bridges added, "People ask me if I came here to ask for justice. I didn't come here to ask for justice—I came to take it!"

Joseph Antoine, a cab driver from Irvington, New Jersey, who was born in Haiti, came with his son Max, who was paralyzed in 1996 by local cops who gave him a brutal beating. Max Antoine recently defeated a frame-up attempt by the police who had assaulted him. Last December prosecutors were forced to drop the charges of aggravated assault against him, and he is now pursuing a civil case against the cops.

"When I heard about this march on the radio, I said it's very important to come here with Max," Joseph Antoine remarked.

Speakers at the demonstration included Abner Louima, who demanded "the government use its power...to end police brutality and racial profiling." Louima was sodomized and tortured by New York cops in 1997.

Also speaking were Kadiatou and Saikou Diallo, the parents of Guinean immigrant Amadou Diallo, who was gunned down last year in a barrage of 41 bullets by police in the Bronx. His death set off a wave of protests in the city. The cops were acquitted February 25 of all charges, including second-degree murder.

"My son was gunned down by four white policemen because of the color of his skin. If there is no justice for Amadou, justice is denied for all," said Kadiatou Diallo, his mother.

Death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal also addressed the gathering via a taped statement. Other rally speakers included Sharpton, King, NAACP president Kweisi Mfume, and Dorothy Height, head of the National Council of Negro Women. Sharpton, the keynote speaker, called for a halt in federal funds to police departments found to be guilty of "racial profiling."

'Unions should take more responsibility'

"The unions should take more responsibility for actions like this. They have the

numbers to really speak for the masses of people," said Maureen Lewis, a lab technician who came on a bus organized by her union, Service Employees International Union Local 1199. Lewis has been active in protesting the murder of Paul Maxwell, killed by Hempstead, Long Island, cops in 1998. She came because she sees police brutality "as a serious problem in this country that has to be brought to everyone's attention. People don't think this happens in suburbia, but look at this case."

Yusef Hanson, 31, a mechanic at United Parcel Service, scrambled to get on a bus from New York at the last minute when his bus from Queens was canceled. "I came to be counted," he stated. Hanson said he went through his first strike three years ago at UPS and this was his first social protest rally. He said he has begun to think more broadly about the world and politics. "It's great. I feel like I'm being awakened."

Like many of the protesters, this was Moses Smith's first national demonstration. The 32-year-old apprentice butcher from Newark, New Jersey, told the *Militant*, "I participated in a protest against police brutality in Newark. I came here hoping there would be some serious changes. I'm skeptical about all these so-called Black lead-



Militant/Stu Singer

Many who joined August 26 march in Washington have been fighting for justice for years. Above, demonstrators from small towns in northeast Arkansas who are campaigning around a number of cases of police brutality and racist terror.

ers. I've seen people preach but not practice what they preach."

Larry Rusche, Guy St. John, and William Dixon were part of a group of about 25 members of the painters union in Virginia, Black and white, participating in the demonstration. "We're fighting discrimination real hard," said St. John. "There's a lot of discrimination on job sites against Blacks and Latinos and union members." Rusche added, "We've been out on the Verizon picket lines. We went out every day and picketed with them—every day!"

While the crowd was overwhelmingly Black, whites and Latinos also came to pro-

test. Ernesto Candado, 42, brought a Puerto Rican flag to the rally. "I had to bring the flag. Everyone is out here supporting what they believe is right. It's important to stick with it." In addition to standing up to police brutality, Candado said he was there to support independence for Puerto Rico. Several people from the Peace for Vieques organization handed out flyers for a September 22 march on Washington to demand the U.S. Navy stop bombing the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

Elena Tate, a member of the Young Socialists, contributed to this article.

Harris campaigns at Washington march

BY PAUL PEDERSON
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON—Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris brought his campaign to the August 26 "Redeem the Dream" march on Washington against police brutality. With an entourage of campaign supporters, he engaged in political discussions with many other participants who were interested in how a working-class candidate responds to politics today. Many of these discussions took place around the several literature tables located throughout the rally site, which were staffed by socialist workers and Young Socialists members.

"I had a lot of fun working with James Harris at the rally," said Ana Ramirez, 17, a

YS member who came from Los Angeles. "We ran into a group of three young Black women who were high school students from the Washington, D.C., area looking over our literature table. One of them, Jade, said she wanted to start a political club at her high school and was interested in the socialists' explanations of the world."

Ramirez said two of them bought the new Pathfinder pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism*. "They were hungry for ideas and one of them told me about her disappointment with the education system," stated Ramirez. "She said more needs to be done about police brutality than just talking about it. She agreed

with the positions of the Socialist Workers campaign, such as defense of affirmative action and supporting a woman's right to choose abortion. She liked the books we had with the speeches of Malcolm X and asked a lot of questions about the Cuban revolution. She was very interested in the Young Socialists, and our explanation that a working-class revolution is needed here in the United States."

Later, Jade returned to the table, outraged at a man she had seen at the rally holding up a sign scapegoating immigrants for problems such as unemployment. She wanted to find out what Harris had to say about this so she could be better prepared to answer these reactionary views. According to Ramirez, "Jade said the man told her there were too many Mexicans in this country, and she asked James Harris, 'What do you think about this?'"

"Anti-immigrant scapegoating is poison that is aimed against working people," Harris told her. "Mexicans are workers like us. In fact, in many struggles immigrants are playing a vanguard role in the labor movement." He explained that immigrants were a leading component in the union-organizing efforts by meat packers around the Midwest. Harris also pointed to the struggles of farm workers in Yakima Valley in Washington State.

"One man was really shocked that James Harris was running for president," Ramirez added. "He said he couldn't believe 'that someone like us' was running for president of the United States."

Ramirez reported that she sold a subscription to the *Militant*, three copies of the paper, and three of the new Pathfinder pamphlet while campaigning with Harris. "I met a lot of students and Black workers who were interested in the campaign," she added.

Harris wrapped up his campaigning at a Socialist Workers open house attended by 40 people who had taken part in the march. "This was an important national demonstration against police brutality. The very fact that it happened was a victory for all working people." It was proof of the tenacity of workers today who refuse to stop fighting against the brutality of the ruling class, he noted.

One person in the audience asked him why was he running for president if elections did not solve anything. "I'm running to explain the truth about politics today and the irreconcilable differences between the two main classes in society—the working class and the capitalist class." He said these differences will grow sharper and will only be resolved through the revolutionary transformation of society as workers and farmers take power and establish a new government of their own in the interests of the vast majority.

Tomato workers celebrate organizing victory

BY BETSY MCDONALD
AND LOUIS TURNER

WILLCOX, Arizona—About 70 tomato workers and their families and supporters, held a celebration August 26 marking their victory in a union election held a month earlier at Eurofresh, Inc. They had real cause

to celebrate as this is the first time in Arizona history that agricultural workers have won a union election.

The event was hosted by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 99, the union local the tomato workers voted to be a part of in a 116-70 vote. Bill McDonnell,

president of Local 99, said the local is statewide and has more than 21,000 members. Festivities included a barbecue, music, dancing, and prizes for the 50 or more children of the workers. A popular chant was "*Si se pudo*." ("Yes, we did it.")

Dutch-owned Eurofresh, Inc. operates a vast expanse of tomato nurseries and row on row of hothouses in this rural town located a several-hour drive east of Tucson. The company is expanding and recently contracted more than 200 additional workers from Mexico, many of whom are indigenous people. The bosses are hoping to use them against the union. At least three of these new workers were at the celebration. One of them, a 15-year-old Mixtec youth from the state of Guerrero, said he thought that many more would support the union.

Cecilia Quijada, a packer who has worked for Eurofresh for almost four years, said winning union recognition will mean "the workers won't be abused like we used to be." She said she'd like to tell others who are considering a fight like the one waged by workers at Eurofresh: "Don't be afraid. If you're afraid, you can't win." Martín Hernández, an organizer for the UFCW, said, "It was great for them, truly a victory for the workers."

This was a celebration marked by the tomato workers' understanding that the company is determined to prevent them from winning a contract. Several workers received a plaque from UFCW Local 99 saluting their contributions as leaders in the organizing drive. One of them cautioned, "We're just waiting to strike another blow against the company." The confidence of workers on the in-plant organizing committee was expressed by Mary Valencia, who said, "We were sure we would win. Everyone was happy. Hopefully it will change everything."

Immigrants march for rights in San Jose

BY RAUL GONZALEZ

SAN JOSE, California—Two thousand working people marched and rallied here August 26 to demand rights for immigrants. The action was organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 428 and the community service organization SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network).

The three official demands of the march were amnesty for undocumented workers, repeal of employer sanctions, and the right of all workers to organize into unions.

Speaking at a brief rally at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church before the march began, Roger Rivera, an organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), told the crowd, "This march can convince some workers not to be afraid. That we don't need to be silent. That we can organize and fight."

A table with paint and marking pens was provided for people to make their own signs. Students from nearby campuses, organized by the UFCW and SIREN, circulated with sheets signing up people for upcoming activities and to help out in the day's activities.

Marchers chanted "*Aquí estamos y no nos vamos*" (We're here and we're not leaving), "What do we want? Justice," "*Queremos*

amnistia!" (we want amnesty), and "*Si se puede*" (Yes we can). As the workers marched down the sidewalk, they were received with honking horns and cheers from people driving by.

Janitors who recently waged a successful contract fight were a central part of the action. Also participating in the event were workers from food processing factories, electronics assembly plants, construction sites, and retail stores, as well as day laborers and others. A contingent of 20 Vietnamese workers marched, one of whom spoke at the rally. Students from local high schools and colleges also attended.

Eliás, a mechanic, who did not want his last name used, told the *Militant*, "I came because we need our rights, the same as a citizen. If we're illegal they exploit us. We're the secret reason this country is so rich."

Banners in the march identified UFCW Local 428; Service Employees International Union Local 1877; Plumbers, Steamfitters and Refrigeration Fitters Local 393; Laborers Local 270; and the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council. Some people carried Mexican and Vietnamese flags.

Raul Gonzalez is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 565 in Sunnyvale, California.

Dock workers lead Labor Day in S. Carolina

Continued from front page
leaving the state.

ILA Local 1422 and 27 individual members of the union also face a civil lawsuit for "damages" filed by the nonunion stevedoring company hired by Nordana.

Struggles for union rights

Other workers at the port have stepped up their fight for union rights. The large majority of Port Authority employees who work on the docks—including crane operators, clerks, and yard crews—have signed cards to join the ILA. South Carolina's anti-union laws, however, prohibit state agencies from negotiating with unions, but the workers continue to fight for better pay and working conditions. The ILA seeks to overturn the antilabor laws.

Truck drivers who haul cargo to and from the port are also trying to win union recognition. Robert Bates and Richmond Truesdale, leaders of the United Container Movers Association of Charleston, came to the Labor Day rally. In an interview, they said many drivers have signed up to join the Teamsters union, but they anticipate a fight because the bosses and government claim that as owner-operators they are "independent contractors" who cannot join a union and bargain collectively.

Port truck drivers in nearby Savannah,

Georgia, involved in a similar fight, held a protest and work stoppage that same weekend. Bates reported that the Charleston drivers are planning protest actions for later this month.

The militancy of the dockworkers in Charleston is a pole of attraction for other workers in the region. Sharon Brown, president of International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) Local 175, said about 30 members of that local caravaned to the Charleston rally. They work at Yuasa Inc., a battery plant in Sumter, South Carolina, and are in the third year of their first contract. Brown said that since becoming president of the local a year ago, "I drive to Charleston to learn how to fight" from the Longshoremen.

Workers at Yuasa, 87 percent of whom are Black, are fighting against the company's racist discrimination and for safer conditions. Larry Maple, a maintenance technician, explained that he and other maintenance workers who are Black are hired and remain at \$10.22 an hour, while many of the workers who are white start at \$12.02 or \$13.02, and go up to \$14.65. Maple said, "When I confronted management about the difference they said, 'The Black workers have the potential while the whites have the experience.' Then why am I training them?" Maple said he was terminated in March on trumped-up charges of "violating company policy," but has just won his fight for reinstatement and expects to

start work soon.

Delores Charles, another IUE member, reported, "I was injured when an acid pump burst and acid got in my left eye." She was off work for three days, but the company reported it to workmen's compensation as one day, so it was not listed as a "lost-time" accident. "I still haven't been paid for two days," she said.

Take pride in struggle

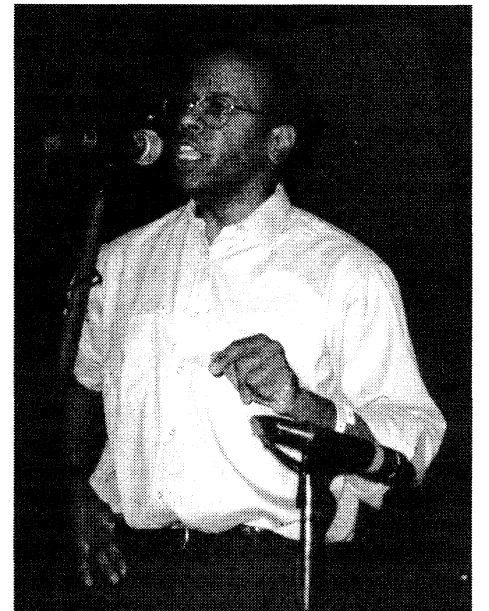
The mid-afternoon rally included brief remarks by a range of local politicians and Democratic Party candidates. Kenneth Riley gave an update on the defense of the indicted ILA members. He encouraged contributions to the Dockworkers' Defense Fund, which helps finance the workers' defense campaign, and urged participation in a union-sponsored blood drive.

Nelson Rivers of the NAACP pledged support for the ILA members, and vowed, "We're going to take that flag off the pole," referring to the Confederate battle flag that was recently moved from the top of the South Carolina legislature dome to a pole on the statehouse grounds. Tens of thousands of workers from across the state, including many members of the ILA from Charleston, rallied in Columbia in January to demand the racist symbol be removed.

James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president, who was one of the speakers at the Labor Day rally, saluted the union fighters present. Referring to the

frame-up tactics used by the employers and their government against working-class militants, he said, "When we fight, they say it's a riot."

"We should be proud" of the longshore workers' resistance to union busting, and "stand with the five brothers under indictment," Harris stated.



Militant/Dan Fein

Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris addresses crowd at Labor Day rally in Charleston, South Carolina.

CALENDAR

Conference ENDING THE COLD WAR WITH CUBA

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For information call *Todo New York Con Vieques* (212) 631-4620

UNITE members join Charlotte Labor Day

BY SAM MANUEL

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Some 700 unionists marched in the second annual Labor Day parade here. Garment and textile, electrical, and auto workers marched, together with machinists, painters, firefighters, musicians, and communications workers.

Among the demonstrators were several contingents of Steelworkers, including members of Local 850 who last year after a 12-month battle pushed back concessions demanded by Continental General Tire.

Chanting, "We have arrived!" about a dozen members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees marched proudly in the parade. Last June, culminating a 25-year campaign,

workers succeeded in organizing a union at the sprawling Fieldcrest Cannon mill complex in Kannapolis and neighboring Concord.

Paulette Johnson, a 20-year veteran in the plant who is a folder operator and union shop steward at Fieldcrest Cannon, spoke to the *Militant* along with Terri Clark, a towel sewing inspector, and Patrice Moore, a weaving machine operator. They explained that workers are proud of their victory and their morale is high. "They cannot take advantage of us and use favoritism to divide us," Clark explained. "They just can't go and lay off or fire people they don't like. And if someone gets fired we now have a way to fight to get their job back."

Moore, who operates 10 weaving ma-

chines, said, "These jobs can be very difficult. Before we won the union if a worker was having difficulty with a job the supervisor could use that to get rid of them if they didn't like the person. In that kind of situation now a worker can come to the steward and the union can work together to get them on a job they can do. We are also involved in efficiency ratings. This can determine your pay. In the past it was just the supervisor's word as to what your efficiency was. They cheated workers in this way."

Johnson explained, "Progress has been made to cut down racial discrimination in the plant. Now everyone is paid the same wage for the particular job they do." She added, "We will be back even stronger next year."

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IOWA: Des Moines: 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. E-mail: 104107.1412@compuserve.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 683 Washington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 282-2254. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

MICHIGAN: Detroit: P.O. Box 441580 Zip: 48244. Tel: (313) 875-0100. E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 1569 Sherburne Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

MISSOURI: St. Louis: Box 19166, 2910 Meramec Street. Zip 63118. Tel: (314) 924-

2500. E-mail: MilPath167@cs.com

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 237 Washington St. (near Market St.) Suite 305. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: swpn Newark@usa.net

NEWYORK: Brooklyn: 1068 Fulton St., 3rd floor. Mailing address: PMB 197, 655 Fulton St. Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 398-7850. E-mail: swpb Brooklyn@yahoo.com
Garment District, 545 8th Ave. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 695-7358. E-mail: nygd@usa.net; **Upper Manhattan:** 540 W. 165 St. Tel: (212) 740-4611. E-mail: swpuptown@usa.net; **Pathfinder Mural Bookstore:** 67 Charles St. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

OHIO: Cleveland: 7535 Broadway. Zip: 44105. Tel: (216) 641-9405. E-mail: 103253.1111@compuserve.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks south of South St. at 5th St.). Zip: 19147. Tel: (215) 627-1237. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com
Pittsburgh: 1003 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

TEXAS: Houston: 619 West 8th St. Zip: 77007. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: 102527.2271@compuserve.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3541 14th St. N.W. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 722-6221. E-mail: 75407.3345@compuserve.com

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 2533 16th Ave. South. Zip: 98144. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: 74461.2544@compuserve.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. E-mail: 106450.2216@compuserve.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

Manchester: Unit D, 21-33 Oldham St. Postal Code: M1 1LG. Tel: 0161-839-1766. E-mail: 106462.327@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 4613 St. Laurent. Postal code: H2T 1R2. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: 104614.2606@compuserve.com

Toronto: 2761 Dundas St., Postal code: M6P 1Y4. Tel: (416) 767-3705. E-mail: milpathtoronto@cs.com

Vancouver: #202D-4806 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3R8. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: 103430.1552@compuserve.com

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milpth@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

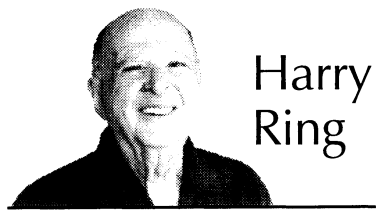
Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. E-mail: milpath.auckland@actrix.gen.nz

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: 100250.1511@compuserve.com

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

The sane society—"WASHINGTON—More than 100 nuclear weapon development sites in this



Harry Ring

country will never be free enough of radioactive debris to allow unrestricted public use, and the government has failed to develop adequate plans for their long-term management, according to a scientific study"—News item.

Read it and retch—In the same issue it reported on a Concorde

superspeed jet crashing near Paris, with a toll of 114. The *Los Angeles Times* offered a piece drooling over the luxuries of the \$5,000 one-way New York-to-London fare. It reads like a Concorde press handout. The article states: "Next time you drag your suitcase down the crowded aisle of a standard jetliner and marvel as a badly dressed fellow traveler tries to shove a stuffed horse into the overhead compartment, consider the Concorde: Airborne proof that the rich truly are different."

What in the world will the rich do?—Soon after we stopped fuming about the item above, it was reported that the British and French governments were about to shut down the Concordes as unsafe—at least temporarily.

What price celibacy?—We've been musing over the decision of the San Francisco Catholic archbishop to fire teenage rectory workers to avoid costly sex-abuse damage suits. Replacing the teenagers who do rectory clerical work, and maintain priests' quarters, will mean replacing youth with older workers who may expect a tad more than the minimum wage.

Oh—In the Cincinnati area, county sheriff's deputies are being disciplined for not meeting arrest and ticket quotas. The sheriff denied there's a quota system, only "performance standards."

Free competition—"When it comes to equality for women athletes and, perhaps more important, the promotion of women to posi-

tions of authority in sports, the International Olympic Committee talks a good game.

The IOC's charter calls for the 'strict application of the principle of equality between men and women.' But not one of 14 nominees recently for an upcoming membership election is female."—News item.

Bastion of liberty—California's Orange County now requires applicants for welfare and food stamps to furnish fingerprints and mug shots.

Capitalist friends and allies—The United Kingdom agreed to pay Japan more than \$60 million for selling them unsafe, falsely labeled nuclear rods. It also faces the domestic problem of having agreed to

bring the hot rods back from Japan, with critics voicing concern that the rods might be hijacked by pirates and terrorists. Are they talking about UK business folks?

But they've got a crowded agenda—"Orange County—Poorly maintained and aging sewer systems have clogged, crumbled, or broken down at least 198 times so far this year, spilling off more than 300,000 gallons of raw sewage."—News item.

Who says there's no affordable housing?—From April through June, California real estate sharks sold 3,293 homes tagged at \$1 million or more, a jump of 54.6 percent over the same period last year. The best seller, in Bel-Air, was snapped up for \$12.65 million.

Socialists deepen integration into struggles

Continued from page 10

giant giveaways to the wealthiest propertied families."

More importantly, he said, the capitalist rulers in Europe are "setting the stage for 'American-style' assaults on social welfare and on the wages, conditions, and job security of working people. They are being driven to do so by intensifying competition with their imperialist rivals, above all in the United States."

Barnes also commented on the statements by Democratic vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman calling for "a constitutional place for faith in our public life."

Lieberman's campaign to legitimize the place of religion in bourgeois politics and government "is reactionary," Barnes said.

"The secularization of society has been gaining ground for hundreds of years," he said. "Any attempt to shift the tide in the opposite direction is a threat to the working class, as is any campaign to pose a 'religious left' as a counter to the 'Christian right.' It's also a boon to Jew-haters and anti-Semites of all stripes."

Aiming for 'first strike'

Barnes commented on the September 1 announcement by U.S. president William Clinton that he was postponing a decision on deployment of a National Missile Defense system, a program pushed by his administration.

Presenting further rationalizations for his eight-year record as a war president and chief spokesperson for world imperialism, Clinton insisted there is a "real and growing" threat from Iraq and North Korea.

From the outset, Barnes said, Clinton's scheme for a land-based missile defense system using radar has been a stalking horse for "the only kind of missile shield that will do the job the U.S. rulers are driving toward. Clinton has opened the way for the next administration—Democrat or Republican—to push further in that direction.

"What the rulers are going after," Barnes said, "is a system using satellites that can detect a missile launch anywhere in the world—stationary radar can't see past the horizon—and that can launch weapons from submarines in or near 'enemy' waters to shoot down missiles in their boost phase.

"The logic of Washington's course—one the bipartisan rulers are dead serious about—is to establish a first strike capacity for the first time in the nuclear age," Barnes said.

Barnes pointed out "that the Clinton years have been marked by initiatives to move the two-party, bipartisan core of bourgeois politics to the right in the United States."

This is true not only on measures such as missile defense "to further strengthen U.S. imperialism as the undisputed military power on the face of the earth," he said, "but on driving the beginning wedge against Social Security in the name of 'welfare reform.'

"True to his origins as governor of Arkansas, Clinton has also made his mark as the 'execution president' over the past eight years," Barnes pointed out, "increasing the violence of the police and courts against working people.

"Those to Clinton's right in the mainstream of bourgeois politics," Barnes said, "simply take the openings presented by the Democratic administration, point out that

these measures are inadequate to do the job, and then push further against working people at home and abroad."

Wen Ho Lee frame-up

Barnes also called attention to the September 1 action of a federal appeals court, acting on a government request, denying the release on bail from prison of Dr. Wen Ho Lee. Lee is the target of a government frame-up on allegations that he stole nuclear weapons secrets from the Los Alamos National Laboratories where he worked. The appeals court, in an unusual move, issued its ruling before federal judge James Parker had even made his action public.

"It is clear that the government has no evidence on which to base a charge against Wen Ho Lee," Barnes said. "But they have imprisoned him without the right to bail for months, under deplorable conditions. This is one of the forms taken by the drive of the U.S. imperialist rulers to strengthen the arbitrary powers of the executive branch—to strengthen their arbitrary powers to jail, to prosecute, and even to execute, all rationalized by claims of a threat to national security.

"The crisis of capitalism is deepening, and with it comes increasing polarization and instability," Barnes said, "as well as a coarseness that more and more marks bourgeois politics. All this proceeds in tandem with the grinding and brutalizing speedup in the pace of work—the assault on the very life and limb of working people—that the bosses need to continue what they call their 'productivity miracle.'"

This underlines the importance of struggles by workers and farmers for dignity and against scapegoating of any kind; of strikes demanding an end to inhuman conditions on the job; of struggles against cop brutality and the death penalty; of opposition to the climate of violence and intimidation promoted by woman-haters and the ongoing probes to push back women's rights.

It underlines the importance of actions by labor to take the moral high ground in asserting social solidarity against capital's assault on Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, and other programs through which working people receive some measure of relief from the conditions they face—and some measure of the wealth they, and they alone, produce by the application of their labor to what nature has bequeathed humankind.

"Now is the time to prepare a proletarian party and widen its influence and trust among broader layers of fighting workers and farmers," Barnes said.

"The capitalist class fears the unknown," he said. "Their debates on military policy reflect their fear of what is coming. All they can do is prepare to meet the unknown with force and violence, with fascism and war.

"The communist party keenly looks forward to the currently 'unknown' resistance gestating among working people," Barnes said. "We follow the natural lines of resistance in the working class in order to be able to be a part of the broader vanguard.

"We keep our eyes out for struggles," Barnes emphasized, "and we adjust the party's forms and structures to facilitate our involvement in them. We increase the distribution, sales, and availability of revolutionary political material—the books and pamphlets produced and distributed by Pathfinder, the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*,



Militant/Stu Singer

Militant sales at August 26 march in Washington against cop brutality. Communist workers "keep our eyes out for struggles," said SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. "We increase the distribution, sales, and availability of revolutionary political material—the books and pamphlets produced and distributed by Pathfinder, the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*."

and *New International*.

"If we follow the course we have discussed and reaffirmed at this National Committee meeting," Barnes said, "if we follow the course our union fractions and more and more branches and branch organizing committees have already begun to blaze—then by the end of the year 2000 we will once again

be building a party like the one whose proletarianization we set out to deepen with the turn to industry some quarter century ago.

"And this time we are doing so with more favorable conditions in the U.S. and international class struggle," Barnes said, "and with wider opportunities to recruit workers, farmers, and youth to the communist movement."

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



September 19, 1975

LOS ANGELES—Elections in the fields have just begun to take place. And already California's wealthy growers have demonstrated they are preparing to use every trick in the book to deprive farm workers of the union of their choice—including the use of armed vigilantes. Initial returns show that the United Farm Workers won six of the first nine union representation elections under California's new farm labor law.

Meanwhile, the use of a right-wing gang of vigilantes to keep UFW organizers out of tomato ranches near Stockton underlined the hollowness of the assertion by Gov. Edmund Brown that the new farm labor law would bring "peace" to the fields.

When the state farm labor law went into effect August 28, the new labor board ruled that union organizers must have access to the fields and labor camps to discuss with the workers prior to an election.

But when UFW organizers approached a tomato ranch in Stockton September 1 to talk to the workers, they found an armed gang waiting for them.

Displaying self-bestowed sheriff's badges were members of the "Sheriff's Posse Comitatus," an ultrareactionary outfit that claims the "God-given" right to enforce—with guns—what they see as the law.



September 18, 1950

The Nazi-like Kilgore bill, which was introduced by six "Fair Deal" Senators, is proof enough that whatever the Trumanites have against the so-called "Red Registration" bills, like Senator McCarran's, it is not that these bills violate constitutional rights.

McCarran's police-state bill at least pretends to preserve the right of trial by jury, habeas corpus, public hearings, confrontation of accusers, and other safeguards. The Kilgore concentration-camp bill, which Truman called an "improvement" over McCarran's, denies all these rights.

Under this "Fair Deal" bill, whenever the President and Congress declare a state of "internal security emergency," the Attorney General can throw into a concentration camp anyone he "suspects" "might" engage in "espionage or sabotage" or merely have "knowledge" of same.

A "detainee" tossed into a concentration camp because he "might" commit some crime some time in the future could be released only by appeal to an administration board. But the Attorney-General is required to show only "reasonable grounds." He does not have to present "evidence" that he claims may "endanger internal security" if disclosed.

Socialist candidates on ballot

Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign of James Harris for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president have scored a real victory in their drive to put the socialist ticket on the ballot in 13 states and the District of Columbia. All that remains is collecting 500 signatures in Vermont!

Over the past two weeks the campaign was certified for the ballot in Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, New York, and Utah, thanks to the help of numerous workers in struggle.

Achieving ballot status strengthens and broadens the reach of the campaign, enabling many more to learn about a fighting, working-class alternative to the Democratic, Republican, Reform, and Green parties. Getting Harris and Trowe on the ballot means the twin parties of the super wealthy ruling minority are not left unchallenged in the electoral arena.

Harris and Trowe are the only working-class candidates who are mounting a nationwide campaign, seeking to get on the ballot in every state possible. At each tour stop they are receiving a serious hearing for their revolutionary perspectives—from workers on strike, farmers defending their land, unionists rallying to defend their rights, and youth protesting the brutalities and injustices of capitalism.

To get on the ballot, the socialist campaigners have to overcome a host of undemocratic restrictions. In many states, requirements such as collecting tens of thousands of signatures are designed to keep working-class parties off the ballot so the two-party capitalist system remains unchallenged.

For a revolutionary workers party, gaining ballot status is an important part of defending its ability to operate openly and pursue as many ways as possible to organize, educate, and get into the midst of struggles and resistance. The capitalist state will always, especially in times of social crisis and labor upsurge, seek ways to limit the ability of workers organizations to function, declaring them “illegal” and beyond constitutional protections under the Bill of Rights.

An election campaign is one of the few opportunities a workers party has to defend its political space and democratic rights by entering an arena of capitalist politics. Elec-

tions are one of the main ways the employers’ class portrays its rule as “democratic,” making it harder for them to justify going after organizations that run candidates.

A byproduct of putting in hundreds of hours to meet the undemocratic requirements and raise substantial funds to make it all possible is reaching thousands of people with a campaign flyer, the *Militant*, or a Pathfinder book. Many are introduced to a socialist candidate or decide to come to a picket line, a demonstration, or a Militant Labor Forum.

The socialist campaign supporters battling for ballot status are a crucial part of presenting a small but important example of how working people can chart a course of independent political action as part of their deepening resistance, and, down the road, revolutionary mobilizations in a fight to establish a government of workers and farmers.

The Gore/Lieberman and Bush/Cheney tickets offer nothing but a continued assault on working people at home and abroad. Both boast of their support for the U.S.-led assault on the Iraqi people, which continues to this day; both back continued executions, jailings, and assaults on democratic rights; both tout the “American miracle” economy that is kept going on the backs of working people; both press the assault against Social Security and other social conquests that were won through the struggles of workers and farmers.

Ralph Nader and the Green Party offer the dangerous illusion that capitalism can be reformed and seek to divert working people into the trap of economic American nationalism. The fact that the logic of the world economic crisis propels U.S. imperialism to drive toward fascism and war can be seen in the capturing of the Reform Party by ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan.

Throughout the United States supporters of the socialist campaign are deeply involved in the resistance of working people to this assault, resistance that points in a different direction from the dog-eat-dog world that capitalism offers humanity. We urge you to join in with the Socialist Workers campaign and build on the victory in the ballot drive.

When working people took power in Russia

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

In the letter published on the facing page, reader G.M. asks about an “election that took place after the Bolsheviks came to power in which Lenin lost” and about the execution of Tsar Nicholas Romanov and his family in 1918.

These questions turn on the character of the October 1917 Russian Revolution. Pro-capitalist politicians and pundits call the revolution a putsch, or coup. They claim the Bolshevik Party led by V.I. Lenin acted against the will and interests of the people of Russia. What they hate is that through the October Revolution workers and farmers established their own government and overthrew the old capitalist order, giving an example to the exploited and oppressed around the world. Millions of working people were drawn into beginning to build a new society, transforming themselves in the process.

In February 1917, a revolutionary upsurge led to the overthrow of the Russian monarchy, headed by tsar Nicholas II of the Romanov family. This revolution was driven by opposition to the imperialist slaughter in World War I, lack of basic democratic rights, widespread hunger, landlessness, and the subjugation of oppressed nationalities in the tsarist empire.

Capitalist politicians patched together a Provisional Government, which continued the imperialist war and ignored the urgent demands of working people and the oppressed. They promised to convene a Constituent Assembly to draw up a republican constitution, but kept postponing the elections for it. Meanwhile, during the uprising, *soviets* (councils) sprang up as a parallel government. These bodies were a new, vastly more democratic form of rule than anything existing under bourgeois regimes. Representatives to the soviets were freely elected by workers in the factories and other workplaces, by peasants, and by soldiers, who were largely peasants. These soviets debated out policy and elected delegates to an All-Russian Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.

At first, class-collaborationist parties—the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries—held the majority in these bodies. They voluntarily handed authority to the Provisional Government, while workers and farmers increasingly raised the demand, “All Power to the Soviets.” This highly unstable “dual power” could not last. Eight months of war and privation impelled working people toward another revolution.

In this process, the Bolshevik Party won wide respect among workers for its class-struggle perspectives and leadership role. The Bolsheviks eventually gained a majority in the executive committee of the Petrograd soviet, which began to arm workers more extensively and voted to replace the Provisional Government with a soviet government.

By the end of October, preparations were made for an armed insurrection. In Moscow and Petrograd, the capitalist government forces took flight before the insurrectionary forces. The All-Russia Congress of Soviets convened in Petrograd, the capital, and voted to assume governmental power. The old bourgeois state apparatus was dismantled, as workers and farmers power was consolidated.

The question asked by reader G.M. appears to be about the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which after the delays by the pro-capitalist forces finally took place after the October insurrection. Pro-capitalist politicians tried to rally forces against the soviet government by demanding “all power to the Constituent Assembly.” But the assembly had already been bypassed by events. For instance, peasants were unable to choose between the pro-soviet and anti-soviet wings of the peasant-based Social Revolutionary party, because the slates of candidates had been drawn up before the party split. When the Assembly was convened by the soviet government in January 1918, the majority voted down resolutions by the Bolshevik delegation calling for recognition of the new soviet government—including its declarations on land reform, workers control, nationalization of the banks, and withdrawal from the war. With mass support, the soviet government dissolved the now discredited and outlived Constituent Assembly.

Imperialist and domestic pro-capitalist forces then unleashed a bloody civil war against the revolutionary government. The young soviet republic was invaded by troops from Britain, France, the United States, and other powers. The revolutionary workers and peasants, through the Red Army, organized the defense of soviet power. They took firm measures to crush the counterrevolutionary forces led by the former landlords and capitalists.

It was at that time that the execution of the tsar’s family, detained in the Ural region, took place in July 1918. As Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in 1935, this “took place during a very critical period of the Civil War.” The action was carried out to prevent the counterrevolutionary White armies from using the former royal family as a live banner to rally around. “The decision was not only expedient but necessary. The severity of this summary justice showed the world that we would continue to fight on mercilessly, stopping at nothing.” It put fear into the hearts of the former exploiters and helped steel the ranks of the Red Army. “In the intellectual circles of the Party there probably were misgivings and shakings of heads. But the masses of workers and soldiers had not a minute’s doubt.”

To learn more about these events, Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution* is indispensable reading. The two-volume *Revolutionary Continuity* by Farrell Dobbs has several succinct chapters devoted to this subject as well.

Harris: U.S. out of Colombia

The following statement was issued September 6 by James Harris, Socialist Workers candidate for president of the United States.

My campaign demands that the U.S. government stop its massive military aid to the Colombian government, withdraw all U.S. military advisors from Colombia, and stop meddling in that Latin American nation’s political affairs. The \$1.3 billion military funding package recently adopted by the Clinton administration and Congress is a flagrant violation of Colombia’s national sovereignty and another step in U.S. military intervention in South America, such as the U.S. air base in neighboring Ecuador.

Washington is sending military helicopters, spying equipment, and U.S. troops to train Colombian army battalions—all in the name of “fighting drug traffickers.” That is one of the pretexts the U.S. government uses, along with fighting “terrorism,” to justify its policies of aggression abroad, and increasingly against the rights of working people at home.

In this case it is a thinly disguised cover for stepping up Washington’s military presence in Colombia and through the northwest region of South America, where the U.S. capitalists have big stakes. Their concern is not with drugs, peace, or pressing social problems. It is with controlling the vast natural resources, protecting the profits from their lucrative investments, and maintaining imperialist domination over

the entire region, which the U.S. billionaire families view as part of their “back yard.”

Under the banner of backing the Colombian regime’s “anti-narcotics” campaign, the Clinton administration is arming, financing, and training battalions of the Colombian army to fight the guerrillas who have been engaged in a 40-year-long conflict with the government. Army officials collaborate with right-wing death squads, tied to wealthy drug capitalists, in waging terror against Colombian peasants and workers.

The source of the social crisis and violence wracking Colombia is not the guerrillas but the capitalist system itself—which has generated record unemployment, the dispossession of small farmers, and the sucking of massive wealth out of that country through the debt squeeze by U.S. and other international banks. The drug business itself is a multibillion-dollar enterprise that enriches the ruling families.

The U.S. big-business press smears working people in Colombia as drug smugglers or at best as helpless victims needing Washington’s intervention. That’s a lie. Workers and peasants in Colombia are the only force that can confront the social catastrophe, as they are doing with their resistance today to the government’s austerity measures. Resolving the crisis and bringing real peace will only come through working people, as they gain political experience and leadership, organizing a mass revolutionary movement that ultimately takes political power from the capitalist minority.

Clinton pushes intervention in Colombia

Continued from front page
Representatives.

The \$1.3 billion in U.S. funds are part of the \$7.5 billion “Plan Colombia” of the government of President Andrés Pastrana, who declared, “Contrary to what people think—that it is a plan for war—it is a plan for peace.” He said 75 percent of the funds would go toward “social investments” rather the military forces that are battling the guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN).

The U.S. aid includes 60 helicopters and other military hardware and spying equipment. It also includes U.S. military “advisors” to train Colombian army battalions that supposedly will only target “antidrug” efforts. But both Washington and the Colombian regime blame the guerrillas for the drug business, making the “war on drugs” indistinguishable from the counterinsurgency war.

The army colludes with right-wing paramilitary death squads in waging terror against peasants and workers. Feigning human rights concern, U.S. Congress approved the military package to Colombia with amendments calling for “certification” that the regime met “human rights standards.”

The Clinton administration disposed of that fig leaf by signing a waiver of the amendments based on “national security.” As a *New York Times* article put it, “The decision was an acknowledgment that the United States must put up with rights offenses that might otherwise be considered in-

tolerable.” It added, “Human rights concerns are not likely to derail what promises to be a long-term involvement.”

“Go home Clinton, human rights violator!” was how demonstrators greeted the U.S. president in Cartagena. In Bogotá, the capital, some 2,000 unionists and students marched from the National University to the U.S. embassy.

The U.S. military aid “violates our national sovereignty,” declared a student leader, Pablo. It will be used against the guerrillas and to impose economic austerity policies, he said.

The U.S. intervention in Colombia has prompted expressions of concern even among other capitalist governments in Latin America. Plan Colombia became a major focus of a summit meeting of 12 South American presidents held at the end of August in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. Among the most concerned about the spillover effect of the conflict was the government of Brazil, which shares a border with Colombia. Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez warned of a “Vietnamization of the Amazon” region.

The social conflict in Colombia is fueled by an economic and social crisis of unprecedented proportions. Working people there face the highest unemployment in Latin America, officially at more than 20 percent. Hit by falling world market prices for coal, coffee, gold, and other export products, the economy shrank by 3.5 percent last year, while industrial production fell by 11.2 percent. Colombia’s foreign debt to U.S. and other international banks stands today at more than \$34 billion, nearly twice what it was a decade ago.

Workers in Australia coal region fight lockout

BY LINDA HARRIS

MOSSVALE, Australia—Into the second month of a lockout by Joy Mining Machinery—a lockout the union has built up into a strike—workers at Joy are winning some effective solidarity. They are maintaining picket lines and reaching out to fellow unionists to push back the antiunion drive by the bosses.

Teams of locked-out workers have been handing out leaflets at nearby coal mines and factories explaining the issues in their fight and asking for support. Delegates have traveled across Australia to speak to meetings of workers in Western Australia, Victoria, and Queensland, including union rallies from Melbourne to Orange, west of Sydney.

The 70 workers at Joy belong to three unions: the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), the Australian Workers' Union, and the Communications Electrical Plumbing Union.

Joy is a manufacturer of heavy mining equipment in this small town near coalfields south of Sydney. It is a subsidiary of Harnischfeger, a U.S. company based in Wisconsin. Joy also has plants in Rockhampton, Queensland, and Cardiff in Newcastle. On July 12 workers at both these plants went on strike for 24 hours in support of their fellow unionists at Moss Vale. Weekly donations from them and workers at other plants around Sydney have been coming in, including \$5,000 from coal miners.

'Solidarity: only way to break lockout'

"It's been wonderful support. It is the only way to break the lockout," commented Neville Watling, on the picket line at Joy. "Where would you be if you weren't in the union," he added. Workers pointed to the importance of solidarity action taken by coal miners. "The only mining machine that has been sent out was black banned," Watling explained, which means a ban on union labor working on the equipment.

The bosses have organized for staff engineers to carrying out production work inside the plant. After doing repairs on a continuous miner, they posed to have their photos taken opposite the picket line as it was trucked out. But when it arrived at the pit the miners union declared it unsafe and it is still sitting at the top of the pit.

Workers at Joy have been trying to win a new agreement since last December. They are fighting for a fair and reasonable wage increase, in opposition to the company's use of casual workers, for a guarantee from the company that their entitlements are secure, for a single contract to cover the whole site, and for protection of the current conditions of employment. The company has taken a hard antiunion line.

On June 30 the company sent a letter to all workers notifying them of their intention to end the lockout on certain conditions. An information leaflet put out by the Joy workers described the letter as industrial blackmail. "The gist of the notice was that if employees didn't negotiate in good faith after they returned to work then they would be locked out again for a further five weeks," stated a union fact sheet. Workers unanimously rejected the company proposal and

voted to strike. The lockout was reimposed.

On July 28, union members attended an Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) meeting to oppose the company's proposal to cancel their agreement. In a surprise move, the company withdrew this proposal and said that instead it wanted to move to arbitration and conciliation. Following negotiations between the company and the unions, a mass meeting of the Joy workers was held August 4, which unanimously rejected the company's proposal and voted for a one-week strike.

Joy, which gave no offer in writing, proposed a 5 percent pay raise over two years with no back pay. All other demands and

conditions were to go to arbitration. The bosses insisted on more than one agreement on site. "Blokies wanted something concrete in writing before going back. Once you go back it's hard to wind the campaign up again," said AMWU shop steward David Turner.

The company responded with threats of fines against individual workers, claiming the strike is illegal. Turner called it "waving the big stick. It's a last ditch attempt to get us back to work so they can arbitrate on our conditions."

During the lockout the company took action in the Supreme Court against the three unions. Following solidarity actions on the picket lines involving students, wharfies,

and construction workers, the company also took individual court action against Arthur Rorris, secretary of the South Coast Labour Council, and Andrew Ferguson, state secretary of the construction division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. Records of the Maritime Union of Australia and the Students Union have been subpoenaed as well.

Workers at Joy refuse to be intimidated and are demanding the withdrawal of legal action against Rorris and Ferguson before they return to work.

Linda Harris is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia,

Washington strikers mark anniversary confidently

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

SUNNYSIDE, Washington—From a block away truckers and others driving up the street in front of Valley Manufactured Housing could hear the chants and shouts. "Si se puede," "One day more," and "What do we want? A fair contract. When do we want it? Now."

Marking the one-year anniversary of their strike against Valley Manufactured Housing (VMH), union members organized an expanded picket line August 25, as well as a barbecue across the street at their picket shack. The 130 strikers have kept up daily picket lines for the past year at the front entrance to the plant.

The union distributed anniversary T-shirts reading "One day more" to the strikers and their supporters, including dozens who are now working inside the plant where they make modular homes. In June, a company-backed decertification election was defeated when the union won most of the workers inside the plant to vote for the Western Council of Industrial Workers, which is affiliated with the Carpenters union. Leading up to the vote, strikers organized house meetings with the replacement workers and won most of them to back their fight. Dozens of replacement workers have since joined the union. Instead of pushing back the union fight, the outcome of the decertification election ended up strengthening the struggle.

As the lunch break came to an end at least 20 people left the barbecue to return to work in the plant. Almost all of them wore the strike T-shirt. They joined others who had been eating their lunch in the parking lot, some sporting the T-shirt.

Macario Ramos worked as an exterior painter at Valley Manufactured Housing. Before going on strike he was at the top pay of \$8.50 an hour. "After one year we're still strong," he said. "Very few of us have gone back to work."

Ramos said the company refuses to negotiate with the union and has stuck by its unchanged offer that freezes wages and increases the out-of-pocket medical expenses to about \$150 per month. Valley Manufactured has also challenged the results of the decertification election, which was won by the union 192 to 69. The company organized two replacement workers to say that strik-



Militant/Ernie Mailhot

Union members at Valley Manufactured Housing downed tools one year ago in fight to defend union. Pickets' T-shirts in Spanish read "Un día más" (One day longer).

ers offered them large sums of money if they voted for the union. The National Labor Relations Board has heard the complaint and is expected to rule on the validity of the election in the next few weeks.

Ramos explained that the strikers didn't have to offer money to the replacements. Far from having to bribe workers, unionists found them receptive to the need for organization. "I was in about 15 house meetings and of all the meetings we had only two of them were unfriendly."

The bosses' frustrations with the continuing strength of the strike and the expanded picketing on the one-year anniversary showed itself as one of the bosses drove his truck dangerously close to the strikers, scraping against Rogelio Montes, pushing him to the side.

The strikers yelled at the boss but did not respond to his provocation. Montes, a central leader of the strike, said that many strikers had no confidence the police would do anything about this. "We complained to the police when this happened once before," he said, "but we were told it was the strikers'

fault because we were responsible to get out of the way."

Montes referred to the two locked-out Kaiser workers who had joined their expanded picket line, "If different fights come together it'll be easier to beat the bosses."

At the end of the workday several workers came out of the plant to talk to the strikers. Estanislao Figueroa explained that the broad support inside the plant for the determined strikers was shown by the fact that bosses said hardly a word to those wearing the strike shirts. Others said that the newest workers who wore the shirts were harassed somewhat.

Mario Herrera, a worker in the plant, said one of the bosses came by to talk to him. "He told me the union is demanding too much and that these workers are a bunch of asparagus pickers." Of the people inside who had worn the T-shirts he said, "You could feel that people were proud and that others would have liked to join in."

On the picket line, Ramos said the strikers will "continue the fight until we win a decent contract for all the workers."

LETTERS

Russian Revolution events

During a recent conversation with a friend, two very obscure events in Bolshevik history were mentioned.

The first was the assassination of the Romanovs. I have yet to find an objective investigation of the events, and I was wondering if you could please clarify what exactly took place or if you could recommend any literature on the subject.

The second event mentioned was a supposed election that took place after the Bolsheviks came to power in which Lenin lost. Supposedly, he ignored the results of the election and declared himself president. Needless to say, I have never heard of this mystery election.

Perhaps you could explain to what my friend was referring, or if this is just another made-up story to discredit the socialist revolution. G.M.

by e-mail

Book on Albizu Campos

The organizers of the event at Hunter College, New York, at which I spoke, which you covered [see "New York forum discusses Puerto Rico struggle," June 5 issue], circulated a flyer that stated incorrectly that I was the co-author with compañera Ruth Reynolds of *¡Yo acuso! Tortura y asesinato de don Pedro Albizu Campos* [I Accuse! The Torture and Murder of Pedro Albizu Campos].

If this were true, it would be an honor for me, but this is not the case.

The person who introduced me that evening omitted the error, and indicated that I am the sole author of the work referred to; and I assumed, erroneously, that the organizers' error would not spread.

I am concerned that this may have created the impression that I chose not to include the dear, deceased compañera as a co-author in order to steal the credit since she is

no longer with us.

Pedro Aponte Vázquez
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Editor's reply—We regret the error. The book by Aponte, on the U.S. government's mistreatment of Puerto Rican independence fighter Pedro Albizu Campos in its prisons, which destroyed his health and led to his death in 1965, has come out in an expanded Spanish-language edition (San Juan: Publicaciones René, 1998).

Engels on evolution

In his article on the scientific and political debates over teaching evolution (August 28 issue), Brian Williams correctly characterizes the two camps in the scientific debate as those supporting a materialist, orthodox-Darwinian viewpoint on evolution versus those who seek to inject a teleological "purpose" into the evolutionary process. But he

errs in lumping all those who think that the evolution of advanced life was "likely from the start" in the teleological camp.

Frederick Engels in his introduction to *The Dialectics of Nature* explains that the evolution of organic beings with a brain capable of conscious thought was—at some point in space and time—not just "likely," but an "iron necessity," as certain as is the eventual extinction of all terrestrial life. And there is nothing whatsoever teleological in Engels's view.

Unlike Engels, Stephen Jay Gould argues in his book *Full House* that there is nothing lawful or necessary about the evolution of higher, more complex organisms from lower ones. This fallacy of Gould's provides the teleological 'supporters' of evolution with the opening they crave.

While Gould's books are a rich source for working people seeking

a materialist and scientific understanding of the world, the scientific insights offered by the revolutionary fighter Engels a hundred years earlier remain unsurpassed. I recommend *The Dialectics of Nature* to anyone following this debate, in particular the introduction, "The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man," and the small sections on "Chance and Necessity" and "Causality."

James Robb
Auckland, New Zealand

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Natives in Canada fight for rights

BY JOANNE PRITCHARD

MONTREAL—Mi'kmaq in Burnt Church, New Brunswick, have launched a fight to defend their right to trap lobster. And in northern Quebec, a barricade set up by Algonquins has put a temporary stop to clear-cutting of the forest they depend on for food through fishing and hunting.

Twenty-nine of the 34 Mi'kmaq and Maliseet reserves have signed one-year agreements with the federal government in Ottawa regulating lobster fishing. But Burnt Church residents voted 308 to 28 during an all-day referendum August 9 to reject federal management. The next day they asserted their rights by putting out more than the 40 traps they are authorized to set during the fall food season, claiming the right to set upward of 5,000 traps in the Miramichi Bay. Federal Department of Fisheries officers in patrol boats had already seized 2,000.

The Mi'kmaqs, in small open craft, have confronted the police on the sea. Two Native boats were rammed and sunk August 29, forcing the occupants to jump into the water to avoid being hit by the federal vessel. Burnt Church residents are demanding that criminal charges be laid. Four Natives have been arrested so far for obstruction of justice.

The confrontations are taking place in the wake of the September 1999 Supreme Court decision ruling that Natives have the right to sell fish caught outside the commercial fishing season. The ruling was based on a 1760 treaty between the British government and Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy peoples, covering practically the entire Atlantic coast of Canada. However, in a subsequent decision, the justices wrote that this did not mean that "the Mi'kmaq are guaranteed an open season in the fisheries" and that the federal government has every right to regulate a fishery in accordance with conservation principles.

Mi'kmaqs from Quebec's Listuguj First Nation drove to Burnt Church to bring their support. In Belleville, Ontario, about 30 Tyendinaga Mohawks blocked a major commuter bridge to support the Mi'kmaqs. Chief Matthew Coon Come, recently elected chief of the Assembly of First Nations, also went to Burnt Church. He demanded the government "call off [the] troops." Some 100 federal fisheries officers are on call in New Brunswick.

In 1999, Federal Department of Fisheries minister Herb Dhaliwal ruled that the Mi'kmaqs from Burnt Church would be limited to 600 lobster traps among 1,450 people during the commercial fishing season and 40 during a fall food fishery. In the same area, commercial fishermen are allowed 325 traps each during the commercial fishing season. Dhaliwal has said he will not negotiate with Burnt Church residents until they stop setting lobster traps.

In the neighboring province of Nova Scotia, four Indian Brook band members were arrested by federal agents and accused of obstruction of justice. They had followed

the example set in Burnt Church of asserting their fishing rights. Their lawyer said the decision by Department of Fisheries minister Dhaliwal that determines when and where natives are authorized to fish is "unconstitutional and a violation of our treaty rights. We want this decision to be reversed."

In northwestern Quebec, Algonquins set up a barricade to prevent clear-cutting by the multinational company Domtar. The company agreed to move operations elsewhere while negotiations take place on who has title to the 389 square kilometers of forest the Algonquins depend on. The Algonquins aim to maintain their barricade, not to block traffic, but as a checkpoint "until the land-claim issue is settled," explained Jacob Wawatie.

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

Communist League candidate defends Native rights

The following is a statement issued by John Steele, Communist League candidate for mayor of Toronto.

The August 29 attack by armed officers of the Department of Fisheries against Native lobster fishermen from the Burnt Church reserve in New Brunswick should be seen as a threat not only to the national rights of Canada's 1 million Native people, but also to the democratic rights of all workers and working farmers from one end of the country to the other.

Two Native boats were rammed and sunk. It was only luck that the Mi'kmaq fishermen were not seriously injured or killed. Working people should support the Mi'kmaq demand that the officers who carried out the attack be charged with attempted murder.

Ottawa's use of deadly force against the Mi'kmaq people is a denial of their national right to use the lobster fishery to make a living. This right was recognized by a 1999 Supreme Court ruling based on a 1760 treaty with the British government. All claims that Native fishing threaten the lobster stock are a fake and a fraud. The threat comes from

the capitalist-owned fishing fleets backed by Ottawa.

All levels of government are involved in the decades-long effort to force Native people into submission. The attack against the Mi'kmaq took place almost one week before the fifth anniversary of the killing of Native activist Dudley George by the Ontario Provincial Police at a Native burial ground at Ipperwash, Ontario. The Ontario government, which is deeply implicated in the killing, has refused the demand for a public inquiry. The Toronto City Council, led by Mayor Melvin Lastman, also stands against Native rights with its decision, over the objections of the Native people in Northern Ontario, to ship garbage from Toronto

to an abandoned mine shaft on their territory, creating an environmental disaster waiting to happen.

The resistance by the Mi'kmaq to Ottawa's terror tactics, the continued efforts of the Stoney Point Native people to win justice for Dudley George, and the continuing protests in Toronto streets over the August 9 killing of Otto Vass following a beating at the hands of the Toronto police show that the increased use of cop violence against working people by Canada's ruling rich—violence that will more and more become the norm against strikers on picket lines—is not going unanswered. Support for the just demands of the Mi'kmaqs by all working people will strengthen this fight.

Farmers in France block roads to protest skyrocketing fuel prices



Farmers, truckers, and taxi drivers blocked highways throughout France September 1 to protest high fuel prices. The actions came one day after fishermen ended a three-day blockade of ports to win concessions from the government. Truckers said they will block oil depots until diesel fuel is rolled back 20 percent.

Vancouver phone strikers make gains

BY BONITA MURDOCK

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Unionized workers at TELUS, the largest phone company in this Canadian province, won a significant victory after a two-week fight to defend job classifications and pay scales. The Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) represents workers at TELUS both here and in Alberta. At stake was the right of workers to comprehensive training and higher pay for performing the complex work of order processing. Since the merger

of two companies in Alberta and British Columbia to become TELUS, the bosses have stepped up attempts to downgrade the work done by the customer service representatives across the company.

A majority of union members walked off the job August 17, after management at the New Westminster Call Centre suspended eight workers for refusing to do work for which they were not trained and that belongs in a higher job classification. The workers gathered in the cafeteria to discuss the situ-

ation. Over that day and the next, several hundred workers around the province also began study sessions to try to find a way to convince management that their methods would not work. The workers agreed to return to work when the company offered to sit down with the union for discussions.

But it soon became clear that management had no intention of changing their approach. Following an August 22 attempt to force the support team to do the contested work, a full-scale work stoppage by thousands of workers spread across British Columbia. An estimated 80 percent of all TWU members in the province took part in one way or another.

The Canadian Labour Relations Board (CLRB) was called in to negotiate the dispute. After a meeting, the CLRB ruled that while the TWU members must return to work, management was obliged to refrain from reassigning the disputed work during a "cooling off period" of at least 15-days. The ruling stated that the issue was to be resolved through union-management meetings and an independent arbitrator was assigned to monitor the entire process.

Although the fight is not over on this issue, this struggle has demonstrated the solidarity that exists within the ranks of the union, and the power of the union when the members make a decision to stand and fight for their rights.

Bonita Murdock member of the Telecommunications Workers Union at the New Westminster Call Centre.

VW strike in Puebla, Mexico, worries bosses

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

On August 31, one week after government intervention forced them to end their strike of five days, 12,600 workers at the Volkswagen auto manufacturing plant in the Mexican state of Puebla won a 21 percent overall wage increase. Prior to the settlement, the workers at Volkswagen—reputedly the highest paid in the industry—earned \$2.30 an hour.

The workers struck the plant on August 18, hanging black and red strike banners on the factory gates. The union at the plant, affiliated to the National Workers Union (UNT) formed in 1998, initially demanded a 35 percent wage rise in response to VW's offer of 9.2 percent.

Volkswagen employs around 16,000 total in the Puebla plant, its only North American factory and one that functions prima-

rily as a platform for exports into the United States. It is the sole producer worldwide of the top-selling updated "Beetle" model.

Facing losses of \$5 million for each day of the stoppage, the bosses threatened that the "demands of the union compromise dramatically the future growth of the firm...and seriously affect the confidence of investors."

On day five of the strike, the federal government ordered the striking workers to return to work or face being fired. In response, 1,000 workers rallied at the government palace in the city of Puebla August 29.

Telephone workers, flight attendants, transit workers, and other unionists joined with the striking auto workers. The UNT threatened to launch solidarity strikes in a number of other plants. A "mood of confrontation persisted," according to James Smith of the *Los Angeles Times*.

The 21 percent pay raise announced one week later breaks down into a 13 percent direct wage hike, 2 percent in loans, 1 percent in aid for school supplies for the workers' children, and 5 percent increase in payments described as "productivity incentives."

"It is most likely that other labor unions are going to try to follow this example," stated Mauricio González Gómez, director of the Grupo Economistas y Asociados. "But it might not be a healthy signal."

Journalist Smith also noted the apprehension felt by the capitalists in Mexico and by the imperialists in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere.

"President-elect Vicente Fox could face more aggressive worker pressure for a bigger slice of the...economic pie after years of labor belt tightening," he wrote.