

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

South African metalworkers
walk out to back UMWA strike

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Unions, civil rights groups build rally in Washington

BY GREG McCARTAN
AND ALYSON KENNEDY

WASHINGTON, D.C. — An August 28 March on Washington for "Jobs, Justice, and Peace" is gaining momentum among civil rights organizations, labor unions, religious institutions, and student groups. March organizers expect some 300,000 people to attend.

The demonstration will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, an action at the height of the civil rights movement at which Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. Within the next two years Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"The event is important because it demands jobs, justice, and peace," said Rosemary Cloud in a phone interview. Cloud is a volunteer at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta. "We still have the same issues that we had 30 years ago. Even though Black people have better opportunities, we still have racism; we still have disparities in income with whites; we still have poorer health care."

"Working people, unionists, and students should attend," Cloud said, "because the march will unify working people and the march has a singleness of purpose."

Cochairs of the march mobilization committee are Coretta Scott King, chief executive officer of the King Center; Rev. Joseph Lowery, who heads the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Benjamin

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'Militant' readers plan campaign to increase sales

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Hundreds of union activists, students, and other supporters of the *Militant* will kick off a campaign to expand sales of the socialist press at the August 28 March on Washington for Jobs, Justice, and Peace, as well as at street corners, campuses, plant gates, and other union and political events around the world that day.

Militant distributors have found real interest in the paper from many people, including activists in the U.S.-Cuba Friendship caravan, young people on the front lines defending abortion clinics, and striking coal miners. Many *Militant* supporters are helping lead these and other struggles and reporting about them in the paper. As a result the *Militant*, its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* have earned a hearing among workers and youth who are attracted to these fights.

Over the course of the 10-week circulation effort, readers will aim to sign up 3,000 people to subscribe to the *Militant* and 700 to *Perspectiva Mundial*. At the same time, they will work to introduce even broader numbers of people to the socialist press by increasing sales of single issues of both

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Clinton austerity budget is welcomed on Wall St.

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Big business breathed a sigh of relief as the U.S. Senate approved President Bill Clinton's five-year budget.

The *Washington Post* editors said Clinton had made "the country eat its spinach." London's *Financial Times* claimed the passage "should prove something of a landmark in recent American political history." "It's time to share a little sacrifice for the good of the nation," declared *Business Week* in its August 16 issue.

Wall Street billionaires reacted favorably as well, sending the Dow Jones industrial stock average to a record high. The bond markets rallied too, as interest rates dropped and bond prices rose. "The mar-

NEWS ANALYSIS

kets just may be rewarding the first serious attempt in more than a decade to control runaway government debt," said *Business Week*.

Despite an upward trend in gold prices, which some economists say will bring a new round of inflation, the evidence points to a deflationary trend worldwide with no explosion in interest rates. U.S. consumer prices rose 0.1 percent in July, following no increase in June and 0.1 percent in May.

Newspaper columnists and "experts," however, were quick to warn that working people should not expect things to get bet-

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AP/Wide World Photos

President Bill Clinton and Senate Republican leader Robert Dole after dining together. Despite Dole's charade of opposition to budget, both agree on "sacrifices" to make workers, farmers, and small businesspeople pay for capitalist economic crisis.

Defense campaign wins temporary stay of execution for Texas inmate

BY PATTI IYAMA

HOUSTON — Gary Graham, a 12-year death row inmate fighting for his life, has been granted a third stay of execution by a state appeals court.

Judge Peter Lowry, of the state district court in Austin, ordered the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles August 13 to grant him a hearing "because under federal constitutional law and under Texas law there is no other mechanism to prevent the execution of an innocent person."

Graham was scheduled to be executed August 17. Lowry's temporary injunction gives the state of Texas until September 29 to prepare its appeal against the clemency hearing.

Gary Graham Justice Coalition leader Jew Don Boney said, "We have some more time to work but we are still in danger of this execution being carried out."

Graham's case has become a national focal point for the anti-death penalty forces. Celebrities Danny Glover and Kenny Rogers; the archbishop of the Galveston-Houston diocese and numerous other clergymen; the NAACP; the Congressional Black Caucus; and Amnesty International have joined in demanding a new trial. Weekly meetings of the Gary Graham Justice Coalition involve between 60 and 200 activists



Supporters of Gary Graham at June press conference demand the state give him a chance to present evidence proving he is not guilty.

Militant/Robbie Scherr

from Houston and around the country.

Graham was convicted in 1981 of the robbery and murder of Bobby Lambert. Graham, who was 17 at the time, was defended by a court-appointed attorney who assumed he was guilty, according to a new affidavit filed by an investigator. The lawyer did not investigate any of the four alibi witnesses whom Graham named or three of the eye-

witnesses to the murder.

Graham was convicted solely on the testimony of a single witness to the crime, who testified she saw the killer's face for no more than a second. Since the trial, six witnesses have come forward to swear that the killer they saw could not have been Graham. Five more have placed Graham elsewhere that night, far from the scene of the crime.

The eyewitnesses' names were kept from the defense by the prosecutor. In addition, the prosecutor suppressed the ballistics report proving that the fatal bullet did not come from Graham's gun.

Under Texas law, however, new evidence in a capital murder case cannot be introduced more than 30 days after a conviction.

Death sentences for people who later are proven not guilty are common. Just in the last five months, four once-con-

demned prisoners have been released after spending years on death row. Two of them, in Alabama and Texas, had been convicted on fabricated evidence and perjured testimony. The third, in Texas, was convicted because of evidence that was withheld. The fourth, in Maryland, was exonerated by DNA analysis, a technology that was un-

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IN BRIEF

Nigerians protest military rule

The streets of Nigeria's largest cities were empty as millions of workers stayed home August 12 and 13 to protest military rule and the government's annulment of presidential elections in June. The protests were called by the Campaign for Democracy, a coalition of 42 trade union and human rights groups, to force Gen. Ibrahim Babangida to honor his pledge to step down by August 27. The government ordered all federal employees to return to work or be fired. Vice-president Augustus Aikhomu warned that the military may impose a state of emergency.

Meanwhile, the oil workers' union threatened to shut down the industry at the end of the month if Babangida does not hand over power to Moshood Abiola, the declared winner of the elections. The bank and textile workers' unions are also planning strikes for August 27 if the military remains in power.

Egypt court clears 24 of murder

An Egyptian civilian court cleared 24 men of murder charges August 14 in the 1990 assassination of Egypt's speaker of parliament, citing evidence that some confessions were obtained through torture. Fourteen of the accused were fully acquitted, and the remaining 10 were sentenced to 5-15 years in prison on related charges. The men are accused of being members of an Islamic religious group, allegedly led by Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, that the Egyptian government blames for many of 170 killings of government officials and others in the last two years. Meanwhile, a military court opened trials of another 53 people accused of belonging to Vanguard of Conquest, a group opposed to the government in Cairo. Egyptian military courts have sentenced 21 men to death in the last six months on charges of membership in Islamic religious groups.

Washington harasses Chinese ship

Since July 23 Washington has been harassing a Chinese cargo ship, claiming it is exporting raw materials to Iran that are used to produce mustard and nerve gas. Beijing has bitterly denied the charges and demands compensation for the "utterly unjustifiable bullying" by the U.S. government. The vessel has been anchored off Oman in the Persian Gulf, unable to receive permission to dock. The Chinese government said Washington pressured governments in the area to keep the ship

out of their ports, putting the crew and the vessel at risk. The U.S. Navy has shadowed and photographed the ship with warships and aircraft.

The U.S. and Chinese governments are now discussing a compromise that would allow a third neutral party to inspect the vessel.

U.S. to label Sudan terrorist

U.S. president Bill Clinton plans to impose trade and other sanctions on Sudan by putting it on Washington's list of "terrorist nations." The State Department claims to have proof that the Sudanese mission to the United Nations was part of an alleged plot to bomb the United Nations building and other sites in New York. No evidence was provided. ABC News reported that U.S. police agencies have kept Sudan's mission under surveillance. The reported claimed Siraj Yousif, counselor to the Sudanese mission, and Ahmed Mohamed, the third secretary, are Sudanese intelligence officers tied to the alleged plot.

Gov't suspected in Peru graves

Boxes of bones that had been burned and broken were recently found in four shallow graves outside Lima, Peru. Human rights groups, opposition members of Congress, and others believe they are the remains of at least some of the nine students and a teacher who disappeared from La Cantuta University in Lima last year and were allegedly executed by the military. President Alberto Fujimori, who imposed rule by decree in an April 1992 military coup, claimed the remains were victims of Shining Path. Dincote, Peru's "anti-terrorist" police, fabricated evidence to back



Protest in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, against the victimization of street children. The sign held by Yvonne Bezerra reads, "This vigil of one hour a day will continue until no more children live on the streets of Rio." On July 23 a gang of off-duty cops shot seven children to death. This was the latest massacre in a series of attacks that last year claimed the lives of at least 400 street children in Rio alone. Cops or hired thugs are responsible for most of the killings. Due to the economic crisis in Brazil, 200,000 children nationwide sleep in the streets.

the hijacking but were subdued by force. Witnesses traveled to Miami from Cuba to be interviewed by U.S. prosecutors and possibly appear before a grand jury. Right-wing Cuban-American groups in Miami have organized a campaign to pressure the Justice Department to drop the charges.

Washington knew Tokyo would surrender before atomic bombing

The U.S. government knew that officials of the Japanese army were willing to surrender more than three months before President Harry Truman devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs. Newly declassified documents show that through spying on allies and foes during World War II Washington obtained the report of a German diplomat returning from talks with a high-ranking Japanese naval officer. The diplomat said that "large sections of the Japanese armed forces would not regard with disfavor an American request for capitulation even if the terms were hard."

Creationism in the classroom

A school board in Vista, California, voted 3-2 to require the teaching of biblical creationism and weaken the teaching of evolution in public schools. State educational policies and court rulings defending separation of church and state forbid the teaching of creationism in science classes. The new policy calls for "discussion of divine creation" at "appropriate times" in history and literature classes. It requires science teachers to question the theory of evolution in the classroom. Many teachers said they objected to the new requirements and predicted they will have little effect in the classroom.

Report cites abuse of immigrants

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported that immigrants held at the federal immigration detention center in Manhattan face appalling conditions, are subject to arbitrary isolation in roach-infested cells and are denied effective access to legal aid. Some are held for months, or even years, after they volunteer to be deported. The ACLU secured the release of one woman who had proof, ignored for 14 months, that she was a U.S. citizen. In the facility's first year, about 15 guards were dismissed for physically and sexually abusing detainees. The report concludes that these conditions are typical of those plaguing Immigration and Naturalization Service detention centers across the United States.

Mideast peace talks may resume

The 21-month-old negotiations among several Middle Eastern governments and Palestinian representatives may resume in Washington, D.C., in late August.

Three Palestinian negotiators, Hanan Ashrawi, Faissal al-Husseini, and Saeb Erekat, tendered their resignations after a dispute with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasir Arafat. The PLO rejected the resignations and appointed them to the organization's leadership committee directing the talks with Israel. This is the first time negotiators from the occupied territories have held official PLO posts.

— PAT SMITH

THE MILITANT

Somalia: From 'humanitarian' intervention to imperialist war

Week after week the 'Militant' has exposed the myth that U.S. or UN troops went to Somalia to feed the hungry. As U.S. helicopters and machine guns rain death on Somali demonstrators, the 'Militant' tells the truth. Don't miss a single issue!



Somali youth cries with pain as he is detained by U.S. marine in Mogadishu.

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U.S. troops open fire on Somalis at rally

BY HILDA CUZCO

Eight months after the intervention of 28,000 U.S. soldiers in the Horn of Africa, allegedly to feed hungry Somalis, Washington is being drawn into a small-scale war against the Somali people. U.S. troops opened fire August 12 against hundreds of people participating in a rally in Mogadishu.

According to the *Washington Post*, three U.S. army vehicles armed with M-16 assault rifles and an M-60 machine gun drove through a rally in support of Gen. Mohamed Farah Aidid. They opened fire against the Somalis and sprayed them with Mace.

Despite denials by U.S. military officials that there were any injuries, Somalis showed foreign journalists three wounded young men shot by U.S. troops. Minutes after the shooting, U.S. Black Hawk helicopters swooped down low over the rally, further angering the demonstrators. Helicopters continued the air harassment throughout the evening.

U.S. Army major David Stockwell, United Nations military spokesman in Somalia, denied the provocations by the U.S. troops and instead blamed the Somalis, saying some had thrown stones. "They apparently felt a threat," Stockwell told reporters. "The patrol was not out of line by firing over the heads of the people."

However, journalists covering the rally — including a cameraman for Reuters television — asserted that the first shots came from the U.S. patrol as the last of the three-vehicle convoy drove through the crowd and was already out of throwing range of rocks.

"Those guys were in no danger at the time they fired," said Michael Maren, a correspondent for the *Village Voice*, a New York weekly. "It was after the Americans started firing that a couple of shots went off from the crowd. It was clearly a provocation."

Reporters said U.S. troops could have easily recognized a pro-Aidid rally by the anti-U.S. government and pro-Aidid banners displayed in the stadium grounds. A photographer for Agence France-Presse took pictures of a U.S. soldier spraying the

crowd with a can of Mace as his vehicle drove through the rally.

Clinton's 'appropriate action'

The August 12 attack by U.S. troops on Somali demonstrators came a few days after four U.S. soldiers were killed when their Humvee vehicles struck a land mine in Mogadishu. This brought to 12 the number of U.S. soldiers killed since the intervention last December.

Following the incident, President Bill Clinton warned Washington would "take appropriate action." He also defended the UN military role in Somalia, declaring "I still believe the United Nations mission is well-conceived and properly undertaken." Senate Republican leader Robert Dole responded saying that Washington should rethink its role in Somalia. On NBC's "Meet the Press" Dole said he might support the withdrawal of U.S. troops. "I would hate to give up on this mission," he said, but "I think it's time to reassess it."

Meanwhile, House Speaker Thomas Foley, a Democrat, said Clinton should take stronger steps against General Aidid. There should be increased efforts to find Aidid "and neutralize his forces," he said on the CNN program "Newsmaker Sunday."

Major U.S. dailies supported Clinton's proposed action. An August 10 *New York Times* editorial stated, "It would be regrettable if Washington rushed to withdraw American forces after the first fatalities."

U.S. may send special commandos

Administration officials contend the four U.S. soldiers died by a remote-control bomb — not a random mine blast — in an ambush masterminded by Aidid.

Washington is now considering sending commando units to Somalia to search Mogadishu for Aidid. A U.S. official said "the use of special forces and other creative military operations" were being discussed and that the use of commandos from other countries was being considered.

U.S. State Department official David



U.S. army patrol, equipped with M-16 assault rifles and M-60 machine gun, fired on Somalis at August 12 rally in Mogadishu. A UN spokesman claimed no one was injured but Somalis showed reporters three young men with gunshot wounds.

Shinn told reporters the "major problem" now confronting U.S. forces in Somalia is dealing with Aidid. "I think it is very important that he be removed from the equation."

UN officials also blame the Somali leader for the June 5 deaths of 24 Pakistani members of the UN military force. The confrontation between Somalis and UN troops began as Pakistani soldiers tried to seize control of Radio Mogadishu, which had been broadcasting statements against the occupation of Somalia by UN troops.

UN envoy Jonathan Howe, a retired U.S. Navy admiral, issued a warrant for Aidid's arrest and posted a \$25,000 reward for his capture, saying he was acting on the UN resolution that calls for the arrest and trial of those responsible for the June 5 ambush. A high-ranking U.S. officer said, "We didn't want to make a folk hero out of this guy."

Of the 22,000 UN troops in Somalia, 4,000 are from the United States, the second-largest contingent after the Pakistani unit. An additional 1,200 U.S. combat

troops remain under U.S. general Thomas Montgomery, who in practice leads the UN military operations there.

Rome, Washington disagree

Disagreements between Washington and Rome have sharpened over handling of the operations. In a press conference in Rome, Brig. Gen. Bruno Loi, head of the Italian contingent of 2,600 in Somalia, said his troops would leave Mogadishu because of disagreements with the U.S. command. He called the move a "redeployment," not a "withdrawal," adding that it would take place in early September.

Italian defense minister Fabio Fabbri described UN military commanders in Somalia as "Rambos." Although he did not specify to whom he was referring, the Italian minister has publicly clashed with Admiral Howe over tactics in Somalia, a former Italian colony. Fabbri said he would pull his troops out of Mogadishu as "an act of dignity" and that Italy could no longer remain the "hostage of Admiral Howe."

Meanwhile, several U.S. soldiers in Somalia have expressed anger and confusion over their role there. In an interview with the *Washington Post*, in Mogadishu, Spec. Michael Matthews of South Carolina was asked whether the 4,000 U.S. troops are accomplishing anything. He answered flatly, "No, I don't. We don't have any need to be over here. They don't want us over here. We're getting rocked, stoned. . . . The only convoy I want to go on is the one going down the street to the airport" to go home.

"They say we're doing a humanitarian mission," said Major Phillips, an army staff sergeant from Arkansas. "But what are we doing? We aren't taking food to the Somalis. We aren't doing nothing for the Somalis but dodging bullets."

Clinton maintains threat to bomb Bosnia

BY PAT SMITH

Several thousand rightist Serb forces withdrew from two strategic mountains overlooking the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, three days after the original deadline set by United Nations negotiators. The August 15 pull-out marks the first time the rightist forces, led by Radovan Karadzic, have given up any of the territory they seized in the 16-month-old war. Through military superiority Karadzic's troops have conquered more than 70 percent of Bosnia.

Washington threatened air strikes if the rightist forces did not pull back. "Occupation of those two mountains is a critical element of the Serbs' ability to strangle Sarajevo," said Mike McCurry, a U.S. State Department spokesperson. U.S. officials said withdrawal from the mountains hadn't ended the siege of the city because adequate relief supplies were still not being allowed in.

NATO ambassadors had reached agreement to bomb Bosnian Serb forces but hadn't established what actions would trigger air strikes. Launching of a NATO attack still requires another meeting of member governments and approval by UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Gen. Francis Briquemont, commander of UN forces in Bosnia, continues to voice his reluctance to carry out bombing raids in Bosnia.

Washington backed down from earlier claims that UN Security Council resolutions gave the U.S. government and its allies the power to act on their own initiative and agreed to wait for Boutros-Ghali's approval before bombing. But the conflict over who has ultimate authority over military intervention continues.

McCurry said Washington considered that the formal warning, called for in the NATO agreement setting out rules on air strikes in Bosnia, had already been issued to the Serb forces. Other U.S. officials said the threatened use of force against rightist Serb forces is designed to tilt the

balance in negotiations in Geneva.

The Bosnian government began boycotting the talks August 1 to protest the occupation of the two mountains by the armed forces of Karadzic's Serbian Democratic Party, seized during an offensive after a cease-fire agreement was signed in July. Before the suspension of talks, negotiators from the Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian governments, as well as Karadzic, had agreed on the constitutional framework to carve Bosnia into three autonomous republics divided by nationality. But agreement on where borders should be drawn has not been reached.

ANC leads fight against violence in S. Africa

BY PAT SMITH

"Urgent and drastic measures by all our people, black and white, to end the scourge of wanton murder of almost 500 people in the East Rand over the past few days, mass destruction of property, displacement of families and resurgence of train violence in the PWV [Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Ver-eeniging] region can no longer be delayed," said the African National Congress (ANC) in an August 11 statement.

The ANC is leading efforts to end the violence sweeping South Africa's townships and build a nonracist, nonsexist, democratic republic. More than 580 people were killed in July 1993 and 220 in the first 11 days of August, the highest since August 1990, when 709 people were killed.

The violence escalated after democratic forces announced April 27, 1994, as the date for the country's first one-person, one-vote elections. Popo Molefe of the ANC National Working Committee told supporters August 5 in Sydney, Australia, that the elections would "give to legitimate representatives of the people the power to control those guns that are being used to kill the people of South Africa. We can not delay it on the basis that there is violence."

On August 16 negotiators in Geneva agreed in principle to demilitarize Sarajevo and place it under control of UN troops. This would take effect only after agreement is reached on division of Bosnia.

Meanwhile, the British government began evacuating 41 war victims from Sarajevo that London, Stockholm, and Dublin have offered to provide with medical care. The government of Italy offered to evacuate 450 people who are seriously wounded. But there are an estimated 50,000 wounded people in Sarajevo with scant medical care available.

The ANC has rejected Archbishop Desmond Tutu's plea for an international peace-keeping force and instead called on constitutional negotiators to immediately set up a multiparty peacekeeping force to replace the current South African security forces and end the township violence.

De Klerk shunned the idea, saying, "such a force can never replace the security forces." The army and police, however, have lost all credibility among township residents, who frequently report seeing the police driving attackers back to local hostels. The security forces are blamed for deliberately fomenting conflict to sabotage the transition to a democratic republic.

At an August 5 rally of 7,000 in a stadium in Katlehong, where some of the worst violence has taken place, ANC president Nelson Mandela suggested that a joint delegation of ANC and government leaders go immediately through the township. But government officials said they all had previous engagements.

Mandela criticized de Klerk's response to the violence. The National Party leader had sent 2,000 troops to the Black townships, where they smashed through barricades put up by residents for self-defense and con-

ducted house-to-house searches without consulting the community.

Mandela renewed his demand for 24-hour guards around hostels where some attacks have been organized. The ANC also condemned as irresponsible de Klerk's threat to impose emergency rule to end the violence.

"You must understand, the solution is peace, reconciliation, political tolerance," Mandela told the crowd in Katlehong. "We must try to win them over," he said referring to supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). "Give them a shoulder to lean on."

Acknowledging that some ANC supporters have participated in the killings, Mandela said, "If you are going to kill innocent people, children, elderly people, women, then you don't belong to the African National Congress."

The ANC took further steps against violence August 8 by issuing a joint statement by ANC and IFP youth leaders that said, "No member of one of our parties must from today onwards engage in conflicts with members of either party."

In its August 11 statement the ANC reiterated that it "unequivocally rejects the no-

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Clinton's flood relief leaves most working farmers devastated

BY JON HILLSON

REDWOOD FALLS, Minnesota — Gene Swoboda, who farms the same rich land his great-grandfather homesteaded here in southwestern Minnesota in the 1880s, expresses concern as he watches wheat roll under the blades of his 12-year-old Case combine.

The \$6.2 billion flood relief bill recently passed in Washington, he says, "is a drop in the bucket for the farmer."

Like all such legislation, it favors the largest, wealthiest farmers. "Those with bigger acreage get bigger money," Swoboda says.

Some \$2.2 billion in the package is set aside to compensate farmers for crop loss, a figure Swoboda and many other working farmers say will not cover the cost of inputs — seed, fertilizer, herbicide, and fuel — let alone make up for lost income.

Amid stunted crops, and in fields still resembling lakes, farmers fear that a likely early frost — anything before October 10 — will devastate harvests of crops planted late because of rains and flooding.

This will leave farmers without an income for 1993.

Minnesota corn production is already expected to drop 38 percent, the lowest level since the drought of 1988. Only 4 percent of the predicted corn and soybean crop is considered "good," according to the Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service.

The fall harvest is "crunch time," explained Delores Swoboda, president of Groundswell, a family farmers' organization here. "And then comes the spring, with no money for inputs for the 1994 crop."

"Once you get behind," Swoboda said, "it's hard to catch up. It's like working in a factory, living on your check from week to week. What happens when you miss a few weeks, when you get behind in your house payment? That's what people in the city have to understand."

"The media makes it sound like everything's okay now with the farmer. But it's horrible. The economy is a disaster, and now it's getting worse with the floods and the crops," he added.

Some plans being aired include federal loans with 4 percent interest to farmers.

"That's just another way for the government to get its hooks into you," said Carroll Nearmyer, a soybean and hog farmer in Prairie City, Iowa.

"We don't need disaster loans; we need grants to make up for losses," remarked Nearmyer, a vice-president of the American Agricultural Movement (AAM).

Larry Ginter, a Rhodes, Iowa, corn and soybean farmer said any loans should be

made on "very favorable conditions, payable for a very long time: 30 or 40 years."

The current situation, he pointed out, leaves family farmers "in the same situation as the factory worker making \$5 or \$6 an hour, without health insurance. What do you do when you get sick?"

Crop insurance 'a joke'

Crop insurance, which some farmers carry, has long failed to protect any but the richest farmers, Nearmyer said.

"If you couldn't plant because of the rain, you got nothing, no matter how much 'crop insurance' you had, because seed has to be in the ground," he added.

This makes crop insurance "a joke," according to Ginter.

A maximum of 75 percent of the crop can be insured, but most farmers get coverage on 35 to 50 percent of their acreage. The premium is based on historic production on the insured land.

The insurance, sold by private agents, is sustained by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

To trigger payments, farmers must first lose a minimum of 25 percent of their crop.

"Let's say you're insured for 35 percent of your crop and that's what you lose," Delores Swoboda says as she drives a reporter through devastated fields in Redwood and Renville counties, known for having the richest topsoil in Minnesota. Farm after farm is pockmarked with crater-shaped stretches of bare, drowned earth, ringed by scrubby corn and dwarfed soybean.

"You've insured 400 acres, and you've paid \$8 an acre, \$3,000 or so," she continues. "But suppose it was so wet you couldn't plant 15 percent. The crop insurance subtracts that amount. According to them, you only lost 20 percent of the crop. And you don't get anything for the premium you paid."

Closer to rivers, the premiums are higher — and out of range.

The several-hundred-acre soybean farm of George and Cindy Schottenbauer, drowned by rains and flooded by the Minnesota River, is ruined for this year's harvest. Swoboda explained as we stopped to look at the expanse of water covering their fields.

Provisions of the new federal aid program pay out 65 percent of "target price on losses," the law states, above 35 percent of the crop if the farmer is insured, 40 percent if they are not insured.

"So in the Schottenbauers' case," Swoboda said, "if he's lucky, he gets 65 percent payment on the 65 percent of the crop he lost, if they pay him for what he didn't plant. That's 42 cents on the dollar."



Militant/Jon Hillson

Gene and Delores Swoboda point out flood damage to wheat field on their farm in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Clinton's \$6.2 billion flood relief bill "is a drop in the bucket for the farmer," said Gene Swoboda. The bill favors capitalist farmers.

That, she noted, may cover most inputs, at best. The Schottenbauer case is not unique.

Gene Swoboda's 400-acre farm has as much as \$20,000 in input costs and "most farms around here are a couple of thousand acres," he stated.

The federal disaster assistance law caps aid at \$100,000.

Even getting that amount can mean an entire year without income.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported August 16 that the Agriculture Department is now "preparing proposals to boost farmer participation in the federal crop and insurance program and improve the financial health of the insurance system." Simply put, farmers will have to pay more for crop insurance.

Farmers encounter new problems

In the midst of rains and in the wake of the flood, farmers encounter new problems:

- More costly aerial use of herbicides was necessary because tractors bogged down in drowned fields.
- A ruined hay crop resulted in the necessity of some farmers to sell their livestock.
- Mechanical failures of farm equipment increased.
- Wet crops and crops with greater weed content will fetch lower prices from buyers at elevators.

Estimated crop damage in then nine midwestern states hardest hit by the flood ran to \$3.7 billion in early August.

But the real figure won't be known until the results of the farmers' race with an early frost are known.

A worst-case scenario for his corn, oats, and wheat, Gene Swoboda said, with some crop insurance and the new government package, "is that we'll cover seed, fertilizer, some herbicide, and some fuel costs this year."

Most of his soybean acreage is still under water. And his case is typical.

Thus, the latest woefully inadequate government program serves Washington's long-range policy, the AAM's Nearmyer explained, "of squeezing out the family farmer to the benefit of corporate agriculture, Cargill, Conagra, and the others."

John Keister, a top Minnesota crop insurance salesman who holds \$150 million in policies, thinks current programs will keep most farmers out of bankruptcy and foreclo-

sure but is blunt about the future.

"The marketplace will take care of the [farmers] who aren't good businessmen," he commented. "Next disaster, they'll be out of business."

These legalized loan sharks risk nothing while getting a cut of the premium.

Insurance subsidiaries of Norwest Corp., the giant Minnesota bank, is the country's leading crop insurer.

While it sells insurance, the actual risk is held by the U.S. government through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

About 1 in 10 midwestern farmers entered the 1993 crop season with a record of bankruptcy in the 1980s.

In addition to facing second mortgage payments to private banks and debt obligations to the Farmers Home Administration and Farm Credit System, some are up against additional financial pressures.

These are farmers who, in a new program launched by private seed companies here this year, got seed and fertilizer on credit against their 1993 harvest.

"Where," Swoboda asked, "do they stand if they got drowned out?"

"This crisis is why we have to demand there be a moratorium on farm foreclosures," explained Larry Ginter, who belongs to the Farm Unity Coalition.

The specter of a new round of auctions and foreclosures, on top of uncertainty about frost and the 1993 harvest, "is putting a lot of farmers through grief," Delores Swoboda said. "Some are in shellshock. And then others, or their kids or spouse who had jobs, get laid off because of all this."

"People in the city have just got to know what is happening," Gene Swoboda added. "They want us to plant and harvest for nothing. They want the worker to work for hours and hours and not get paid. The way they are driving us, it's getting to be very serious business," he says.

"You know, I believe it is in the hands of labor and agriculture to solve the problems of the world," Swoboda said quietly, his eyes on the wheat. "If we don't, I cannot imagine how bad it will get for us all."

Jon Hillson is a railroad worker in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a member of United Transportation Local 1000.

Migrant workers hard hit by floods

REDWOOD FALLS, Minnesota — Scores of Mexican workers employed by Heartland Foods in Marshall, 30 miles from here, have returned to Mexico in the wake of massive flooding in this southwestern Minnesota town.

The workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 544, rented trailers in the Camelot park, where floods forced residents from their homes into shelters.

"They lost everything," René de la Cruz, shop steward at the turkey-processing plant, said in an interview.

"They didn't have insurance and it doesn't seem like they're going to get anything," he said. "They don't own property."

Workers from Laos, who also live in the trailer park, are trying to make the best of their water-ravaged homes, De la Cruz said.

In late July, 600 Mexicans and Chicano migrant workers who had journeyed to Santa Clara, Minnesota, for field work met in a religious mass to reinforce each other as they face a summer without work.

Floods have ruined sugar beet fields where they were hired to toil.

"For us, it's a disaster," Juan Garza, one of the workers, told *La Prensa*, a Minneapolis Spanish-language weekly.

The disaster is compounded by difficulty in getting food stamps, eligibility for which is based on "projected income" for the coming month.

"Projections are not reality," Garza explained. "You can project all you want, and if you can't get out on the fields, you can't work. If you can't put this on paper, you're not eligible for food stamps." — J.H.

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Dozens urge parole for Iowa unionist

BY ANGELA LARISCY

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Mark Curtis Defense Committee's Parole Now! campaign has gotten off to a strong start. It has received almost 100 letters from around the world urging parole for jailed unionist and political activist Mark Curtis.

Curtis was the victim of a police frame-up and beating here in March 1988. Falsely convicted of sexual assault and burglary, he is serving a 25-year prison sentence.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee launched a Parole Now! campaign in June that runs through August 31. The goal of the campaign is to gather hundreds of letters to the Iowa Parole Board asking that it grant Curtis parole and release him from prison.

Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee around the world have won new backing and obtained letters urging Curtis be released on parole. They have won this support while participating in conventions of political organizations, protest actions, and demonstrations. They have also called supporters and democratically minded individuals and discussed the case at school, on the job, and at union meetings.

The Parole Now! campaign takes on new urgency with the parole board's new policy of deciding by its own internal review whether or not a prisoner will be granted a parole hearing (see article below).

In an August 6 mailing to supporters around the world, defense committee coordinator John Studer points out, "Outrage over this policy change can help spur union and political activists to join us in urging the board to grant

Mark a hearing this fall and to order his release. This fight will significantly advance the long-term drive to win justice for Mark."

Below are excerpts from several letters received urging that Curtis be released on parole. To send a letter urging parole for Curtis write the Iowa State Board of Parole at: Capitol Annex, 523 East 12th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319. Send copies to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee at: P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, IA 50311, or call (515) 246-1695; fax (515) 243-9869.

Howard Zinn

Professor Emeritus,
Boston University

I am writing to urge you to grant parole to the prisoner Mark Curtis. I have reviewed the facts of his case, and have noted that he has insisted on his innocence, even if it cost him a long prison sentence. I have no way of knowing if he is guilty of the charges which put him in prison, but I have been informed that there is sufficient doubt on that matter for a federal judge to have decided in his favor in a civil rights suit against the police.

I also understand that he has been a prisoner who has done helpful work in his prison community and that many respected people in his and other communities have called for his parole. He has already served a number of years in prison, and seems to be the kind of person who will be a valuable citizen of the community when he is re-



Militant/Marla Puziss

Kate Kaku, a leader of Mark Curtis Defense Committee and Curtis's wife with Rev. Roland Joseph (left) and Rev. Felix Jean-Guillaume of the Haitian Ministry Theophile Church in Christ in Atlanta. Members of their congregation signed a letter to the parole board that said in part, "We know that Mark, a union and political activist, was involved in defending immigrant workers at the time of his arrest. . . . Listen to our voices, and set Mark Curtis free."

leased. I therefore ask you to seriously consider granting him his request for parole.

Robin Singer

Atlanta Coordinator,
Pastors for Peace

I first met Mark Curtis shortly after his arrest on the rape charge he was eventually convicted of. But I had previously known of Mark through his work in Birmingham, Alabama, against the brutal U.S. policy in El Salvador, a project that we were both involved in. I listened to Mark's story and soon became a supporter of his fight for justice. I followed his trial and have read a great deal both in support and against Mark. Now, I am even more convinced of his innocence. I urge you to grant Mark Curtis parole now, so that he can again become a productive member of society.

Carol Warren

Peace and Justice Coordinator,
Catholic Diocese,
Lexington, Kentucky

I am writing to you on behalf of our Diocesan Council for Peace and Justice to respectfully request that you grant speedy parole to Mark Curtis. We feel that it is fundamentally unfair to require Curtis to participate in any special programs for sex

offenders in order to receive parole. He has never wavered from his statement that he is innocent, and his case is still under appeal. No one should be forced to "claim" guilt while maintaining innocence — this would be a violation of conscience.

Dave Ayre

Hon. Secretary,
Wear Valley and District
Trades Union Council,
Durham, Britain

The Wear Valley and District Trades Union Council of Durham County in the United Kingdom have over the past years followed with interest the case of Mark Curtis.

We note that he has now reached and passed the expiration date of his sentence on sexual abuse. Also that his personal conduct whilst in prison has been exemplary.

Delegates to the Trades Union Council wish to make a plea to you as responsible Parole Board members to grant Mark Curtis his immediate release from prison.

Mary J. Fontaine

Chairperson,
United Transportation Union
Local 1732,
Oakland, California

I have had the opportunity to read quite a lot of information on Mr. Curtis's situation. Based on what I have learned about his case and about his conduct while he has been with you, I ask you to give every favorable consideration to granting his parole when he comes to ask for it. Thank you.

Mack C. Shelley, II

Professor of Political Science
and Statistics,
Iowa State University,
Ames, Iowa

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen, and as a student of the political process, in very strong support of the request for early parole by Mark Curtis. It is my understanding that, counting time for good behavior, he has now completed his sentence on the third-degree sexual abuse charge. Expiration of the sexual assault charge certainly weakens any remaining arguments for Curtis's continued incarceration. To deny his request for a gate pass to work outside the prison, despite a recommendation from his classification committee, on grounds that he must first admit guilt for a crime which he says he did not commit, and then subject himself to the Sexual Offenders Treatment Program (SOTP), flies in the face of both logic and decency.

It is in the best interests of the Board, and in the best interests of the community, to release Mark Curtis immediately and reintegrate this man productively into society.



Militant/Mark Gilsdorf

Ruth Nebbia (left), a supporter of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, speaks to group of young volunteers at El Paraíso agricultural camp in Cuba. After showing of video *The Frame-up of Mark Curtis*, 47 people signed letter calling the unionist's conviction "an offense to human dignity," and demanding "freedom and justice for Mark Curtis."

New Iowa law restricts rights of prisoners

BY NORTON SANDLER

DES MOINES, Iowa — A new law has gone into effect here making it more difficult for many of the state's 4,700 prisoners to receive an annual parole board hearing and to argue for their release.

This change follows other attempts nationally to chip away at the rights of prisoners. On August 11 President Bill Clinton announced, as part of his "anticrime" legislation, that he will seek to broaden the death penalty to include 50 offenses; limit federal habeas corpus appeals — primarily by death row inmates — to speed up the process of their executions; and convert closed military bases to boot camps for young prisoners.

Until now all prisoners, except those convicted of what are termed class "A" felonies or those serving more than a 25-year sentence, automatically received an annual hearing before the parole board. Under the new law, an annual review of a prisoner's file will replace the annual hearing. Only through this screening process will the parole board decide which prisoners receive hearings.

Iowa Parole Board vice-chairperson Barbara Binnie said in a phone interview that the board asked for the change in the law.

"There are an enormous number of people in the institutions and we were seeing people many times, including those who had served maybe one or two years on a 25-year

sentence," she said.

"It was not an efficient use of everyone's times. If the judges mandate a 25-year sentence of robbery in the first degree, the board assumes [a prisoner] is not to be released right away," stated Binnie. "We are averaging five to six years on releases on 25-year sentences. The idea is to spend quality time with an individual who is a good parole or work-release candidate and to make decisions accordingly."

"The institutions are overcrowded and they don't rehabilitate anyone," said Iman Ako Abdul Samad, a counselor for many years in the Iowa prisons. "I have always believed that a resident of the institutions should have access to everything relevant to his release even to the point of being able to look in his file," he said.

In a recent letter to his defense committee, Mark Curtis, an imprisoned unionist and political activist serving a 25-year sentence in the John Bennett Correctional Facility in Ft. Madison on false rape and burglary charges, described the initial experiences prisoners are having with the policy change.

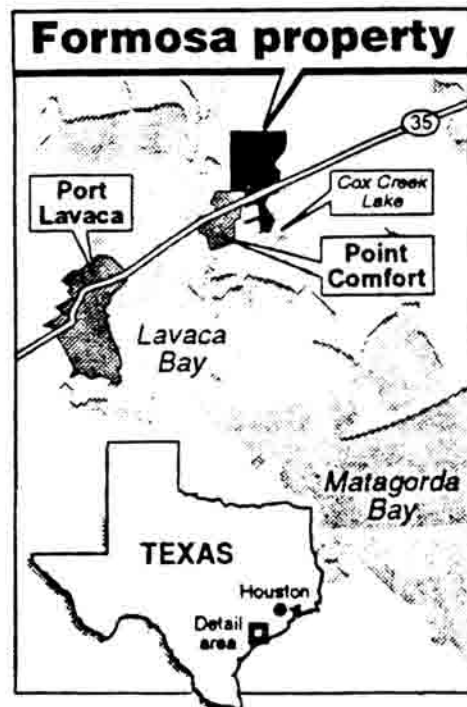
"Two inmates whose annual parole hearing dates are in August have already received letters," Curtis explained. "The letter says the board met on July 1 and considered and decided against a release. They would be considered again after another year unless sooner initiated."

Texas shrimper leads fight against chemical polluter

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

SEADRIFT, Texas — Fishermen, workers, and other residents of this Gulf Coast area are engaged in an intense battle with Formosa Plastics Corp., a powerful petrochemical company.

At issue is whether Formosa Plastics should be allowed to begin dumping millions of gallons a day of toxic-laced waste water into the Matagorda Bay system, among the most prolific shrimping and crabbing areas of the Gulf of Mexico. This environmental dispute has drawn national attention and has been the focus of feature



articles in the *New York Times* and the *Houston Chronicle*.

In the center of this fight is Diane Wilson, a shrimper. Four years ago Wilson, 44, organized the Calhoun County Resource Watch, which is spearheading protests against Formosa.

"Formosa Plastics has enlarged its plant in Port Comfort by 10 times," said Wilson in an interview at Froggie's, one of the many fish houses along the dock in Seadrift where shrimpers bring in their catch to be weighed and iced down. She works at the fish house between shrimping seasons and also repairs shrimping nets to help make ends meet.

"In 1982 the company opened a small operation and began dumping waste into a creek that leads to Lavaca Bay," she added. "The Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] leveled a record \$3.37 million fine against Formosa in 1991. The Texas Water Commission fined them, too. And this was when the plant was still small. With the massive increase in size, they will go from approximately 1,500 gallons a day up to 15 million gallons a day."

This waste water will carry thousands of pounds of carcinogens and other toxins such as benzene, phenol, and fluorine. The Alcoa chemical plant at Port Comfort dumped mercury into Lavaca Bay from 1966 to 1970, creating an environmental disaster.

"Incredibly, the Texas Water Commission has said there will be no impact, that it won't affect the water quality," Wilson continued. "But the Department of Health is saying, 'The day you discharge we're shutting down the bay.' The elimination of the shrimp, crab, and oyster industries alone will cause an

estimated loss of \$200 million every year."

Wilson was particularly enthusiastic about a demonstration organized July 16 by the Calhoun County Resource Watch. "The company organized a free barbecue at the civic center in Port Lavaca," she explained. "They saw this as a big public relations event. We mounted a counterprotest that drew up to 150 people, which is a great success in this part of the world. Nearly half the people there were Vietnamese fishermen, and this, particularly, had a big impact. We also had people from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers [OCAW] union at the rally. They are making an effort to unionize the Formosa plant."

The Calhoun County Resource Watch has staged a variety of other protest activities, including a rally in 1990 and three hunger strikes by Wilson.

"The shrimping and the crabbing industry is already in a crisis," Wilson said. "The oyster industry is considered a disaster area. There was nothing all winter long for many fishermen. They are destitute. And



Shrimper Diane Wilson has fought to unite Vietnamese and U.S.-born fishermen and workers in environmental battle.

because fishermen have boats, they can't get on welfare.

"These fishermen have no insurance of any kind — no health insurance, no boat insurance, no house insurance, most don't even have car insurance.

"So they get hit time and time again. And now you force another area of our bays to close.

"What you will have is 200 to 400 boats that will be forced out of that bay. People are losing their boats, they're losing their cars. There seems to be no one who cares."

The problems on the bay have been exacerbated by tensions between Vietnamese and U.S.-born fishermen. Fishermen came here from Vietnam after the U.S. war in their country. By the early 1980s competition and animosities exploded.

Wilson explained how she had managed to unite U.S.-born and Vietnamese fishermen in the protest against Formosa.

First, she said, it's important to understand the origins of the animosities. "A rich fellow from Maryland sponsored 50 Vietnamese families to work for him as crabbers. There was no effort at communication. It happened suddenly overnight." The Vietnamese were kept isolated and apart in a little settlement.

"There is a longtime fishing and crabbing tradition here, how people carry out their work to ensure fishing for future generations. The Vietnamese had a different way of operating. Instead of 150 traps in an area, they would set out maybe 400 traps. Instead of setting them 150 feet apart, they would set them 50 feet."

The company used language barriers and racist prejudice to keep people divided. No one explained to the Vietnamese the fishing traditions in the bay, Wilson said.

"After a while of working for this man, the Vietnamese crabbers went on strike. They didn't like the way he controlled them or their wives, who worked at his processing plant. So they broke off, which says a lot for them."

Then an incident brought things to a head between Vietnamese and U.S.-born fishermen.

"What happened was there was an argument on the bay, it continued on the dock, and one of the Vietnamese boys went home and got a gun and shot and killed a local crabber. It was like a powder keg going off. Some houses got burned, some boats got burned. And then the [Ku Klux] Klansmen heard about it and they decided to march on the town. I will say this for this town, they refused to let them march in the town."

Wilson explained how she has attempted over many years to create ties between U.S.-born and Vietnamese crabbers and shrimpers, including organizing a demonstration in Austin, Texas, against restrictive fishing regulations that drew fishermen from both communities. But still, to this day, no

Continued on next page

Tobacco farmers oppose Clinton's cigarette tax

BY DIANE SHUR

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — Farmers and workers joined a panel discussion here at the Militant Labor Forum in June to discuss the Clinton administration's proposed tobacco tax.

North Carolina produces about two-thirds of the flue-cured tobacco grown in the country. Despite cutbacks in production, tobacco is still the sixth-largest cash crop in the United States. In addition, North Carolina is the manufacturing center of several large cigarette and tobacco products companies, including R.J. Reynolds, American Tobacco, and Lorillard.

About 1,500 workers and representatives from tobacco companies, as well as farmers, had traveled to Washington, D.C., May 13 to oppose the proposed \$2-a-pack tax on cigarettes. Thirty-three busloads of workers and management were organized by R.J. Reynolds in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Three busloads of workers and farmers went from eastern North Carolina. Farmers and tobacco company employees from Virginia and New Jersey also attended.

Opening the discussion at the June 12 forum was Edna Harris, a tobacco farmer near Harmony, North Carolina, and a member of the United Farmers Organization (UFO). Harris said one acre of tobacco currently generates \$40,000 in taxes. She pointed out that farmers get \$1.78 a pound for tobacco, which is an extremely labor-intensive crop. "I put in all the work and take the risks," she said. "Then I go to market and I'm at their mercy. The government grades the tobacco and the companies set the price."

Harris said her organization began fighting farm foreclosures in the mid-1980s. In 1986, when the Carolinas suffered a severe drought that left farmers unable to feed their livestock, the UFO organized a "haylift" from other parts of the country. The group is currently organizing farmers to oppose the tobacco tax.

Speaking about the possibility of converting to other crops, Harris said, "We can't afford to raise corn or soybeans." She cited the experience of a neighbor who converted to growing squash and subsequently lost his farm.

Tobacco is the most consistently profitable crop for North Carolina farmers, most of whom operate smaller farms than the grain-producing farmers in the Midwest. At the forum, Harris and JoAnne White, another



Tobacco ready for harvest. Clinton's \$2-a-pack cigarette tax will hit working people most. "Taxes as 'moral' coercion are reactionary," said socialist worker Nancy Brown.

farmer, described how they and many other farmers also depend on off-farm income as well as growing other crops to survive.

Oscar Smith, president of Local 192-T of the Bakery, Confectionery, and Tobacco Workers Union, is employed at the American Tobacco Co. plant in Reidsville near here. He said many tobacco workers have been losing their jobs due to increased automation as well as the lower demand for cigarettes. In fact, that very week American Tobacco had announced layoffs and the early retirement of more than 200 workers at the Reidsville plant.

Attacking the proposed tax, Smith said, "An excise tax means that a lower-income person is paying a bigger portion of their income in taxes than a wealthy person. History shows us that when excise taxes go up, the total income generated goes down, because people buy less of the product. Labor will not support any health-care program that is based upon an excise tax."

"This tax affects all working people," Nancy Brown, an auto worker and member of the Socialist Workers Party, told the meeting. "The best thing we can do is to organize against it." Brown pointed out how the tobacco tax, as well as other proposed taxes and cutbacks in social programs, is part of

the attempt by the Clinton administration to get working people and farmers to pay for the worldwide capitalist depression.

Government officials and other capitalist politicians attempt to present the cigarette tax as progressive because it will allegedly cut down on smoking and raise money for health care, said Brown. "But this is a sham," she added. "Taxes for the purpose of 'moral' coercion, whether for beer or cigarettes, are reactionary." Many workers despise such social engineering proposals by Bill and Hillary Clinton, Brown said.

"Working people should oppose all consumption taxes," she added. Such taxes are especially disastrous for working farmers and small businesspeople, Brown said. She called for the abolition of all indirect taxes, local and state taxes, and duties, and for their "replacement with a single, steeply graduated income tax."

"What we need now is solidarity," said Brown. "We must look for more ways for workers and small farmers to get together, whether it's to oppose this tax or to lend support to struggles like the coal miners' strike. Organizing ourselves to fight and win some battles now will give working people the confidence to carry out and win the bigger struggles down the road."

Crown Heights report calls for more cop repression

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN

NEW YORK CITY — The conclusions of a recently released New York State report on the events in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn in August 1991 represent an attack on working people and should be condemned by all defenders of democratic rights. The investigation was set up to legitimize more sweeping and violent use of police forces.

For several weeks a discussion has been taking place on the conclusions of this document. It has been the subject of dozens of newspaper articles, public meetings, and debates on street corners and in workplaces throughout the city. The report and the events in Crown Heights have become a central issue in the mayoral election campaign.

The social explosion in Crown Heights two years ago was sparked by the actions of the police at the scene of a car accident that killed seven-year-old Gavin Cato and severely injured his young cousin Angela Cato, both from Guyana. The children were playing on the sidewalk near their home when they were struck by a car driven by Yosef Lifsh. The car was part of a police-escorted motorcade for the central leader of



Militant/Derek Bracey
In a military fashion, Mayor Dinkins deployed 2,200 police in Crown Heights in August 1991.

AS I SEE IT

the Hasidic Jews of the Lubavitcher religious sect.

Crown Heights is the world headquarters of the group and some 10,000 followers live there. The community has about 200,000 residents, 80 percent of whom are U.S.-born Blacks and Caribbean immigrants, workers in their big majority. The majority of the Hasidim and a small but significant layer of the Blacks in Crown Heights are professionals and small businesspeople.

Witnesses at the scene said the car ran a red light. Authorities estimate it was traveling at 45-55 miles per hour when it hit the children. There are conflicting accounts of what happened next from the residents present and the cops.

An emergency vehicle arrived within minutes from the Hasidic ambulance service called Hatzolah. The emergency service workers in this ambulance did not treat the injured children but were ordered by the cops to take Lifsh and the two other occupants of his car away from the accident. Gavin Cato was still pinned under the car while this occurred. He died at the scene.

The police say a city ambulance was present before the Hatzolah ambulance left. Witnesses say the second ambulance arrived minutes after and that the police cursed and struck Carmel Cato, father of the injured boy, as he attempted to lift the car off his son.

The anger of the crowd, initially directed at Lifsh as he tried to leave the accident scene, shifted to the cops for refusing to arrest the driver.

For the next four days, confrontations between Black youth and the police took place in the streets of Crown Heights. In the hours following the traffic accident that killed Gavin Cato, some groups targeted Jewish residents. Yankel Rosenbaum, a student visiting from Australia, was stabbed by someone in a crowd of a dozen youths yelling, "Kill the Jews." He later died after receiving inadequate medical care at Kings County Hospital.

The first volume of the report sharply criticizes Mayor David Dinkins and other government officials and the New York Police Department for being too slow in using force and violence to crush the spontaneous explosion. It uses the developments in Crown Heights to outline a sweeping series of recommendations that, if implemented, will lead to swift and brutal use of the police in future confrontations.

The state report tries to portray the antipolice riot as a war between Blacks and Jews. It calls this the city's "worst outbreak of racial violence in more than twenty years." Some Jewish leaders and Republican-Liberal mayoral candidate Rudolph Giuliani have characterized it as a " pogrom " against Jews in Crown Heights. But the facts in the state report don't sustain this conclusion.

The New York Police Department's own records indicate that cops sustained the majority of injuries — 152 of the 190. Six stores were looted, all in the same block and none targeted as Jewish-owned.

Twenty-seven police vehicles were damaged or destroyed, including the car belonging to then-police commissioner Lee Brown, who is Black. Mayor David Dinkins was shouted down, pelted with debris, and forced to take cover in a nearby building when he tried to speak to a crowd August 21, two days after Cato's death. Next day he ordered 2,200 cops into Crown Heights, occupying the 30 square blocks in a military-style operation.

Opponents of Black rights are seeking to take advantage of the anti-Semitic slurs and violent acts of some youths during the riot to discredit the struggle against the racist and brutal treatment meted out by the cops every day.

Outrage at years of unequal treatment, focused by the police actions at the accident scene, brought people into the streets. But in the absence of a mass, organized political

movement, this potentially powerful political force was dissipated into random confrontations with the police.

Some Black political figures such as Al Sharpton moved quickly to organize small protest actions. But these focused on perceived conflicts between Blacks and the Hasidic Jews and did not advance a course to protest the actions of the police.

The middle-class political outlook of figures like Sharpton leads them to point to Jews as the source of the problems in Crown Heights, not the capitalist system which produces the depression-like conditions workers face.

The state report blasted the leadership of the New York Police Department for its failure to move swiftly and decisively in Crown Heights. The detailed strategic and tactical plan the report lays out is designed to put the cops in shape to deal forcefully with similar social explosions.

These proposals, together with the hiring of thousands more cops, are supported by Mayor Dinkins, Giuliani, and virtually all other Democratic and Republican politicians in the city. They are an expression of the rightward shift of these two parties and the increasing use of the police to intimidate, harass, and punish working people.

The role of the police came under the spotlight during the Sept. 16, 1992 cop riot on the steps of City Hall. Ten thousand off-duty cops, many armed, shouted racist epithets, assaulted passersby, blocked the Brooklyn Bridge, and broken down police barricades during a demonstration against a proposed civilian police review board. None of the cops involved in the rioting were ever charged.

Several weeks later, the trial of Lemrick Nelson, the youth accused of stabbing Yankel Rosenbaum, opened. Last October the jury acquitted Nelson, who is Black, on all charges. Jurors stated they reached their verdict because they were not convinced the cops were telling the truth.

The reverberations from this verdict led to the state investigation that produced the Crown Heights report. The report calls for federal civil rights charges to be brought against Lemrick Nelson and demands new arrests in the Rosenbaum case. This would result in new frame-ups by the cops. Working people should loudly oppose a retrial for Lemrick Nelson.

The Crown Heights report is an assault on the democratic rights of all working people and provides ammunition for future cop violence. It defends the role of the cops in protecting the property and privileges of the wealthy minority. By supporting its conclusions, Dinkins, Giuliani, and the other politicians advance this as well.

As the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of New York, I join those defending workers and youth in Crown Heights and throughout the city against police violence. This is a step toward uniting the working class in the fight against cop brutality, racism, anti-Semitism, unemployment, and war — all products of the capitalist system.

Mary Nell Bockman, who is running for New York mayor on the Socialist Workers ticket, is a member of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 155. Bockman and her running mates, Al Duncan for public advocate and Melissa Harris for comptroller, just filed 11,000 signatures with the New York City Board of Elections to place their names on the November ballot.

'Militant' readers plan campaign to increase sales

Continued from front page papers.

Readers are also taking a goal of selling 1,200 copies of *New Internationalist* and its sister publications in French, Spanish, and — in a soon-to-be-printed edition — Swedish.

The subscription campaign will follow a one-month renewal drive aimed at winning hundreds of new subscribers to become

long-term readers. *Militant* supporters are also organizing a concerted effort to increase the number of libraries that subscribe to the socialist publications.

Great response on Friendshipment

Many of the 300 drivers on the Friendshipment solidarity caravan to Cuba wanted to read the *Militant*, which features un-

equaled coverage of the Cuban revolution and the fight to bring down Washington's embargo against that country.

John Cox, a *Militant* supporter and driver on the caravan from Pittsburgh, said, "It was great. We talked about all kinds of things going on in politics." Friendshipment activists bought 20 *Militant* subscriptions and more than \$200 worth of Pathfinder books.

When rightist forces launched an assault on abortion clinics in Minnesota in July, pro-choice activists mobilized to protect the clinics. Seventy-two of them bought copies of the *Militant* at protests, meetings, and clinic defense assemblies, and seven decided to subscribe. Three other activists renewed their subscriptions for six months or more. *Militant* supporters helping defend clinics in Denver August 9-15 got a similar response, selling 39 single copies and one subscription.

Many workers on the picket line find that the *Militant* brings other working-class struggles to them while telling the truth about their own fights. A number of unionists from Britain who recently visited the coalfields of West Virginia to give solidarity to the mine workers' strike there found this to be the case.

In the course of discussing everything from the similar problems faced by workers in Britain and the United States to the U.S. embargo against Cuba, 62 miners and others in the area bought copies of the *Militant*, and three subscribed.

To aid the efforts of hundreds of supporters around the world, the *Militant* will be producing a multicolor promotional brochure for use in the circulation campaign.

Next week's *Militant* will print a list of sales goals taken by supporters around the world. Readers who are members of industrial unions in several countries will be setting targets as well.

We encourage all our readers to take part in the circulation campaign. If you would like to help in this effort, please order a bundle and take a goal in your area. To do so, contact one of the distributors listed on page 12 or the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, tel (212) 243-6392.

Texas shrimper leads fight against pollution

Continued from Page 6

Vietnamese shrimper will dock at Seadrift.

"So when we reached out around the Formosa issue, for an American commercial fisherman to be able to talk to them and get this type of support is tremendous. I mean, it was one of the best things I felt I had ever been around. Something real significant was happening."

Drawing workers into the fight

Television coverage of the July 16 protest tried to portray the fight around Formosa as pitting fishermen against workers. "The company says they're going to create 800 jobs," Wilson said. "Actually, there's only going to be 600. I'm for the jobs. I've never been interested in killing the plant altogether. We're just trying to stop the massive pollution caused by Formosa's greed and negligence."

She explained that her group has always sought to make information about chemical hazards available to the workers in the plant, while Formosa management was trying to cover up the information.

Wilson said that during negotiations with the company in the middle of her second

hunger strike, she demanded that Formosa recognize workers' right to a union if they so wished.

"I didn't know anything about unions," she said. "All I knew is they could give the workers some strength, they could back them. So I put this into the negotiations with Formosa. I guess I didn't realize exactly what I was asking."

"Later, I talked about this with some people in the OCAW. They had lent me support during the hunger strike, along with a lot of environmental groups like Sierra Club and Greenpeace. I got a letter from [OCAW president] Bob Wages saying this was one of the first times a proposed environmental settlement included something for the workers."

"The company agreed to it. I came off my hunger strike on the basis of that agreement. And within a week, they had reneged on it and offered the union \$50,000 to clear out of town."

"This company — you cannot believe a word," Wilson said. Her attorney advised her not to tell the press about this, "but I thought it was outrageous. So I told the media and it made headlines. Then the local press came out with editorials saying that I was a union orga-

nizer, that my whole intent all along has been to unionize the plant. That was just too much."

Wilson went on a third hunger strike to put pressure on the company to recycle the waste. She said John Dehn of the EPA responded that the demand would be "economically unfeasible" because "it costs nothing for [the company] to dump, and \$50 million to recycle."

Formosa Plastics received a federal permit August 16 clearing the way for its expansion on Lavaca Bay.

Numerous threats have been made against Wilson and others who oppose Formosa Plastics' plans. Her boat has been severely damaged twice, shots have been fired at her house, and animals she owned have been killed.

But she doesn't give up.

"Really, all these issues — human rights, environmental, wanting basic equality, workers' issues — they're all tied together," she concluded.

Jerry Freiwirth works at the Shell Oil refinery in Deer Park, Texas, and is a member of OCAW Local 4-367. Willie Mae Reid, also a member of Local 4-367, contributed to this article.

Wall St. welcomes Clinton's budget

Continued from front page
ter. "The results," an August 10 *Washington Post* editorial warned, "are unlikely ever to be visible at street level. There's not going to be a big sudden bounce of prosperity."

With the passage of the austerity budget, Clinton has consolidated his presidency. Bigger sections of the ruling class are firmly behind Clinton's antilabor course and are confident in his ability to carry it out. At the same time, the shattering of the European monetary system has dealt a major blow to the illusion that a supposedly united Europe can challenge Washington's dominance in the fight over control of world markets. U.S. bankers cashed in on the European currency crisis in a big way. Six top banks reported combined quarterly revenues of \$2.2 billion from currency trading, an all-time high.

Opposition a charade

The heart of the budget plan consists of \$496 billion in tax hikes — one of the largest in U.S. history — and spending cuts. Working people will be hit particularly hard through a regressive fuel tax and cuts in urgently needed social programs. The administration and Congress claim such moves are necessary to reduce the federal budget deficit, which they state is a key source of the long-term economic crisis in the United States. Newspapers took to calling the plan "the deficit bill."

The House passed the bill August 5 by a 218 to 216 vote. Vice-president Al Gore cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate August 6.

Republicans, who voted unanimously against the bill, complained that the plan didn't go far enough in social cutbacks.

The opposition to the Clinton plan was a charade despite the close final votes. There was no debate in Congress over the substance of the bill. "Despite all the carping and widespread whining," said an editorial in the August 16 *Business Week*, "there is no politically acceptable alternative to the deficit reduction bill, however imperfect it may be."

"Senator Bob Dole," the magazine continued, referring to the Republican minority leader, "has not presented a realistic alternative that details just where he thinks spending should be cut. Even if he did, the cuts would be as politically unpopular as the current proposed tax hikes."

Nebraska senator Bob Kerry, who with great fanfare decided to vote for the bill, resulting in the tie broken by Gore, advanced the Democrats' main complaint — again that the austerity didn't go far enough. "My heart aches with the conclusion that I will vote 'yes' for a bill which challenges Americans too little," he grumbled.

Clinton sounded like a kinder, gentler version of Texas billionaire Ross Perot, who opposed the Clinton plan on the grounds it did not balance the budget — that is, it did not gut social programs enough.

It was Perot who initially called for savage cuts in Social Security, Medicare, and other entitlements to reduce the deficit. He was the first to demand a 50-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax increase.

Clinton demagogically claimed the budget plan targets the rich. "We now have real fairness in the tax code," he said.

Ruin of farmers, small businesspeople

The new budget, however, will speed the ruin of tens of thousands of working farmers and small businesspeople, many of whom will find themselves hit by higher taxes without the resources the wealthy have to pay or avoid them.

Cost-of-living allowances for government retirees will be delayed. Medicare, which provides health care for 35 million disabled and elderly people, will be slashed by \$56 billion. Agricultural, housing assistance, and veterans medical-care programs will be cut by \$6.6 billion.

The budget is the administration's opening shot in its attack on entitlements such as Social Security, a gain won in struggle by

the working class, that provides a minimal safety net for retired workers. Couples with income above \$44,000 and individuals with income above \$34,000 will be taxed on 85 percent of Social Security benefits — up from 50 percent.

By targeting Social Security, the government will increase the amount of surplus value produced by workers that is taken from them. A higher percentage of workers' labor time will go to the employers, and less to the social wage of the working class as a whole.

Consumption taxes

A regressive gasoline tax of 4.3 cents per gallon will boost the federal gas tax to 18.4 cents per gallon. Federal diesel taxes will rise to 24.4 cents per gallon.

Such consumption taxes pretend to be fair by ensuring "equality of sacrifice." But for workers the share of earnings that goes to pay this tax is much bigger than for the wealthy. In addition, indirect taxes hide the total amount workers are paying the state.

A tax raise for the rich will have little impact on their living conditions. The billionaire ruling families have always been able to shield the bulk of their incomes from government taxation through a variety of loopholes.

Riding the saddle of government more confidently, the Democratic president has already announced his next moves. The spearhead of the bipartisan war against the working class is the current attack on those sections of the class that are being scapegoated for the economic and social crisis — the so-called underclass and immigrant workers.

Proposed legislation announced by Clinton would sharply restrict the rights of immigrants.

Another front in this anti-working-class onslaught is Clinton's "anticrime" legislation, which among other things will expand the use of the death penalty. In addition, the health-care plan crafted by Hillary Clinton will enrich large insurance companies while shifting more of the burden for medical costs onto working people.

Administration officials floated a proposal August 15 to issue "health security cards" to all U.S. citizens and legal residents. Besides denying health benefits to undocumented immigrants, the card could serve as a national identification card.

Clinton is increasingly functioning as a coalition president. This becomes evident in the administration's effort to push



Militant/Kim Kleinman

More than 2,000 auto workers at this General Motors plant in Wentzville, Missouri, were laid off in June. Even the most profitable companies continue layoffs in the middle of a recovery. Using widespread computerization, employers have launched another wave of reorganization in manufacturing.

through Congress the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or another version of a trade accord to further integrate Mexico's economy to the U.S. and Canadian markets. On August 13 the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States put the final touches on the trade accord by signing supplemental agreements on environmental and labor issues. While many Democratic congressmen still oppose the pact, most Republican politicians seem to favor it. NAFTA "gives Republican lawmakers a golden opportunity to show they'll cross party lines to support parts of Mr. Clinton's agenda," said an article in the August 17 *Wall Street Journal*.

Layoffs during recovery

Plagued by a falling rate of profit in industrial production, the employers are continuing to push the crisis onto the backs of working people.

Amid a worldwide depression, a fact common to the economies of all imperialist countries is that even during periodic upturns in the business cycle, hundreds of thousands of workers face layoffs. This is occurring at many strong, profitable companies that seek to intensify the exploitation of

labor by making fewer workers labor longer hours while producing more for the boss.

In the United States, the employers are in the midst of a new wave of reorganization of the labor force in manufacturing. The widespread computerization of all aspects of the economy, including big hunks of industry, has enabled the employers to squeeze more from workers.

Furious competition among rival capitalist firms is breeding price wars. In July, for example, tobacco giant Philip Morris announced that temporary price cuts in its premium brand cigarettes were being made permanent.

Proctor and Gamble, following a year of record profits, laid off 13,000 workers earlier this year. General Electric, AT&T, Johnson and Johnson, and Raytheon — all profitable companies — made similar moves. Permanent job losses as a percentage of unemployment have climbed above 40 percent.

Official unemployment stands at 6.8 percent. If the figure is added to those working part-time and "discouraged" workers who are not counted in jobless figures, there are 16.5 million workers unemployed in the United States.

Graham wins temporary stay of execution

Continued from front page

available at the time of his trial.

Many more death row inmates, however, have been executed. Since assuming office in 1991, Texas governor Ann Richards, a Democrat, has presided over 26 executions, more than any other governor in the state's history. Eleven additional executions, including Graham's, are scheduled for next month.

Richards is following the lead of her fellow Democrat, President Bill Clinton. On August 11 Clinton announced that, as part of his "anticrime" legislation, he will push for limiting federal habeas corpus appeals — primarily by death row inmates — to one, in order to expedite the executions.

Organized support has saved Graham

At a meeting of supporters, attorney Mandy Welch of the Texas Resource Center said of the victories in the case so far, "It has not been legal proceedings and lawyers who saved Gary. It was people like you and the work you've done in winning support."

The meeting was called to plan a week of activities to launch a new phase of the defense effort. The actions include: a video showing of *Justice on Trial: The Case of Gary Graham*; a gospel fund-raiser at the Missionary Baptist Church; a mock hearing presented by Graham's attorneys at Texas



Gary Graham faces death by injection

Southern University Law School; and a candlelight march from the district attorney's office to the federal court building.

Countercampaign

A countercampaign demanding Graham's execution without a hearing has developed and received widespread media attention. The *Houston Chronicle* has conducted numerous front-page interviews with victims

of the other robberies to which Graham has confessed.

Spearheaded by so-called victims' rights groups that have ties to the cops and the prosecutor's office, an organization called Justice for All has been formed. The group, which attracts right-wing forces, has staged several rallies ranging in size from 100 to 150 people.

Participants in these pro-death-penalty actions carry signs like "Kill Graham, not babies" and pictures of hypodermic needles used for lethal injections in Texas with the words "Stick it in now." By presenting themselves as victims' rights supporters, they seek to win sympathy for the execution of "public enemies" like Graham.

Graham and his supporters do not argue that he should not be held accountable for the robberies he did commit. But, they argue, he should not die for a murder he did not commit.

Since his incarceration 12 years ago Graham has completed his high school equivalency exams, become the editor of a prisoners' newsletter, and actively joined in planning his own defense.

Messages of support or contributions can be sent to: Gary Graham Justice Coalition, P.O. Box 66806, Houston, TX 77266.

Patti Iiyama is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-227.

Illusion of European 'unity' crumbles

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Bankers and other business figures in the United States expressed satisfaction in the aftermath of the shattering of the European Monetary System (EMS). The collapse of the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) meant fat profits for U.S. banks and dealt a major blow to the notion of a "united Europe" that can compete with Washington for control over world markets.

"The latest convulsions of the European Monetary System," said the August 16 *Wall Street Journal*, "have produced smirks, and some cheers, from this side of the Atlantic."

"ERM, RIP," exclaimed the headline of an editorial in the August 23 issue of the conservative magazine *National Review*. "The decision to let the European currencies float in a 15 percent band signals the effective end of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. Good riddance," the *Review* editors wrote.

The EMS was established in 1979 by the governments grouping themselves into the European Community (EC). The Exchange Rate Mechanism was set up to provide stable values and semifixed exchange rates. Currencies have been pegged to the value of the German mark.

The deepest recession since World War II is plaguing the German economy despite Bonn's position as the strongest industrial and trading power in Europe. The German government is pouring \$62.5 billion a year into the eastern part of the country, with projections to pay that much annually for a decade at least. German capitalists have kept interest rates high in order to siphon funds from their competitors in Europe to foot the bill for reunification.

French franc battered

The crisis proved devastating for those governments that had pegged their currencies to the value of the mark.

The French franc, which hit the floor of the old exchange rate mechanism, has yet to recover. While new "flexible" rates allow fluctuations of up to 15 percent, the franc remains at historic lows, having lost more

than ten percent of its value against the mark since the beginning of August. Economists are widely predicting long-term weakness for the franc, Italian lira, Spanish peseta, and Danish krone.

"The French have a problem," an economist told the *Wall Street Journal*. "They need to get [interest] rates down, but they have to prevent the franc from collapsing. Now, though, they seem to be mourning the death of the EMS like the loss of a close relative." Lowering interest rates could prompt a flood of speculation against the French currency, causing further devaluations.

Attempts to bolster the franc amid the monetary storm wiped out the foreign currency reserves of the Bank of France in one week. Net reserves plummeted by \$31.4 billion, leaving the state bank with a deficit of \$30 billion in its foreign exchange holdings.

French prime minister Edouard Balladur called for reforming the system August 12, blaming speculators for the fallout and claiming that "the crisis wasn't due to concern about the franc itself, but to a desire to destroy the European monetary system." Belgian and French officials joined forces to call for tough measures to stop speculators from forcing devaluations of their currencies.

But an EC official warned that reimposition of capital controls would cause an open split in the European community. Such controls would be "like using a nuclear weapon," he said.

A weak show of unity between Paris and Bonn has failed to conceal the animosities aroused in the wake of the crisis.

The Paris daily *Le Monde* accused Bonn of imposing a "diktat" that led to the ERM's collapse.

German chancellor Helmut Kohl said August 9 that plans for a single European currency by 1999 have now been pushed back by at least a year or two.

Responding to Paris's suggestion that the mark should be temporarily removed from the monetary system to resolve the crisis, Kohl said, "We did not isolate the French. If the French made the proposal, let us not

beat around the bush, that the mark should leave the system for a while, then that was a matter for the French."

The British *Financial Times* reported August 17 that at the meeting where EC officials junked ERM levels earlier this month, German officials asked that there be no big cut in interest rates following the move. When a Portuguese delegate suggested the immediate monetary union of the franc and mark, the state secretary of the German finance ministry said he hoped it was "a joke."

Assault on social wage

From London to Bonn and Paris, however, capitalist governments are in unanimous agreement on one question. They are all opening new assaults on the social wage of the working class and the rights of immigrants.

German finance minister Theo Waigel announced August 11 that the Kohl cabinet had agreed on a \$45.2 billion cut that will chop into short-term and long-term unemployment benefits, maternity payments, and social security pensions.

Bonn also announced that child-care benefits for non-citizens and asylum seekers would be eliminated unless they have been granted legal residency in Germany.

Ingrid Matthäus-Maier, deputy chair of the Social Democratic Party parliamentary opposition, complained that such moves would "endanger the social peace."

The head of Germany's automobile employers' association told an August 12 meet-



This Albanian youth, seized by cop in Athens, is about to be deported from Greece. Governments across western Europe are trying to scapegoat immigrants for the capitalist economic crisis and using rougher methods.

ing that the auto bosses would need to eliminate 100,000 more jobs in the next two years. Auto and parts companies in Germany have already terminated 95,000 workers since 1991.

The pattern that has emerged in all the imperialist countries is that layoffs continue amid furious competition, even during recoveries in the business cycle. British Coal,

Continued on Page 12

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Anti-embargo forces build on success of Friendshipment

BY HILDA CUZCO

Flush from the victory of the U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment caravan, in which 300 volunteers delivered 100 tons of aid to Cuba, many of these activists are building on the momentum of this success. They are organizing public speaking engagements, other meetings, and media appearances to broaden participation in the fight against the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

Minnesota participants of the caravan took to the airwaves immediately on their return to Minneapolis to describe their defiance of the U.S. embargo against Cuba and explain why Washington's attempt to strangle Cuba should be opposed.

These efforts have received widespread news coverage. The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* devoted two full pages of articles and photos to the caravan's arrival in Havana and the warm reception they received from Cubans.

Organizers of the annual Cedarfest parade in Minneapolis, held August 15, invited caravan participants to join it. As they marched, they received applause throughout the route of the parade. They also collected hundreds of signatures from the crowd opposing the embargo.

Later in the day, dozens of people — including numerous youth, some auto workers, and a farmer — joined the caravan participants in a welcome-back reception that heard a report of the successful journey from seven of the volunteer drivers.

Friendshipment supporters in Minneapolis are now planning a major citywide meeting for September 11 on the new stage in the fight against the embargo.

Pastors for Peace, which initiated the Friendshipment, is urging supporters to hold public meetings to report on the solidarity caravan to Cuba.

"Most of the 300 members of the caravan will return to their hometown soon," says a flier put out by the group. "Use these valuable resource people for public meetings in which they can report on the successes of the Friendshipment."

Pastors for Peace also demanded that U.S. Customs authorities release a school bus impounded July 29 when the caravan successfully crossed the U.S. border into Mexico at Laredo, Texas. The bus was to be donated to a church in Cuba. Nine caravan participants have entered the third week of a hunger strike on the bus to protest the confiscation.

Caravan participants from as far as Los Angeles and Chicago marched through

downtown Laredo August 7, demanding the release of the school bus and winning support from some local residents in the process. At a rally held afterward, the activists announced they had received statements of support from Nobel Prize-winner Rigoberta Menchú, the African National Congress, and others from around the world.

Hunger striker Alex Tehrani said at the rally, "What we have accomplished here is a tremendous success. We have drawn national attention and more people now know about the blockade than ever." Tehrani and two other strikers left the bus in Laredo August 13 on the advice of their physician. They are returning to their cities to continue the battle against the embargo. Two other hunger strikers had left earlier.

About 80 Friendshipment activists participated in a picket at the federal building in Houston August 11, demanding an end to the embargo and the release of the school bus. They then departed for their home cities and prepared to organize events to celebrate the success of the caravan.

Similar protests took place in early August in St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and other cities. Several received news coverage.

"An hour after I got off the plane the *Seattle Times* called me for an interview," said Friendshipment driver Chris Hoeppner in a telephone interview from Seattle. Hoeppner, who is the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle, was one of the 14 hunger strikers on the impounded bus in Laredo.

"The caravan was a big victory," Hoeppner said. "The main success was involving



Militant/Jon Hillson

Demonstrators in Minneapolis protest U.S. embargo on Cuba August 11. Pastors for Peace are urging supporters to engage in public meetings to report success of U.S.-Cuba solidarity caravan and involve more forces in fight against U.S. trade and travel ban.

broader numbers of people than ever in opposition to the trade embargo on Cuba. These included students, workers, and the Church Council from greater Seattle, which sponsored our trip from here. The participation of dozens of Cuban-Americans was also a big victory."

One example that shows the breadth of the support for the caravan, he said, "was the reaction of a pastor in Del Rio, Texas, where I stopped my truck on the way to Laredo. The pastor said he was a vehement opponent of the Cuban government but explained he felt it was his duty and responsibility to oppose the embargo, which was being used to starve his own family on the island."

The *Seattle Times* published an article about the caravan on the return of the Seattle Friendshipment drivers. Hoeppner has also been interviewed by two radio stations and the Associated Press. Caravan activists are now planning a reportback at University Baptist Church and scores of other speaking engagements to win additional support against the embargo.

Hoeppner is also fighting to get his job

back at the Kenworth truck factory. "The company refused to give me a leave of absence," he said. "I was fired for taking time off. But my union, my coworkers, church officials, Friendshipment activists, and others are already putting pressure on the company to get my job back. It's extremely important for any worker to be able to take part in activities like the Friendshipment without company harassment."

Protest messages demanding Hoeppner be reinstated can be sent to Jim Britton, Director of Human Resources, Kenworth Assembly Plant, 8801 E. Marginal Way, Seattle, WA 98108.

Hoeppner asked that copies be sent to the International Association of Machinists Local 289, 9135 15 Pl. S., WA 98108; fax: (206) 762-2122; and to the Socialist Workers Campaign, 1405 E. Madison, WA 98122; fax: (206) 323-1755.

John Cox, Joe Callahan, Chuck Guerra, and Mark Severs, reporting from Laredo, and Jon Hillson in Minneapolis contributed to this article.

Senate hearings assess Cuba policy

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In late July the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence held "a rare open meeting," as the July 30 *New York Times* described it, to assess U.S. policy toward Cuba.

The hearing was broadcast on the cable television network C-Span and transcripts were made available on request.

Arizona senator Dennis DeConcini, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, said at the opening of the hearing that, in light of recent editorials in newspapers around the country suggesting that Washington's 33-year economic embargo of the Caribbean country is outdated, there is a

need to "examine the impact of U.S. policy on Cuba, its successes as well as its failures, and whether recent development in Cuba may suggest changes in that policy."

"What can we do to assist in bringing about a successful transition without violent eruptions and social upheavals?" he asked.

In the month of July the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, and other U.S. dailies ran editorials calling for the easing or partial lifting of the embargo.

Testifying on the first panel were the CIA's Brian Latell, national intelligence officer for Latin America, and Robert Gelbard, deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs. This was reported to be the first detailed public testimony ever offered by the CIA on developments in Cuba.

All those testifying described the severe economic crisis in Cuba — the food shortages, transportation problems, lack of fuel, frequent power outages, the smallest sugar harvest in 30 years, the hard currency debt, and other hardships facing the population. The Senate committee did not hear much new from the government's top spy agency, as information about the social and economic challenges had been described in detail several days earlier in a public speech by Cuban president Fidel Castro.

Latell said the legalization of the use of dollars in Cuba, while "likely to increase hard currency remittances from abroad and thus provide some margin of economic relief," would also "aggravate social tensions and distinctions in Cuba, in part because only a small percentage of the population will be likely to receive hard currency from abroad."

He stressed that the Cuban leadership remained adamantly opposed to the introduction of large-scale private enterprise and to the reemergence of capitalism in Cuba and quoted a sentence of Castro's July 26 speech where the Cuban president said, "We cannot ever commit the mistake that the socialist countries made, that the USSR committed."

Gelbard dismissed the role of the U.S. government's economic embargo against Cuba and the worldwide crisis of capitalism

in exacerbating Cuba's economic problems. He instead put forth the theory that "the underlying cause of Cuba's problems has been and remains the lack of political and economic freedom." He said Cubans must have "freedom to exercise private initiative to own and manage private property."

Gelbard called for maintaining the trade embargo in order to pressure the Cuban government to dismantle its military, reform its economy, and refrain from so-called human rights violations.

"A violent transition" in the Cuban government, Gelbard said, "would carry severe risks" for the U.S. rulers. He warned that attacks against Cuba from U.S. territory, a number of which have been carried out recently by rightist groups under Washington's nose, are against U.S. law. He urged the law in that regard to be enforced.

He argued for "continuing to isolate the Cuban government diplomatically, politically, and economically."

Professor Jorge Domínguez, on leave from Harvard University, expressed the view in a second panel of witnesses that the U.S. trade embargo "remains an important U.S. policy instrument... if it is used to advance policy objectives that are in U.S. interests." But he also argued that the mere continuation of the U.S. embargo has not accomplished much, nor is it likely to accomplish much.

Domínguez called for negotiations with the Cuban government; permitting limited, licensed sales of medicines and food to Cuba; facilitating telephone communications; direct mail, cultural, and academic exchanges; establishment of news bureaus in the respective capital cities; the sale of fax machines; and travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba.

"The embargo's main political utility," Domínguez said, "is the capacity to lift it in stages in reward for democratizing behavior."

He also advocated removing all punitive measures from the so-called Cuban Democracy Act, which aims to prevent trade with Cuba by foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms.

The hearing continued in closed session.



The above photo of the Militant Labor Forum in Miami, held to discuss support for the Friendshipment, appeared in the August 8 issue of *El Nuevo Herald*, the city's main Spanish-language daily.

S. Africans walk out to back UMW strike

BY MARY ZINS

MARISSA, Illinois — About 750 workers at the Eveready battery factory in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, staged a one-day walkout August 6 in support of the 17,000-strong strike by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

The workers who struck are members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). The plant is owned by Hanson PLC, based in London, which controls Peabody Holding Co., the largest employer of the U.S. miners on strike.

After delivering a message in support of the UMWA strike to plant management and picketing the factory, NUMSA members met with African National Congress president Nelson Mandela.

This was the second international walkout in support of the miners' strike. In June 1,000 United Mine Workers of Australia members walked off the job at two Peabody-owned mines in that country to show their support for the UMWA fight.

Anglican bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, also sent a message of support to the UMWA. "Your struggle for job transfer rights is just and reasonable," he said. "Coal miners... should not be discarded when one mine is depleted and another mine opened by the same company. It is very unethical," he continued, "for the coal operators to abandon the miners and their families without providing job opportunities in newly opened mines when they are available."

A representative of the Russian Independent Miners' union visited picket lines and spoke to members of UMWA Local 1980 in Greene County, Pennsylvania.

Union victory at Pontiki

On the heels of union-organizing drives at Zeigler Coal's Marrowbone and Wolf Creek mines, workers at the MAPCO-owned Pontiki Coal Co. mine near Martin County, Kentucky, voted 101-78 for UMWA representation in mid-August. Twenty-three of the votes are contested.

Zeigler has signed interim contracts at the newly organized Wolf Creek and Marrow-

bone mines agreeing to abide by the terms of the national agreement once it is signed.

The vice-president of operations at Pontiki called the recent organizing victories and the vote at the mine "a virus." Sam Bradley, a leader of the organizing drive there, responded, "That's a mild term for how strong we're going to be. This is a victory for all working people."

Solidarity with the striking coal miners, who are fighting for a contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), continues to grow.

A series of rallies are scheduled around Labor Day in the different strike areas, featuring UMWA president Richard Trumka.

Trumka will speak in Evansville, Indiana, September 6. "Our goal is to make this parade and rally the largest anywhere this Labor Day. This is going to be our Labor Day message to the coal operators," reads a release from the UMWA Region 3 office. The parade begins at 9:00 a.m. at the Civic Center in downtown Evansville.

An August 16 press conference in Birmingham, Alabama, kicked off a strike solidarity tour sponsored in that state by UMWA District 20. "We invite all unions to participate in the Evansville rally," said UMWA striker Sonny Smith. "We need the support and unity" of the labor movement to win this strike, he explained. Jim Albright, president of the state AFL-CIO, and representatives of the United Auto Workers and building trades unions also spoke at the news conference.

Locals of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers at the Amoco, Chevron, Phillips



The August 7 issue of the *Times-West Virginian*, a newspaper published in Fairmont, West Virginia, carried the above photograph on its front page. The caption read: "Jim Spaul (left) a British coal miner, stands together with his UMWA brethren. He has been visiting the area, speaking with miners on the picket lines and in Marion County communities. Shown with Spaul are (from left) Lambert Ezelle of Local 1501, and Ronald Chaney and Clarence Mitchell of Local 1949."

and Flying J refineries, as well as the Hercules and Rubber Engineering plants, in Utah have initiated a tour of two striking miners from Pennsylvania that begins in September.

UMWA strikers are scheduled to begin a several-week-long tour of union meetings in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in September. The St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly has made office space available to organize the tour.

UMWA representatives spoke to recent regional conferences of the United Transportation Union in Kansas City, Missouri, and Pittsburgh. They raised thousands of dollars for the strike relief funds.

For the first time since the strike resumed May 10, talks were held between the BCOA and UMWA.

In the last week hundreds of camouflage-clad strikers have marched in union contingents at annual parades in coalfield communities. The strikers drew cheers and applause from onlookers at the parades in Mannington, Monongah, and Morgantown, West Virginia; and Marris, Illinois.

UMWA strikers are preparing to attend the August 28 civil rights march in Washington, D.C. UMWA Local 1980 in Dillworth, Pennsylvania, has reserved two buses.

In another development, the August 4 *Charleston Gazette* reported that the UMWA is discussing joint action with the

OCAW and transportation unions as a way to step up support for the strike. There have also been several efforts by UMWA members to shut down coal production at non-union mines in West Virginia and Kentucky.

Smear campaign continues

The coal bosses are continuing their efforts to accuse UMWA members of violence. A federal grand jury convened August 17 in Charleston, West Virginia, to investigate charges in the shooting death last month of Eddie York outside Arch Minerals' Ruffner mine in West Virginia. Although the shot that killed York came from the woods on company property behind the picket line, state police said all 14 UMWA members on the picket line that day are suspects.

Tony DiRico, president of Arch Mineral of West Virginia, said, "We have video cameras in front office, in the vehicles. We have video cameras everywhere." But the company does not have a videotape of the shooting. DiRico said the camera malfunctioned that day.

Mary Zins is a laid-off coal miner and a member of United Transportation Union Local 1405. Elizabeth Laracey, member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 347 in Morgantown, West Virginia, contributed to this article.



Militant/ Linda Joyce

Coal miners from newly organized Wolf Creek Colliery being sworn in August 8 as UMWA members in Lenore, West Virginia. A few days later, workers at the Pontiki Coal Co.'s mine near Martin County, Kentucky, also voted to be represented by the union.

New Zealand meat co. lays off 1,000

BY TONY MASTERS

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — At a time when capitalist politicians here are hailing "an economic recovery," New Zealand's second-largest meat-processing company has permanently laid off 1,000 workers. AFFCO New Zealand Ltd. announced July 9 that the job losses will affect its Horotiu, Waitara, and Moerewa plants.

Combined Trade Unions president Ken Douglas, speaking on behalf of the Auckland and Tamoana Freezing Workers Union and the New Zealand Meat Workers Union, which organize workers at the three plants, said the unions "accepted the existence of serious structural problems within AFFCO, and had agreed by unanimous resolution to work through these with the company."

The unions also agreed to allow the company to stagger payments on the \$25 million it owes the workers in redundancy

(severance) pay over a period of three years. Many workers are concerned that besides not being able to use these benefits to pay off debts and mortgages, the staggered payments will interfere with their eligibility for unemployment benefits.

Company spokespeople claim the job cuts were necessary because of "overcapacity" in the meat-processing industry. Yet shortly before AFFCO made its announcement, plans for new plants in two of the regions where it operates were made public. This fits a pattern over recent years where meat bosses replace older plants with new smaller ones operating on shifts with reduced staffing levels, lower wages, worse conditions, and which are often non-union.

AFFCO is latest of several companies to carry out major layoffs, which have reduced the number of meat-packing workers in New Zealand from 34,000 in 1981 to 20,100 in 1991.

ANC leads fight against violence

Continued from Page 3

tion that the violence is between Inkatha and the ANC or a Zulu-Xhosa conflict." "The violence is engineered and fomented by elements of the Third Force. These elements must be exposed and isolated."

ANC leader Joe Modise, addressing 2,000 supporters in western Transvaal August 7, condemned the rightist Afrikaner Resistance Movement for "beating the drums of war" and called for an end to violence. He also called on the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) to lay down their guns. The Pan Africanist Congress stated they would not disarm APLA, their military wing.

More than 40,000 people turned out for a rally against violence at a cricket field in Johannesburg August 15. Mandela, government ministers, and other leaders of political parties participated. The rally was called by religious leaders, according to Agence France-Presse.

Meanwhile, the second draft interim constitution for a post-apartheid South Africa was unveiled August 10. The draft is not complete but deals with three areas in detail: regions, constitution-making, and the legislature.

The draft calls for the "establishment of one sovereign state, a common South African citizenship and a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between men and women and people of all races." Among its 27 points, all forms of discrimination are outlawed. The "diversity of language and culture shall be acknowledged and protected, and conditions for

their promotion shall be encouraged," the draft states. The interim constitution is to take effect as early as September or October of this year when transitional executive structures are supposed to be set up.

The majority of the 26 groups involved in the multiparty talks support a two-stage plan. After next year's elections, a Constitutional Assembly would replace the Transitional Executive Council — which will be responsible for leveling the playing field leading up to the April 27 elections — and would totally revise the constitution. The rewritten document will then be voted on by the electorate and, if approved by a majority of 60 per cent, will become the constitution of South Africa.

The Concerned South Africans Group (COSAG), a right-wing group led by the IFP, wants the present negotiators to draft the constitution to be voted on. Discussions continue to work out the remaining disagreements. The draft document "is something to build on," ANC secretary general Cyril Ramaphosa said.

At the same time Mandela continues to campaign for lowering the voting age. "I am going to fight and win this battle. Young people under 18 and right down to 14 are going to vote in the future," Mandela told 30,000 mainly young supporters in the northern Orange Free State in July. He said he would respect official ANC policy that only people 18 years and older vote in the April elections.

"In future elections I am going to make sure that children of 14 and upwards are going to vote," Mandela said to wild cheers. He urged the crowd to attend school so they could "lead our people."

Civil rights groups build August 28 march

Continued from front page

Chavis, the newly elected executive director of the NAACP; and John Jacob, president of the Urban League. Former Washington, D.C., delegate to Congress Walter Fauntroy is the national director of the march.

Buses, trains, and cars are being organized to transport unionists to the march from across the country. SCLC spokesperson Mike DeJoie said. He encouraged as large a turnout as possible so "people can let themselves be heard."

United Mine Workers of America members on strike plan to have a large delegation to help get out the word on their fight. Other unions sending buses include the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, the United Steelworkers of America, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; the United Food and Commercial Workers; the Service Employees International Union; the Teamsters union; and the United Auto Workers.

A local mobilization committee has been meeting here twice a week to build the march. Participants include college students who are volunteering prior to returning to school and many involved in the ward structures of the Democratic Party, as well as representatives of city churches and other activists. A final two-week effort is planned to get out the word through the media, at local cultural festivities, at college registration activities, and through the labor movement.

Literature promoting the march points out the action is needed "because 7 million people were out of work last month and hundreds of thousands more are being laid off each month." Other issues are the fact that "there is still discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic

origin, gender, age, and sexual orientation. We shall not be divided," the program adds.

On August 27, the day prior to the march, there will be a "People's University on the Mall," which is free of charge. The event will feature a series of workshops on "topics such as justice, peace, the environment, and civil rights."

The August 28 march will gather at the Washington Monument on the Mall in the morning and step off at noon. An afternoon rally will be held at the Lincoln Memorial. For more information on the events contact the March on Washington office at (202) 822-7965.

Greg McCartan is a member of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 106. Alyson Kennedy is a rail worker and member of the United Transportation Union.



Militant

August 28 rally will commemorate 1963 historic march on Washington (above).

Illusion of European 'unity' crumbles

Continued from Page 9

for instance, announced plans to close another 15 pits in the next eight months.

Under the cover of a campaign for "family values," the government of John Major has called for new inroads against unemployment benefits and welfare. In a July 2 speech, Welsh government official John Redwood branded single-parent families "one of the biggest social problems of our day." Junior health minister Tom Sackville exclaimed, "The existence of very comprehensive benefits and free housing has further reinforced the illusion that anyone can have a baby at any time regardless of means or circumstances."

Similar austerity moves are under way in Spain, France, the Scandinavian countries, and throughout western Europe.

Scapegoating immigrant workers

Blaming immigrant workers for the economic crisis, the capitalist governments have placed increasingly savage restrictions on the rights of immigrant workers in all aspects of life. Germany adopted Europe's strictest asylum policy earlier this year. In France, interior minister Charles Pasqua has called for a policy of "zero immigration."

The Schengen agreement — under which all European Community members except Britain, Ireland, and Denmark are to dispense with internal borders and create a "fortress Europe" by strengthening border controls with other countries — is supposed to take effect in December.

Several governments have used alleged fears of immigration from less developed countries like Greece, Portugal, and Spain to increase the powers of police officers. Cops will now be able to check documents within 25 miles of internal borders.

A continent-wide computer system is being developed that will allow the denial of asylum to an applicant in one country to be

recorded everywhere. Another system, which uses fingerprints for identification, will link police stations so "undesirables" can be quickly spotted.

But the capitalist governments of western Europe are not waiting until Schengen goes into effect to take action against immigrants.

The government of Austria has sent 2,000 troops to try to seal the Hungarian border. Bonn sends planes full of deportees almost every day to Bucharest. Under Pasqua's direction, Paris is adopting some of the strictest measures, making it harder for immigrants to get French citizenship through marriage and cutting back on work permits.

These moves aren't aimed at stopping immigration, but at expanding a pariah layer of the working class without rights.

In July the Greek government rounded up and expelled 25,000 Albanians, using the excuse that one Greek priest had been deported from Albania. There are some 200,000 Albanian immigrants in Greece. Many say they were beaten and robbed by police officers before being pushed across the border.

Celia Pugh from London contributed to this article.

Peasants protest in China

Continued from Page 13

cities without official permission, called "muddy legs," do not receive grain rations, housing, or medical care. There are more than 60 million Chinese in this position. They often take the most difficult and dangerous jobs.

Shenzhen, in Guangdong Province, has swollen from a city of 70,000 in 1978 to more than 2 million today. Guangdong, one of China's first "special economic zones," is home to one of China's two stock markets. It is reportedly rich from export revenues and the influx of foreign investments.

Eighty percent of the 1.3 million workers in Shenzhen are "temporary workers," who are granted permission to live and work in the area for two years at a time. They typi-

cally work long hours, seven days a week, and are denied many social benefits.

This influx of labor to the cities has contributed to a significant growth of the country's gross national product (GNP). China's GNP has risen at a very high average annual rate of 8.7 percent for the past 15 years. Its current growth rate is 14 percent.

Given the fact that China's economy is still weighted toward agricultural production, the wave of urbanization and industrialization now under way still leaves room for growth of the rate of labor productivity. But this growth will soon peak — as many bourgeois commentators have noted — and decelerate toward economic stagnation and irreversible crisis as it happened earlier in the Soviet Union.

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Fight for Immigrant Rights: A Protest and Picket. Wed., Aug. 25, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Downtown Federal Building, 300 N. Los Angeles St. Sponsor: Pro-Immigrant Mobilization Coalition. Tel: (213) 852-0578.

Parole Now! Fund-raiser for Mark Curtis. Barbecue and poolside party, Sat., Aug. 28, 2-6 p.m. 2231 New Hampshire. Donation: \$10. Sponsor: Los Angeles Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment Reportback. Tues.,

Aug. 24, 7 p.m. University of Pittsburgh, School of Public Health, Auditorium A-1115. Sponsor: Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition. Information: (412) 241-6087.

CANADA

Vancouver

U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment: A Report from a Participant. Speaker: Chris Hoepfner, driver in caravan to Cuba, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle, member of International Association of Machinists. Sat., Aug. 28, 3 p.m. 482 E. 37 Ave. Donation: Barbecue and program, \$10; program only, \$5. Sponsor: Socialist Publications Fund Drive. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

and Atomic Workers and Convention of National Organization for Women. Panel discussion, Sat., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 250, in Woodridge Plaza. Donation: \$3. Tel: (713) 644-9066.

BRITAIN

London

Justice for Joy Gardner! Prosecute the Police! Sat., Aug. 28, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £2. Tel: 71-928-7993.

The Cuban Revolution Now — Slide Show and Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Martin Mariotti, returned from work brigade in Cuba. Sat., Sept. 4, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £2. Tel: 71-928-7993.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

What Stand Should Working People Take on NAFTA? Sat., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. 508 N. Snelling Ave. Donation \$3. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

NEW YORK

New York

Socialist Campaign Rally. Speakers: Mary Nell Bockman, Socialist Workers candidate for New York mayor; others. Sat., Aug. 21, reception 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m., party 9 p.m. 191 7th Ave., 2nd floor. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

TEXAS

Houston

The Fight for Women's Rights Today. Reports from Women's Conference of Oil, Chemical

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Tel: (3) 365-6055.

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St. Enkelsplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

Balancing the family budget — When Hillary Clinton accompanied Bill to Japan, a press aide noted that



Harry Ring

her freshly cut hairdo cost but \$17. Her cut-rate Washington stylist had accompanied her to Tokyo.

Or, possibly, vice versa — "Until the American people can overcome their cynicism, it's going to be very difficult to solve the problems

of this country." — Prez Clinton.

Sort of like has-beens and wannabes — Eduard Shevardnadze, the honcho in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, cut the ribbon at a new Coke bottling plant there. He took a swig and was heard to say, "Mmm, delicious. Tastes just like Pepsi."

Housing program — "I think initially it was difficult to scale down psychologically, so we bought three condos on Knob Hill — one for our guests, one for the servants, and one for ourselves." — San Francisco socialite Harry de Wildt on selling his mansion. "Obscene Quote of the Month" in the

homeless paper *Street Sheet*.

Freedom road — Rolls-Royce has opened a sales agency in Moscow and hopes to sell 20 to 25 cars a year for up to \$350,000 apiece.

Preserving male values — The New York office of *Sports Illustrated* barred its Canadian edition from running an ad by Adidas of Canada featuring a Canadian soccer team wearing naught but Adidas shoes. (Key anatomical areas were discreetly covered, variously, with hands, trophy cups, and a soccer ball.) An annual *Sports Illustrated* feature is its swimsuit issue, filled with photos of scantily-clad women.

Hey Adidas! — Chanel is offer-

ing a high-top sneaker for \$660, and a tennis shoe for \$615.

Think you're crazy? — Tribal Latitudes. Dressing for a new world order. Imperialist and islander motifs coexist beautifully in this eclectic pairing from Ozbek. Front-zip rayon vest, 995.00. Slim, LYCRA rayon batik skirt, 395.00." — Macy's, San Francisco.

Comes the revolution — "OVERTHROW THE STATUS QUO. Ralph Lauren revolutionizes fall. His Bolshevik collection establishes a brand-new doctrine. The leather jacket with faux Persian lamb trim and superwide trousers are for rebels with a cause. . . ." —

At Bergdorf Goodman.

Fake fakes — Works by pop artist Mark Kostabi sell so well that he's able to hire artists who do paintings in his style, which he then signs. Now his former sales rep is charged with arranging for one of the artists to provide him with Kostabi-type paintings on which he forged Kostabi's signature. They seemed to have sold as briskly as the real fakes.

In sum — Check out *How to Succeed in Business without Lying, Cheating or Stealing*. The *Los Angeles Times* "Small Business" column warmly recommends it as "a vest-pocket-size gem . . . ideal beach reading."

Chinese gov't fears mounting peasant protests

BY PAT SMITH

When millions of workers in China went to collect their paychecks for June, they found most — in some cases all — of their pay was docked for bond purchases. The workers never had a say in this. They were forced to "buy" the bonds by the regime in Beijing.

With other measures like this, the Chinese government is stepping up belt-tightening moves against working people. This comes at a time when Beijing's drive to expand capitalist investment is generating rampant inflation and growing wage disparities.

In July the government announced a 16-point austerity plan. It proposes restrictions on credit and cuts in social spending.

Among the most serious concerns of the privileged bureaucrats in Beijing is the ferment spreading among Chinese peasants.

According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, there were more than 200 protests by peasants last year alone.

Protests by thousands of peasants in villages in central and southwest China forced the government in June to abolish 37 taxes imposed on them. That is in addition to the 43 taxes Beijing removed earlier this year. The government also promised to crack down on local officials who are pocketing money extorted from the farmers.

Peasants are protesting against deteriorating conditions, heavy taxes, and the widening gap between rural and urban working people. In December 1991 the government limited the tax on peasants to 5 percent of a year's income, but through extortion from local officials peasants actually pay three or four times that amount.

In addition, there was widespread outrage over the government's issuing of promissory notes instead of payment.

Protests in Renshou

Guo Jialong, an official in the Foreign Affairs Office of Sichuan Province, said, "There were serious incidents of beating, smashing, and looting," in Renshou county over several days. Ten thousand peasants joined protests June 3 and 6. Farmers in Renshou county, who pay 18 percent of their \$60 annual income to the government, rebelled when asked to pay an additional \$8.75 charge for new roads.

The 1949 Chinese revolution — which overthrew capitalist rule, nationalized factories, mines, and land, and opened the door to narrowing the gap between the conditions of workers and peasants — was a tremendous advance for humanity. Following the abolition of landlord rule, peasants' lives improved through government-subsidized housing, transportation, education, health care and other necessities.

But the Stalinist misleadership has been an obstacle to forging an alliance between workers and farmers and encouraging the working-class initiative necessary to advance the revolution. Living standards of the peasantry and agricultural modernization have been kept to a minimum to finance industrialization. Workers and peasants have been forced out of political decision-making. Decades of bureaucratic methods of planning and management by the privileged ruling caste in Beijing have left China underindustrialized with a rural population of 900 million in a country of 1.1 billion.

In 1978 the Communist Party of China (CPC) introduced market-oriented reforms that opened China's economy more to the

world capitalist market. The government welcomed foreign banks to "special economic zones," where capitalist investment is less restricted than in the rest of China, opened two stock markets, and allowed the privatization of some land. Foreign investments have also soared, increasing to \$10 billion in the first five months of 1992.

Real estate a windfall for a few

Chinese real estate has become a financial windfall for a few. The number of areas zoned for real estate sales rose from less than 120 in 1991 to 8,700 a year later.

The May 8 *New York Times* reported on cases of entrepreneurs purchasing land without any capital or previous experience and selling it at an enormous profit. "This is possible," the *Times* article said, "because the Communist Party has quietly but frenetically been parceling out public lands to well-connected businesses at cut-rate prices."

The most aggressive sellers are often CPC branches, which sell their land, offices, and resorts for large sums of money and use the profits to buy fancy cars and apartments for officials.

Along with privatizing some land, the government has fostered joint ventures with capitalist investors from Asia and the United States. China International Trust and Investment Corp., founded in 1979 with a \$5 million government handout, has grown into a \$7.5 billion corporation with 30 subsidiaries, affiliated companies, and banks in China and around the world.

These measures have produced a dramatic social gap within Chinese society. An article in the June 18 *Wall Street Journal* points to "an emerging middle class." By some accounts in the Chinese press there are now 4 million or 5 million Chinese with incomes over \$175,000.

The majority, however, has not benefited from the "market reforms." Despite relatively low living standards, Chinese workers have traditionally had a comparatively high percentage of disposable income, since basic needs are subsidized. Authorities plan to reduce or end some of these subsidies.

Increases in rent, food prices

Throughout China, working people face increases in rent and food prices and the prospect of unemployment with reduced social benefits. Inflation has reached 20 percent in the major cities this year. Officials claim wages are keeping up with inflation but recent strikes in Zhuhai and labor protests elsewhere show workers are being squeezed.

The gap between China's rural and urban working people is also widening. Even before heavy taxes, peasants earn between one-half to one-third of the income of workers in the cities. Hunger and illiteracy have reemerged in certain areas of the countryside. In the town of Yanan, in Shaanxi Province, for example, poverty prevents 10,000 children from attending school.

Inside China, there is an exodus of peasants from the countryside to the cities to find work. The government reports more than 15 million peasants have recently moved to cities. An estimated 100 million farmers have found work in towns and cities in the past 10 years. Urban train stations are filled with traveling peasants sleeping on the floor.

Workers who leave the rural areas for the

Continued on Page 12



Peasant in Guangdong province gets water from well. Running water is too expensive. As small layer of the population in China gets rich through government "market reforms," conditions worsen for the majority of workers and farmers.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



The exceptionally promising movement for proletarian democratization which has been surging through Czechoslovakia for the past nine months was ruthlessly stamped out through the occupation of the country by the military forces of five Warsaw Pact powers headed by the Soviet Union.

Close to 200,000 land and airborne troops poured into Czechoslovakia August 20 and took over its principal cities. The Dubcek government counselled the people not to fight the invaders and kept the army in the barracks.

Despite the official appeals for passive nonresistance, angry and defiant civilians engaged in scattered acts of conflict within the capital and several provincial cities. They flung Molotov cocktails at the Russian tanks and burned some of them. Hundreds of students built a barricade from two overturned trucks and a red trolley close by the Old Town Square in Prague; it took three Soviet tanks to ram it down. In the encounters at least 23 demonstrators were reported killed and hundreds were wounded by machine-gun fire from the occupying troops.

The Presidium of the Czechoslovak National Assembly assailed the invasion as a violation of international law, the Warsaw Treaty and "the principle of equality between nations." Along with President Svoboda, it demanded that "all armed troops be withdrawn from Czechoslovakia" and told the Czech workers that they might, "if necessary," defend themselves by a general strike.

Bitter and frustrated citizens shouted "Russians, go home!" Soviet soldiers seemed bewildered and nervous. When one told a group of Czechs they had come to protect them, the Czechs laughed. One Soviet officer said: "We were told we were being sent to combat a counterrevolution, but when we came here we did not see any."



August 28, 1943

Drastic sanctions against striking unions and individual strikers were decreed by President Roosevelt in an executive order issued on August 16. Penalties to be imposed against unions when the government seizes struck plants include withholding union dues collected through the check-off and the suspension or denial of union security provisions in working agreements. Individual strikers may be drafted into the armed forces or blacklisted in industry.

Supplementing the order, Roosevelt wrote to William H. Davis, War Labor Board chairman, defining the procedure in imposing the sanctions and emphasizing the Smith-Connally Act provides for the criminal prosecution of strikers in industries taken over by the government. Thirty Pennsylvania coal miners are now being prosecuted by Roosevelt-Biddle under this Act.

The new executive order authorizes the withholding of "any benefits, privileges or rights" in taking sanctions against the unions. This sweeping generalization leaves the door wide open for the application of numerous penalties.

Hailing the executive order, a WLB [War Labor Board] official said: "This gives the board teeth with which to bite the employees . . ."

Justice for Gary Graham

More executions, carried out faster, with far fewer options to appeal an unfair verdict — this is the heart of President Bill Clinton's "anticrime" bill. The president's latest proposals include the addition of 50 more crimes to the list of offenses punishable by death; limiting inmates to one federal habeas corpus appeal; and putting 50,000 more cops on the streets. These moves are the latest steps in a drive by both Democratic and Republican officials to curtail democratic rights.

Clinton announced his intent to extend the use of the death penalty as a battle unfolds in Texas over whether Gary Graham will be allowed to live. Despite overwhelming evidence the young man did not commit the murder he was accused of, the government has thus far refused to take him off death row. Only a concerted effort by a defense coalition that has won broad national support has prevented Graham's execution so far. Ann Richards, Democratic governor of Texas, is on a fast track to add Graham to her gruesome record of 26 executions in the past two years. She has presided over the most executions in the state's history and 11 more are slated for September. Richards is implementing Clinton's bill before it becomes law.

The government's latest assault on the right to due process is not limited to workers on death row. The Iowa state legislature recently passed a law revoking the right of most prisoners to receive an annual parole hearing. The new statute allows the parole board to be even more arbitrary and selective in who is chosen for release.



President Clinton flanked by Attorney General Janet Reno — the duo who ordered the massacre in Waco, Texas — announcing "anticrime" bill at the Rose Garden. The real criminals are in the White House.

The framework for this bipartisan attack on democratic rights is the growing social and economic crisis of capitalism. The ruling class and its government attempt to use working people's concern over crime, drug addiction, and other social problems in order to blame a layer of the working class for the problems of the capitalist system. Under the banner of a "war on crime," they seek to justify expanding the use of force and repression against those accused of an offense. The racist character of capital punishment is blatant. In 1992 Blacks made up 40 percent of the nearly 2,500 people on death row, although they represent 12 percent of the nation's population.

The executions and other measures that Clinton and others demand will be used first and foremost to terrorize working people who resist the bosses' attacks on their wages and living standards. The cops and courts will more and more use these tools to go after workers on strike, protesters against police brutality, opponents of Washington's wars, and others.

As the Graham case pointedly illustrates, the death penalty and other antidemocratic measures have nothing to do with stopping crime. The government and others who call for his immediate execution claim his innocence doesn't matter — he didn't have proof in the allotted time, so he must pay with his life.

The labor movement and all supporters of democratic rights should condemn Clinton's anticrime demagoguery, campaign to end the death penalty, and demand justice for Gary Graham.

Oppose Clinton's war moves

As we go to press, U.S. warplanes flying over Iraqi territory have just dropped cluster bombs and four laser-guided bombs near an air defense battery close to the city of Mosul in northern Iraq. U.S. military officials claimed the bombing was carried out in response to the launch of an aircraft missile. Washington maintains no-fly zones over a large part of Iraqi territory.

This is the latest in a series of steps by the Clinton administration to assert U.S. imperial military might around the world. Such acts prepare the field for bigger war moves.

In Somalia, what didn't look as likely a few months ago is turning into reality. From an invasion disguised as a humanitarian food-distribution operation, U.S. troops are now engaged in a small-scale war in that country, raining death on Somali demonstrators in the streets of Mogadishu.

The August 12 attack by U.S. forces on a Somali political rally is one more example, following Washington's bombing of Mogadishu in mid-June. Despite the evidence presented to international journalists — the wounded bodies of three young men shot by U.S. forces — Pentagon brass lied about the entire affair, claiming there were no injuries.

Acting in typically brazen fashion, the administration placed the North African country of Sudan on Washington's "terrorist list." For several days preceding the August 18 announcement, government officials and media newsmen made sensational accusations that the government of Sudan was involved in the alleged plot to blow up the United Nations. An unnamed State Department official told the media

it had "evidence" but would not say what it was.

A day later, the administration was forced to admit the charge was totally unsubstantiated. The State Department retained the smear, however, by putting Sudan on the list.

The government, with the big-business media in tow, is churning out stories about the supposed terrorism of the Sudanese government, working hard to tie it to Iran. "Iran's the real menace, not Sudan," screamed the headline of a syndicated opinion column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak. Pushing for military aggression against Iran, the columnists wrote of "the steady transformation of Africa's largest country into an Iranian satellite."

Washington views Tehran, whose economic influence in the region is growing, as its main enemy in that part of the world. For the past few weeks, U.S. warplanes and ships have harassed a Chinese cargo ship, claiming it is carrying material for the production of chemical weapons in Iran. Earlier, the U.S. government was able to block a ship carrying hydrofluoric acid from docking in Lebanon, saying the chemical could be used to make nuclear weapons.

Clinton's imperial arrogance against the people of Iraq, Iran, Sudan, and Somalia is the logical extension of his attacks on immigrants and his "anticrime" campaign. These moves will lead to more wars. Working people should demand that U.S. and United Nations troops get out of Somalia and that Washington end its bombings of Iraq as well as its threats against Iran and Sudan.

Build on Cuba caravan success

In Miami, Minneapolis, Seattle, and dozens of other cities around the United States and internationally, opponents of Washington's embargo against Cuba are moving to take advantage of the victory scored by the Friendship caravan. The hundreds of returning caravan drivers are a valuable resource in advancing the fight against the U.S. government's criminal policies banning trade with and travel to Cuba. They are now beginning to speak out at public forums, protests, and in the media on how the embargo affects the Cuban people and why it should be brought down.

In Minneapolis, for example, Friendship activists marched in a local parade and collected hundreds of signatures on a petition opposing the embargo. Demonstrations in Laredo, Texas, and many other cities have protested the embargo and demanded the release of a Friendship bus seized by U.S. customs officials in Laredo after the rest of the caravan had crossed into Mexico. Nine people continue a three-week-old hunger strike in the bus in Laredo to press these demands.

During the caravan, meetings and fund-raisers to support the Friendship and get out the truth about the U.S. government's brutal policy toward Cuba were organized in more than 100 cities and towns all over the United States, as well as in Canada and Mexico. Activists can now follow up on this work and widen opposition to the embargo still further.

Reportbacks can be set up at schools, union meetings,

churches, and meetings of community organizations. As people hear about the caravan, more will want to get involved in calling for an end to the embargo.

The convoy itself reflected the broad openings that exist to carry out this work. In addition to the 300 volunteer drivers who transported 100 tons of humanitarian aid to Cuba, the project drew in thousands of others who volunteered time, energy, and supplies to ensure the caravan's success. Those who took part included students, clergy members, unionists, retirees, and professionals. Among them were dozens of Cuban-Americans. Some caravan participants supported the Cuban revolution; others did not. But all agreed that the embargo must be brought to an end.

There is growing pressure on Washington to lift the embargo. The recent moves to allow increased telephone contact with the island as well as recent Senate hearings assessing U.S. policy toward Cuba are another indication that growing layers within the ruling class favor loosening restrictions to permit U.S. companies to do business in Cuba.

Now is the time to press further the fight against the embargo.

In every city across the United States, and throughout the world, opponents of the U.S. trade and travel ban to Cuba should follow the example of the returning "caravanistas" and step up public protests and educational events on Washington's cold war against the Caribbean island.

Should Tel Aviv try Demjanjuk?

In his letter to the editor, reader Fred Feldman of Brooklyn, New York, asks for more discussion of points raised in last week's *Militant* editorial on the John Demjanjuk case. The editorial argued that the Israeli and U.S. governments have no right to try him as a Nazi war criminal.

First of all, the trial was a travesty of democratic rights. Demjanjuk was sentenced to death in Israel on the basis of unproven — and later disproven — accusations that he was "Ivan the Terrible," a Nazi gas-chamber operator at the Treblinka death camp in the 1940s. The Israeli Supreme Court was finally forced to throw out his conviction, acknowledging "reasonable doubt" of Demjanjuk's guilt.

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Now some insist the Ukrainian-born man should be retried — this time on charges of having been a guard at the Sobibor, Flossenbürg, or Regensburg concentration camps. "This is a terrible decision," said Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, denouncing the reversal of Demjanjuk's conviction. "It casts Holocaust survivors in the role of being aggressors and perpetrators as being victims." "A Nazi is a Nazi and should be tried and punished," demanded Naomi Feldman, a leader of the far-right Kach Party in Israel.

The position that some crimes are so barbarous that those accused should be convicted regardless of whether they are proven guilty is an abuse of due process and undermines the fight for justice. It has given ammunition to rightist, anti-Semitic politicians like Patrick Buchanan, who in a recent newspaper column condemned Demjanjuk's accusers for wanting "to find Demjanjuk guilty of some, any, crime" and to force him to now "prove he is not Ivan of Sobibor, or Ivan of Flossenbürg, or Ivan of Regensburg."

Secondly, the government of Israel had no legal or moral right to try Demjanjuk and Washington should not have extradited him there. By what authority does Tel Aviv claim a special right to prosecute and execute someone for crimes committed in another country — and before Israel even existed? This gets to the heart of the problem. The trial was organized to bolster the Israeli government's continuing efforts to give itself a humanitarian image and falsely claim it represents the interests of Jews around the world. The establishment of the state of Israel, however, was not an advance for most Jews or for any working people; it was set up through the expulsion and oppression of the Palestinian people. Similarly, the campaigns waged by professional Nazi hunters — as in the Demjanjuk case — have little to do with winning justice for victims of German imperialist massacres in World War II, much less preventing future holocausts.

World War II itself was not a war to stop fascism. It was actually three wars in one. First, it was an interimperialist war, in which the defeat inflicted by Washington and its allies on their rivals in Germany, Italy, and Japan did not eliminate the economic or social roots of fascism. Fascism, the most malignant form of maintaining imperialist rule, will arise again in periods of deep capitalist crisis.

The international conflict was also a war to roll back the Russian revolution, one in which the working people of the Soviet Union defeated the invasion by Hitler's armies and pushed back the imperialist powers' goal of restoring capitalism there. At the same time it was a war for liberation by many nations — from India and China to the Mideast — against their colonial oppressors in London, Tokyo, and elsewhere.

After the war the imperialist victors organized the Nuremberg trials, where 19 top Nazi officials were convicted — and 3 were acquitted — of war crimes. The trials, the *Militant* explained at the time, "had one main aim: To throw the whole blame for World War II on the German Nazis and to conceal the guilt of the Allied imperialists." The ruling capitalist families on both sides, the paper stressed, "are all equally guilty. They, together with their political representatives, are the war criminals."

Likewise, Tel Aviv, backed by Washington, sought to use the Demjanjuk trial to divert attention from its own war crimes and from the real cause of fascism and war — the capitalist rulers and their system. This is why they have no moral authority to conduct such a trial.

This does not mean working people cannot or should not press capitalist governments to bring killer cops, racist thugs, and other criminals to justice, as Feldman notes. Through such struggles, the government has been forced to prosecute its own cops, as in the Rodney King beating case, and individuals who perpetrate racist violence bred by the rulers' own system, as in the Howard Beach and Bensonhurst cases Feldman cites. While not ending police and racist violence, these victories raise the political confidence of working people and make it easier to point to the root of the problem — capitalism.

In the Demjanjuk and Nuremberg "war crimes" trials, on the other hand, the truth was not found in the courtroom. Working-class fighters must explain that the war criminals are in Tel Aviv and Washington.

— MARTIN KOPPEL

Canadian rail workers strike in British Columbia

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

About 1,600 rail workers organized by seven different unions have been on strike against British Columbia Rail since July 19. The

strike has completely halted freight and passenger services on Canada's third largest railway.

The company is refusing to negotiate with the workers, taking a hard line against their demand for a 30-month contract with a 2.05 percent increase in the first year, a 2.2 percent increase in the second year, and a cost-of-living adjustment of 1.1 percent in the last six months if the consumer price index rises above 3 percent.

Workers on the picket lines said they also oppose eliminating cabooses on the trains, demand an end to contracting out of work, and want to rescind suspensions of workers involved in job actions leading up to the strike.

Solidarity messages can be sent to 3876 Norland Avenue, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5G 3S8 or call (604) 983-2871. □

Iron Range taconite miners strike

On August 5 United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 2660 struck National Steel's taconite mine in Keewatin, Minnesota, and the 750 members of USWA Local 2705 struck Hibbing Taconite. Another 500 miners, members of USWA Local 6860, have granted daily contract extensions to the Eveleth mine as negotiations con-

tinued. All three mines are in northern Minnesota's Iron Range. An additional 1,800 USWA members are on strike at mines in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

This is the first strike on the Iron Range since the 142-day work stoppage in 1977.

One of the main issues in the strike is the union's demand for better pensions for retirees, with guarantees that the pensions will continue whatever the financial condition of the mine owners.

Thousands of retired taconite miners live on the Iron Range and many current miners are approaching retirement. Layoffs devastated working-class communities on the Iron Range in the 1980s. The mines have only recently begun to hire workers again, giving preference to miners with years of experience.

Swedish journalists win battle

In 91 years there has never been a wildcat strike among journalists in Sweden. But July 1 all journalists at the daily *Norrlandska Socialdemokraten*, a social democratic paper published in Luleå, in the north of Sweden, decided to go on strike because management fired Björn Torbjörnsson, the former chair of the local union, contending he was "difficult to cooperate with." He got one hour to leave the workplace.

The strike received a lot of financial and moral support. Within days a Mineworkers Union local donated \$10,000 from two strike funds.

The strike and the big support it got finally forced the employer after 15 days to come up with an offer that both Torbjörnsson and the strikers could accept. The unionist will be reinstated permanently on the editorial staff in Boden, a town north of Luleå, with four months' leave with full pay. "I am glad that my coworkers took

this action but am disappointed that union work is being punished by moving me to a local staff as they have done," he said. □

Oil workers hold women's conference

More than 200 Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) members, mostly women and a few dozen men, attended the first OCAW Women's Conference July 16-18 in Washington, D.C. Participants came from more than a dozen states, many attending their first union conference.

Participants attended various workshops. In the "Sexual Harassment/Discrimination" workshop, women and men discussed their experiences in dealing with discrimination against women. Most agreed that rather than relying on the company, workers have to work through their union and with fellow workers to combat sexual harassment on the job.

Striking United Mine Workers of America members and members of the Coal Employment Project, a

group that presses for the hiring of women in the mines, attended the conference. One thousand dollars was raised for the strike during the meeting. □

Timex strikers visit Connecticut

Four striking Timex workers from Dundee, Scotland, on a solidarity tour of the United States, joined a picket line in New Haven, Connecticut, August 4. They walked the picket line with members of Local 1199 of the hospital workers' union, who have been on strike since April 2 at the Winthrop Healthcare Center in New Haven. Discussions there focused on the health-care workers' fight against big cuts in health insurance being proposed by management.

Striking hospital workers want a contract that keeps their present level of medical benefits and also includes a 4 percent wage raise for each year of the pact. Winthrop refuses to sign such a contract, despite the fact that 1199 workers have won similar terms at 30 other nursing homes in the state.

The Timex strike in Dundee began January 29, and since then members of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union have visited workers throughout Britain, Ireland, France, Norway, Denmark, and the United States. □

The following people contributed to this week's column: Colleen Levis, member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 3020 in Vancouver; Marea Himmelgrin, member of USWA Local 9128 in Roseville, Minnesota; Birgitta Isacson in Stockholm, Sweden; Kathy Mickells, member of OCAW Local 8-901 in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania; and Will Wilkin, member of International Association of Machinists Local 609 in New Haven, Connecticut.

LETTERS

Demjanjuk

The editorial on the Demjanjuk case correctly explained that the imperialist trials of Nazi mass murderers have been an obstacle rather than an aid to the working-class struggle to prevent future holocausts. But I think some points need more discussion.

Those tried were "underlings," as the editorial said. But we know that being an "underling" confers no immunity for such crimes as initiating, planning, and executing the slaughter of millions of Jews.

The editorial pointed out that the U.S., Israel, and other imperialist powers have no "moral authority" to try World War II criminals. From the standpoint of the interests of the working class, they have no moral authority to try anyone or do anything else.

That didn't keep us from demanding that the teenaged thugs who killed Michael Griffith and Yusuf Hawkins, and the cops who beat up Rodney King, be arrested and punished, even though they were not "the criminals at the top" who are responsible for all police brutality and racist violence, and even though the rulers sought to use the trials that resulted to cover up the real roots and ultimate perpetrators of these crimes. But the differences between these trials and the trials of Nazi mass murderers were more important than the similarities.

The trials of the L.A. cops and of the racist killers in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst [in New York City] were forced on the rulers by the struggles and demands of working people. The fight helped to clarify the real roots of the attacks and fostered greater working-class self-confidence and independence of the criminals at the top.

Nuremberg and the subsequent war crimes trials were the opposite. The victorious imperialists initiated them to serve their purposes and controlled them every step of the way — including deciding which criminals would be held for show trials and which would be provided with safe and prosperous exiles. The credibility of the trials among working people reflected ground that had been lost in the fight for working-class independence of the capitalist rulers.

By the time World War II opened, more than 15 years of massive defeats to the working class had made the war inevitable and placed Roosevelt and Churchill in a strong position to sell the lie that the "democratic" imperialists were the alternative to fascist world conquest.

In my opinion, the U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies staged Nuremberg to prepare future wars, by painting themselves as humanitarian world cops against genocide, totalitarianism, and aggression. From the claim to be "leader of the Free World" in the "Cold War" to the struggle against "warlords" in

Somalia, the themes of the show trials have been central themes of U.S. war propaganda.

The issue for working people in the discussion of war crimes trials is the political independence of our class — no confidence in the rulers to solve any problem we face. Unlike Patrick Buchanan, we do not rally to the defense of "unjustly imprisoned" mass murderers. Aside from the Demjanjuk case, hardly any of these trials could be accurately described as a frame-up of the accused individuals.

We have nothing in common with those who berate Jews, Blacks, Armenians, Japanese, North and South American Indians, and others for "endlessly harping" on holocausts that took place decades or even centuries ago.

There is no lack of political and commercial exploitation of these events, but that is not the reason why people's minds return to them again and again. They have not been resolved. They have not been made right.

The victory of the working class and the end of capitalism, however, will make it possible for the holocausts against Jews and others to cease serving as warnings of things to come. They will be part of the common heritage of exploited humanity's struggle for liberation.

Fred Feldman
Brooklyn, New York

Eugene Debs

1993 marks the centennial of the formation of the American Railway Union, led by Eugene Debs, that became the landmark effort to organize labor along industrial lines. 1994 will be the centennial of the Pullman strike that culminated with the ARU's defeat at the hand of the federal government.

I hope the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press will be able to commemorate these centennials with articles and a pamphlet. With the deepening crisis of rail labor today, an understanding of this crucial episode is vital for rail unionists to go forward.

Jon Flanders
Albany, New York

Ballot restrictions

On July 15, just before recessing, the State Senate acted to make it even harder for independent candidates to get on the California ballot. AB 1173, by Assemblymember Gwen Moore of Los Angeles, was amended on the Senate floor to provide that independent candidates have only 60 days in which to circulate their petitions, instead of the existing 105 days. In addition, the amendment provides that independent candidates must now pay filing fees.

Existing law, since 1981, has provided that independent candidates need not pay filing fees. Instead they have to get 151,015 signatures for statewide office or approximately

9,000 signatures for Congress or State Senate in order to get on the ballot. Since the purpose of the filing fee is to keep the ballot from being too crowded, and these petition requirements accomplish the same objective, the filing fee was redundant.

But under the July 15 amendment to AB 1173, independent candidates will have to pay the filing fees (which are sometimes as high as \$2,500) and collect the same number of signatures they have always had to collect. Or, they can forego paying the fee, but must collect two separate petitions at different periods of time, one for 10,000 signatures and then another for 151,015 signatures (for statewide office).

The amendment was made after the bill had gone through the Election Committees in both houses, so it was impossible for any one from the public to protest, or even to know what was happening. Please call or write your state senator and say that the voter's right to vote for independent candidates is already too restricted, and that the July 15 amendment should be deleted.

Richard Winger
San Francisco, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Abortion foes defeated in Denver

BY BRIAN PUGH

DENVER — Operation Rescue and other antiabortion forces from around the country failed to close any abortion clinics here during Pope John Paul's August 9-15 visit.

Some 1,500 pro-choice activists out-mobilized rightist forces by a 10-1 ratio, striking another blow to Operation Rescue's summer campaign to shut down abortion clinics.

Operation Rescue and other groups sought to use the visit by the pope, who addressed 160,000 Catholic youth attending World Youth Day activities, to gain new forces to their rightist attacks on a woman's right to choose abortion.

Weeks prior to the announced campaign, antiabortion leaders claimed that thousands of people would be mobilized to stop all abortions during the pope's visit.

At an August 11 antiabortion rally in Denver, national Operation Rescue leader Joseph Scheidler told 175 people that the fight to stop abortion must be carried on by the youth. Another rightist group, Collegians Activated to Liberate Life, announced plans at the rally to organize antiabortion groups on college campuses. Operation Rescue claimed to have handed out 50,000 fliers to World Youth Day participants.

During the six-day campaign, however, only a handful of World Youth Day participants joined the antiabortion protesters, who never numbered more than 150.

Pro-choice activists from California, Minnesota, Iowa, Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Utah, Kansas, and Florida joined local activists to defend 10 sites that were targeted by antiabortion forces. Michael, a clinic defender, stated, "I'm here to defend



Eight hundred clinic defenders mobilized August 14 at Planned Parenthood in Denver, vastly outnumbering Operation Rescue supporters, who were unsuccessful in their last attempt to shut an abortion clinic during Pope John Paul's visit.

somebody else's choice."

Dozens of abortion rights supporters returned each day at 5:30 a.m. to keep the abortion clinics open. Groups of volunteers followed antiabortion forces every morning, alerting clinics of their arrival. At every single clinic that performed abortions, Operation Rescue was out-mobilized by clinic defenders.

During the week, antiabortion forces

picketed the homes of two doctors who perform abortions. At both residences, clinic defenders arrived first and outnumbered the right-wing forces.

After consistently being outnumbered by pro-choice fighters, Operation Rescue announced August 13 it no longer planned to close clinics during the pope's visit.

Abortion rights activists "have a lot of people out, which is good for us," Joe Slo-

venec, a national leader of Operation Rescue, contended. "Many women will turn away from this." But pro-choice leaders reported no clinic closings. All patients had kept their appointments.

On August 14, as 800 clinic defenders mobilized at Planned Parenthood to counter a final rally of 150 by Operation Rescue, Katherine Spillar of the Feminist Majority Foundation announced, "Operation Rescue and Rescue America were a total fizzle. Every woman who had an appointment was able to get inside without harassment."

The resounding defeat of Operation Rescue's forces here is one of the many blows pro-choice fighters have dealt the rightists, from Melbourne, Florida, to San Jose, California. Ed Martin, executive director of Rescue America in Ocala, Florida, said, "I think there's just apathy. We've become fat and lazy as Christians."

To celebrate the defeat of Operation Rescue, 150 clinic defenders gathered the evening of August 15 at the First Baptist Church to hear organizers and volunteers exchange experiences.

"We were asked by the police and the policymakers to close down for this week," said Sylvia Clark, director of Planned Parenthood. But the clinic stayed open. Clark said many patients responded that it was their constitutional right to enter and use the clinic. Patients and staff of Planned Parenthood said they appreciated the presence of the clinic defenders.

The victory party was held at a local pub over pizza and beer.

Unionists fight cop brutality in France

BY DEREK JEFFERS

SAINT OUEN, France — On July 26 a court acquitted Dominique Jean-Ernest, a 27-year-old metalworker born in the Antilles, on frame-up charges of armed battery against a police officer. In the weeks leading up to the trial the two main unions at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant here, where he works, waged a broad campaign in the factory to win support for the young worker.

Jean-Ernest had been chased down April 21 by a police car while bicycling to work through the Paris suburb of Argenteuil. The cops accused him of running a red light and not obeying their order to stop. The two cops then took him to a dead-end; one of them beat him savagely, calling him a "dirty Negro" who should be "fried in a microwave."

After being held for six hours at the local police station he was finally released. Cops charged him with armed assault against them, the alleged weapon being his bicycle. They also accused him of using insulting language and carrying a weapon — a pocket-knife he uses to prepare his lunch at work.

On retrieving his bicycle from the cops and mounting it, Jean-Ernest realized the handle bars and back wheel had been partly unscrewed. Meanwhile the cops watched and laughed.

Suffering serious head injuries, Jean-Ernest was unable to return to work for a month and has since had several relapses.

Spate of police brutality cases

The attack was one of a spate of police brutality cases reported since the step-up of the French rulers' anti-immigrant campaign. Following the crushing defeat of the Socialist Party government in the March parliamentary elections, the new conservative government of Prime Minister Edouard Balladur quickly launched a series of attacks on wages and social benefits, as well as hiking taxes. Minister of Interior Charles Pasqua, calling for "zero immigration," announced a series of anti-immigrant measures. Soon after, several immigrants in Paris, Chambéry and Wattrelos were killed by cops.

This has sparked a large number of protest actions, including a demonstration of thousands in Paris June 19 called by antiracist organizations and a number of unions.

At Jean-Ernest's plant, the two unions affiliated to the CGT and CFDT labor federations helped him find legal aid, and mobilized support from his coworkers. A group of mainly young workers was organized at several shops to campaign for the acquittal of Jean-Ernest. Some of these workers are union members and some are not.

The workers circulated a petition, eventually signed by 116, addressed to the prosecutor demanding the charges against Jean-Ernest be dropped. They gathered affidavits from 27 coworkers who volunteered as character witnesses. They also collected more than \$550 toward legal expenses. Virtually all of the workers in the coil-winding shop where Jean-Ernest works donated money.

Five Alsthom workers, including CGT

and CFDT union representatives, as well as a delegation of four Antilles-born workers sent by the national CGT, accompanied the young coil-winder to his hearing and presented the factory petitions to the authorities. This visible support was crucial to Jean-Ernest's court victory.

The two policemen, although summoned to appear in court, did not show.

The verdict acquitted Jean-Ernest on the major charges. It fined him \$500 for running a red light and refusing to obey a police order to stop.

This victory "can only encourage Dominique to go ahead with his suit" against the cops who beat him, stated the CGT and CFDT in a joint leaflet circulated at work after the trial.

Derek Jeffers is a member of the CGT at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant in Saint Ouen.

Hundreds rally to protect Canadian forest

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

CLAYOQUOT SOUND, British Columbia — One thousand people stood on the road August 9 in front of the Kennedy River Bridge in a protest to protect the old-growth forests of Clayoquot Sound. The road is the main route used by the MacMillan Bloedel company's logging trucks to enter the forest area.

Protesters came from all parts of British Columbia, many other parts of Canada, and from other countries including Chile and Germany.

After a MacMillan Bloedel official read a court injunction forbidding protesters from blocking access to the bridge, police moved in and arrested 300 people who remained on the road. Police charged all but 50 protesters who they said were too young. The demonstrators chanted, "If we all stay on the road, they can't arrest us all," and "The whole world is watching."

Many of the protesters, including those

arrested, were young. "I'm too young to vote so I'm here to support what I believe in," said 14-year-old Meegan McGillivray from Roberts Creek, British Columbia.

Two young environmental activists attending Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington, decided to come up for the protest after hearing of the mass blockade on the news. A single old-growth cedar is worth about \$30,000 to the giant forest companies.

When the New Democratic Party provincial government announced its decision to allow logging in 75 percent of Clayoquot Sound, environmental groups like Friends of Clayoquot Sound and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee stepped up the fight to save one of the largest areas of ancient temperate rain forest remaining in the world. More than 90 percent of the world's temperate rain forest has been destroyed. One quarter of what remains is in British Columbia.

Opposition to the government's decision

on Clayoquot Sound is widespread. In Vancouver 1,500 attended an August 2 rally to save the forest. More than 6,000 people have participated in the protests in Clayoquot Sound itself — a relatively remote area on Vancouver Island.

At the August 9 action, Friends of Clayoquot Sound leader Tzaporah Berman vowed to use the momentum "to win the fight to save Clayoquot Sound this summer." Activists are heartened by the fact that more forestry workers are joining the fight despite the official union position supporting the government decision on logging in the Sound. At least four forestry workers, including a faller from Ucluelet, are among the more than 400 arrested to date.

Environmental groups across Canada are organizing a cross-country car cavalcade beginning in Halifax on the east coast and picking up people across the country to arrive in Clayoquot Sound for a bigger protest September 5.