

THE MILITANT

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Cuba: thousands protest murder of navy officer

Workers, youth rally in Camagüey to defend revolution

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — Tens of thousands of working people and youth turned out in Camagüey, Cuba, August 14 to honor the life of Navy Lieut. Roberto Aguilar Reyes and show their support for the revolution. Thousands more filled the streets in the port city of Mariel the same day in memory of the fallen officer. Reyes's body was flown from Mariel to Camagüey, his hometown, for burial.

Reyes was gunned down August 9 by Leonel Macias González, a 19-year-old reservist who hijacked a boat with 26 people aboard and fled to the United States. Macias forced three other navy personnel overboard during the hijacking.

Demonstrators in Cuba were especially incensed by Washington's claim that there had been no murder. The U.S. Coast Guard took Macias into custody on his arrival in Florida along with 25 others on the stolen boat. U.S. authorities have so far refused the Cuban government's demand to prosecute Macias or return him to Cuba.

These events unfolded only a week after half a million Cubans mobilized in Havana to express their outrage at the murder of a Cuban police officer by hijackers who attempted to commandeer a local ferry to the United States August 4 but failed as the vessel ran out of gas.

The outpourings in defense of the Cuban revolution continued on August 15 and 16 when thousands of workers and others protested the illegal takeover by 700 Cubans of an oil tanker in the port of Mariel. The ship, the Jussara, has a Greek captain and operates under the Maltese flag. It is presently being rented by the Cuban government for fuel transportation between the Caribbean island's ports.

Those who boarded the ship had taken advantage of the fact that many thousands of Mariel's residents were at the wake for murdered navy officer Reyes.

The Cuban authorities stationed two boats to block the exit of the Jussara and informed those aboard that under no circumstances would the ship be allowed to leave. They also provided food for those on board, which included children.

After a 28-hour standoff everyone left the ship. The Cuban government took no action against those who had boarded it.

The recent hijackings and the workers' mobilizations
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Thousands join August 14 ceremony in Mariel, Cuba, to pay tribute to Roberto Aguilar Reyes, who was murdered in a hijacking.

Canadian Press

Belfast rally: 'British troops out now!'

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

BELFAST — Thousands of people marched here August 14 to demand an end to the presence of British troops in Ireland.

An August protest is held each year to mark the anniversary of the introduction in

1971 of internment — imprisonment without trial. This year the event coincided with the 25th anniversary of the deployment of British troops on the streets of Northern Ireland, and was projected as part of the buildup to a major national demonstration

to be held in Dublin on Saturday, August 20, to mark the anniversary.

In the week leading up to the Belfast march festivals were organized in different parts of the city to celebrate 25 years of resistance in the face of the British troop deployment. The determination to continue resisting was evident from march participants, who set off in different feeder marches.

This reporter joined the feeder that started in Andersonstown. To get to Andersonstown from the city center, you have to take a black cab, one of the hallmarks of the divided city. On the way, the taxi driver spoke of the situation in Northern Ireland. He said that he saw nothing "for us" in the Downing Street declaration, the joint statement of the London and Dublin governments concluded last December. He said that this was the overwhelmingly view among people living in the area. "I've been driving a cab for 25 years. When I started it was impossible for a Catholic to get a job. It's a bit better now, but the young people need a better chance."

Arriving at the assembly point early allowed a close-up view of the heavy deployment of British army and armed Royal Ul-

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British troops patrolling in Northern Ireland

Abortion rights foes set back in Mississippi

BY JANET POST
AND MAGGIE MCCRAW

MIAMI, Florida — The U.S. government's failure to defend a woman's right to choose abortion is feeding a polarization on the issue. Rightist assaults on abortion rights are meeting resistance from youth and other defenders of women's rights.

Clinic defenders dealt right-wing thugs in Jackson, Mississippi, a significant blow by successfully outmobilizing them August 6-13 during their "No Place to Hide" campaign sponsored by the American Coalition for Life. "We won't back down," said pro-choice activist Jessica Hartog, 23, from the University of Southern Mississippi. For two years Hartog has defended clinics in Mississippi and Florida.

Clinic defenders in Jackson consistently outnumbered anti-choice forces by 3-to-1. Abortion rights opponents made no serious attempts to block access to the clinic. By the end of the week both the national and local leaderships of the rightist groups had left town and the remaining right-wing cadres were demoralized, barely attempting to harass patients.

More than 100 clinic defenders from seven states came to Jackson. Some came for the first time, in response to the July 29 murder of Dr. John Britton and volunteer
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Spirits are high among Caterpillar strikers

BY KATHY MICKELLS
AND DEBORAH LIATOS

YORK, Pennsylvania — "Spirits are high, better than ever," was the sentiment expressed by John Ampsacher and James Newman, United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 786 members on strike against Caterpillar, during a recent visit here.

Morale on the picket lines was given a big boost by the August 1 solidarity rally organized by UAW Local 786 and other unions. A mass picket line of more than 500 unionists that day prevented most of the scabs from entering the plant. Claiming

Maintenance workers join UTU strike rally — page 11

the ground the union conquered with the rally, the strikers put up a street sign renaming the driveway into Caterpillar Scab Ave. Memory Lane. The highway in front of the plant was dubbed Union Blvd.

On August 2, Caterpillar filed a request for a permanent injunction against the strikers. In a mutual agreement between the UAW and Caterpillar, the union agreed not to hold mass rallies outside the plant, not to block the entrances to the company's buildings, nor interfere with traffic on Memory Lane. The company agreed to allow the union to continue to staff its picket
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Israeli rockets pound Lebanon

Israeli troops on August 10 blasted south Lebanon with high-explosive rockets. There was no word on damage or casualties from the attacks on the region where the Hezbollah group is located. Mobile rocket launchers were moved into the so-called "security zone" of southern Lebanon occupied by Israel. Tel Aviv had not used such military equipment since its invasion of Lebanon in 1982. That intervention forced the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its 8,000 fighters to leave what was then their main power base. The Hezbollah group, a Shiite Muslim group, is leading a campaign to drive Israel out of the 440 square mile zone in south Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Tel Aviv threatened to delay implementation of any Palestinian self-rule agreements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip if the PLO did not crack down on "extremists." On August 15, PLO security forces in Gaza arrested at least 13 members of Hamas, a Palestinian group that opposes the PLO-Israeli accords. The arrests followed two roadside ambushes in the Gaza Strip August 14, in which an Israeli civilian was killed and six others wounded. Hamas took responsibility for the attacks, saying they were revenge for the killing of two members of its group in a shoot-out with Israeli police officers near Jerusalem August 12.

Beijing facing bankruptcies

The Chinese government has been forced to finance massive bailouts over the last two years to help state-run companies pay wages. Almost one-half of China's 14,000 large and medium-sized enterprises are running at a deficit, and Chinese economists say more than 10 percent of state-run companies have stopped production.

Fearing an increasingly militant labor force, one Chinese official stated, "We are designing a system to take care of people who have lost their jobs." Major cities such as Beijing have set up unemployment insurance funds, although workers can only receive \$20 a month at most.

Russians fire on Japanese boats

A Russian coast guard vessel shot at two Japanese boats fishing off the South Kurile islands August 15, wounding at least one



Militant/HarveyMcArthur

Haitian refugees detained by U.S. military at Guantánamo, Cuba, during a visit by a group of journalists in December 1992, in which the *Militant* participated. Washington reopened the camps at Guantánamo Bay in early July and holds some 15,500 Haitians captive there today. Hundreds of refugees protested their living conditions on August 13, leading to a crackdown by U.S. army police.

crew member. The Itar-Tass news agency said the coast guard opened fire after the Japanese vessels, which were allegedly fishing in Russian Pacific waters, ignored orders to stop.

This was one of the most serious episodes in the 40-year dispute between Moscow and Tokyo over control of the islands. "We'll act the same way in the future," said Lieut. Gen. Vitaly Sedykh, the regional border guard chief, in justifying the actions by Russian authorities.

Controversy over plutonium

Authorities in Bonn claimed August 15 that members of Russian security services were involved in the smuggling of bomb-grade plutonium into Germany. German police arrested three couriers, two from Spain and one from Colombia, who flew in from Moscow with what officials said was more than 300 grams (10.6 ounces) of plutonium 239, which can be used to produce nuclear weapons. German officials claim the delivery was the first part of a

shipment of four kilograms of the material — nearly enough to build one bomb — in a \$250 million deal. They have also made unsubstantiated accusations that Iraqi government agents were involved in the purchase.

This was the third shipment of weapons-quality material from the former Soviet bloc seized in Germany in the last four months, according to authorities there. Russia's Atomic Energy Ministry announced August 15 that there was no plutonium 239 missing from its inventory. But Bonn rejected claims from Moscow that Russia is not the source of the smuggled plutonium, asserting that German government scientists could pinpoint the manufacturing laboratories in Russia where the nuclear material originated.

Sniper fire persists in Sarajevo

Sniper fire persisted in Sarajevo in mid-August despite an accord between rightist Serb forces and the Bosnian government to cease all such activities in the republic's capital. Sporadic clashes were reported throughout the country. UN authorities said Serb forces had obstructed UN convoys in eastern Bosnia.

Meanwhile, U.S. president Bill Clinton set a deadline of the end of October to ask the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia, if Serb forces led by Radovan Karadzic continue to reject the plan to carve up the former Yugoslav republic. This plan was drawn up by the governments of the United States, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom. A UN arms embargo has hampered the Bosnian government's military operations since the carnage began. Rightist Serb troops have received weapons and reinforcements from the regime in Belgrade.

Italian fascists clamor for Istria

The fascist National Alliance, which runs five ministries in Italy's government, has resurrected a territorial claim on the Istrian Peninsula. This area shifted from Italian to Yugoslav control after World War II. Following the 1991 breakup of Yugoslavia, Istria became part of Croatia and Slovenia.

Italy's foreign minister told Croatian and Slovenian officials in June that the fascists' demands for the return of Istria would not become official government policy. However, that same month the Italian government vetoed Slovenia's bid for associate membership in the European Union. Rome has pledged to do the same for Croatia until the property claims of Italians who left after the war and property demands of Italians living in Istria are settled.

In a related development, Italy's labor minister, Clemente Mastella, asserted August 12 that "New York's Jewish lobby" was behind the Italian lira's decline. Mastella is a member of the Christian Democratic Center party. The anti-Semitic remark caused embarrassment for the government of Silvio Berlusconi. After widespread news coverage of his remarks, Mastella was forced to issue a formal apology.

U.S. troops attack Haitians

After maintaining a news blackout on the story for two days, Pentagon officials admitted that hundreds of Haitian refugees, who are being held indefinitely at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, clashed with U.S. troops there on August 13. Some 15,500 Haitians who fled political and military repression in their homeland are crammed into prison camps on the base.

According to military officials, several hundred Haitians in one of the four camps began protesting against the horrendous living conditions there. They sang and chanted political slogans. The chanting quickly spread to the three other camps, involving about 750 Haitians. Some 45 Haitians and 20 U.S. police officers were injured in the confrontation.

About 120 refugees scaled the razor-sharp wire fences and tried to escape by swimming a mile and a half across Guantánamo Bay to sovereign Cuban soil. They were picked up by Coast Guard and Navy ships and forced back into the camp.

Judge overturns antigay law

A federal district judge ruled that an antigay rights measure approved by Cincinnati voters last November violated the First Amendment rights of homosexuals to participate in politics. The amendment eliminated sexual orientation as a basis for discrimination complaints. It also barred Cincinnati from enforcing laws based on sexual orientation. Eight states now ban discrimination against gays, and 11 other states have executive orders prohibiting discrimination against public employees who are gay.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Stop racist attacks!

From Wedowee, Alabama, where working people are protesting the racist conduct of the former high school principal, to countermobilizations against the Klan and the fight against racist attacks in Britain the *'Militant'* is on the scene with unparalleled coverage. Don't miss a single issue!



Michigan youth march against Klan

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Editor: GEORGE FYSON

Managing Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Business Manager: NAOMI CRAINE

Editorial Staff: Naomi Craine, Hilda Cuzco,

Martin Koppel, Sara Lobman, Greg Rosenberg,

Pat Smith, Brian Williams, Maurice Williams.

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represent the *Militant's* views. These are

expressed in editorials.

Seoul cracks down on student protesters

BY PAT SMITH

While proclaiming its support for improved relations with the North, the regime in Seoul is clamping down on students and other supporters of reunification of Korea. About 7,500 riot cops raided a Seoul campus August 14-15 and broke up protests demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops and unification of the peninsula.

The police fired tear gas on thousands of students at Seoul National University who defied a government ban on celebrations of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule 49 years ago. Many of the 10,000 students there fled the campus to avoid arrest. About 200 people were injured and 24 taken into custody.

At the same time, South Korean president Kim Young Sam formally offered to supply North Korea with modern nuclear equipment during a nationally televised speech. "This could well become the very first joint project for national development — leading to the establishment of a single community of the Korean people," Kim said. The president insisted that reunification of Korea, which was divided by Washington and Moscow following World War II, must be gradual, with the governments cooperating economically before they join politically.

Thousands of students protested in July against the jailing of youth who organized memorial services for the late North Korean president Kim Il Sung, or attempted to visit the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) to attend the funeral. South Korean cops announced in mid-July that they were conducting a nationwide sweep to find about 100 college students charged with handing out pamphlets eulogizing Kim. The military authorities also arrested leaders of a pro-unification organization after searching their homes. The South Korean regime is staunchly enforcing its national security law, which forbids political activity deemed favorable to the North.

In an attempt to justify the division of Korea, Seoul has portrayed the Korean War not as a war for national liberation, but as an invasion by the North, and painted Kim as a war criminal. "There has been a historic assessment that Kim Il Sung is responsible for a number of national tragedies," South Korean prime minister Lee Yung Dug told an emergency cabinet meeting July 18, "such as the consolidation of national division and fratricidal war," referring to Washington's brutal assault on and division of the peninsula.

The June 11 *Pyongyang Times* reported a growing resistance of unionists in South

Korea to attempts by management to freeze wages. The National Council of Trade Unions, which represents more than 1,700 unions, pledged to organize a campaign to demand wage hikes, the *Times* said. Some 20,000 workers in Seoul celebrated May Day and opposed concessions put forward by the government-controlled General Federation of Trade Unions. An unauthorized union of locomotive engineers is demanding pay raises, shorter working hours, and the right to carry out union activity. They walked off the job in late June. More than 100 rail workers were fired and hundreds more arrested following the four-day strike.

Meanwhile, representatives of the U.S. and North Korean governments issued a statement August 13 agreeing to strengthen economic and diplomatic ties, including the possibility of establishing full diplomatic relations. Both sides stressed that "important issues" still have to be resolved before the proposals are implemented. They promised to resume talks September 23. After eight days of negotiations, the two governments said they are "prepared to establish diplomatic representation in each other's capitals and to reduce barriers to trade and investment, as a move toward full normalization of political and economic relations."

Pyongyang is already developing a free trade and investment zone in the northern



About 7,000 students confront riot police at a banned pro-unification rally on Seoul's National University campus celebrating Korea's liberation from Japan 49 years ago.

region of the country. The North Korean government has revised its laws over the past year in order to open its markets more to international investment.

Washington also resolved to help the DPRK replace its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities with light water reactors. Pyongyang will halt construction of the 50 and 200 megawatt reactors, which produce more weapons-grade plutonium than light water reactors, and seal the Radiochemical Laboratory, which will be monitored by the International Atomic En-

ergy Agency.

Because the U.S. government deems economic and diplomatic dealings with the North illegal, Washington is asking Tokyo, Moscow, and Beijing to join Seoul in providing the technology and capital to build the new reactors.

Pyongyang is prepared to remain a party to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The U.S. government in return said it is prepared to provide the DPRK with assurances against the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Rwanda carnage engineered by Paris

BY GREG ROSENBERG

As the devastation of the lives of millions of working people continues to unfold in Rwanda and refugee camps in neighboring Zaire, new evidence has emerged implicating the previous Rwandan government in organizing the slaughter. These facts debunk the argument that a centuries-old "ethnic conflict" was at the heart of the killings of at least half a million people.

The old government formed and armed militias and gave them intensive training beginning in 1993 to prepare the slaughter. Government-aligned radio stations launched a months-long campaign railing against Tutsis.

Following the April 6 plane crash in which former Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana died, one station, run by the president's in-laws, broadcast statements such as "the grave is still only half full, who will help us to fill it?"

François Karera, the former mayor of Kigali and subsequently Prefect of the region surrounding the Rwandan capital, is now in exile in a rented villa in Zaire. "The Tutsi are originally bad," Karera told the *New York Times* in an interview that appeared in the August 15 issue. "The Tutsi have given the white people their daughters. Physically they are weak — look at their arms and their legs. No Tutsi can build; they are too weak." The ruling capitalist class in Rwanda, primarily Hutu in origin, used such demagoguery to bolster its hold on power.

Karera, who complained that he could no longer get his favorite Rwandan beer and had to drink cheap banana wine, lives only about 25 miles from where hundreds of thousands of Rwandans are living in cholera and dysentery infested refugee camps at Goma, Zaire. But his exotic palm-tree-filled compound is a world away from the conditions in the camps. "If the reasons are just, the massacres are justified," he opined. Karera had to leave his several houses in Kigali behind when he fled, as the former government collapsed in the face of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) offensive.

The new prime minister of Rwanda, Faustin Twagiramungu, was targeted to be killed by rightist militias, along with anyone else who bore his last name. Twagiramungu is Hutu. But as the founder of the main opposition party to Habyarimana, Twagiramungu narrowly escaped execution.

Some 2,500 troops sent to Rwanda by the French government are preparing to

withdraw from the region August 22, to be replaced by a military force under United Nations auspices. Paris, which profits from its cozy relationship with capitalist regimes throughout Francophone Africa, was dealt a blow by intervening in the Rwandan civil war too late to save the previous regime. The French government propped up the Rwandan government for many years in cooperation with Belgium, the former colonial power. It was Belgian imperialism that instituted the pass system arbitrarily classifying the population into ethnic groups.

Taking advantage of Paris's embarrassing setback, Washington has moved to assert its power in the region, deploying troops in Rwanda and Zaire under a humanitarian cloak.

Meanwhile, instability wracks the area. On August 11, thousands of working people in Goma, including some Rwandan refugees, demonstrated against the rampant thieving and brutality by Zairian soldiers in the area. Setting up roadblocks, they pelted the troops with rocks and chanted "throw the soldiers out!" after a well-known peddler was shot dead by a soldier who demanded money.

As French troops prepare to leave, thousands of inhabitants of the zones they control in southern Rwanda began heading toward the Zairian border. French officers have spread rumors that Hutus would be killed when Paris withdraws its forces.

The new government denies claims it is organizing killings in revenge. An RPF spokesperson, however, said up to 100,000 people could be tried for war crimes.

Strikes cripple economy in Nigeria

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Nigeria has entered its seventh week of political turmoil in the most serious crisis since a civil war erupted there almost 30 years ago. The Campaign for Democracy, a human rights coalition, has organized numerous antigovernment demonstrations. Strikes led by the trade unions in the critical oil industry and elsewhere have begun to cripple the economy.

The crisis began when the military refused to honor the results of the June 1993 presidential elections, and jailed the winner, Moshood Abiola, on June 23 of this year on treason charges. Working class actions began to spread July 4 when the Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers went on strike to demand the release of Abiola and the return to an elected civilian government.

The strikes have spread throughout the country as office workers, air traffic controllers, and hundreds of thousands of other workers have walked out alongside the oil workers to demand an end to military rule. Banks and offices have been closed for weeks.

During the first week of August Nigeria's largest oil refinery in the southeastern city of Port Harcourt was closed down when soldiers entered the plant and tried to force striking workers back to their jobs. Oil industry officials say it could take three weeks to repair equipment damaged during the army's assault. The closing of the refin-

ery means that unless Nigeria begins importing gasoline, the severe fuel shortages felt for several weeks in Lagos, the capital, will soon affect the entire country.

Nigeria, with a population of 90 million, is the world's 10th largest oil producer. Production has fallen by more than 25 percent since the strikes began, and oil prices have risen by about \$2 a barrel.

The actions by the mass democratic movement have weakened the military regime. The high court of Nigeria granted bail to Abiola on August 5, but with onerous restrictions. Abiola, however, refused the offer, rejecting the government's demands that he not address political rallies, talk to the press, or travel abroad.

Nigeria's rulers have now embarked on a course to promote ethnic divisions as a way to push back and possibly defeat the opposition. Military officials are attempting to blame the turmoil on members of the Yoruba ethnic group that Abiola is a member of. The present political crisis, however, was not brought on by ethnic divisions but by a decade of falling living standards, collapsing social services, and the trampling of civil liberties.

Femi Adewole, an idled office worker who had not been paid for weeks, captured the sentiment of millions determined to press the struggle against the dictatorship. He told the *New York Times*, "This strike hurts everyone a lot. Our only hope is that it will hurt the military most of all."



Workers in Goma, Zaire, and some Rwandan refugees pelt the Zairian troops with rocks protesting their thieving and cruelty. They chanted, "throw the soldiers out!"

Mandela calls for strengthening the ANC

BY GREG ROSENBERG

South African president Nelson Mandela is expected to make a major speech to Parliament in Cape Town August 18 to accelerate the fight against the legacy of decades of apartheid rule. Mandela will speak as hundreds of thousands of working people are engaging in strikes, land occupations, and other protests, demanding rapid action on their calls for increased wages, decent housing, and land.

Mandela told an audience of 4,000 people in Seshego August 13 that regarding the pace of measures he has called for to benefit the oppressed and exploited "delivery should start, however modest it may be."

Mandela also stated that the ANC is in disarray since many of its central leaders assumed government posts and that more leadership attention is required to organize and build it.

"There has been complete dislocation and our organization is literally in tatters because our leadership is not there," the ANC president said. "I have decided...that every Monday I will be at Shell House, the headquarters of the ANC." These remarks drew loud cheers in the northern Black township.

Mandela has repeatedly argued, well before the April elections that opened a new stage in the democratic revolution underway in South Africa, that the fight for the ANC's stated goals — a nonracial, non-sexist, democratic republic — cannot be undertaken without building the ANC as a mass organization that functions not just within the boundaries of the constituent assembly but as an integral part of the struggles of working people.

Strike wave continues

Some 100,000 workers are out on strike, including 25,000 auto workers who have shut down factories across the country. "In a country like South Africa, with obscene disparities, where workers have been denied their basic human rights, current developments are hardly surprising," said Sam Shilowa, general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). "Workers are determined that the emerging economic upswing, and the apartheid dividend which democracy will bring, must not only benefit the rich at the expense of the poor. They are sick and tired of being asked to tighten their belts," Shilowa said.

Some 316,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) began voting on a "final" pay offer from the Chamber of Mines, representing the owners. The results are expected by August 28. If miners reject the bosses' offer of a 9.25 percent wage increase, they will launch their first nationwide walkout in seven years. The union has reduced its pay demand to 11 percent from 15 percent.

South Africa is the world's largest producer of gold. Spokespeople for the mining bosses estimate that they have lost about 15 tons of production in strikes by miners between April and June.

Another fight is on between the Shoprite/Checkers supermarket chain and workers organized in the South African Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers' Union. (SACCAWU) Union officials are threatening a nationwide strike if the company fails to meet their demands. Workers at 25 stores in the PWV (Pretoria,



Mandela at last ANC national conference, Jan. 21, 1994. He told delegates to the Reconstruction and Strategy meeting that "in the face of what lies ahead of us, the need for [the ANC to be] rooted among the masses, is even greater. Whatever else we do, we must have the strength to continue to build such an organization."

Witwatersrand, Vereeniging) region are out on an "illegal" strike. Bosses have fired some 500 employees. COSATU says it plans to intensify a consumer boycott of the stores.

COSATU called off a general strike

planned for August 8 in the PWV region after SACCAWU workers settled a fight with the Pick 'n Pay chain.

Big business is screaming for government intervention to break the strikes. The ANC and COSATU, however, have

launched a draft labor bill to be presented to Parliament. It would guarantee workers' right to strike. The fight for a new labor law will likely be one of the topics of discussion at COSATU's national convention, which takes place September 7-10 in Soweto.

ANC leader Thabo Mbeki, deputy president of South Africa, answered questions on the floor of Parliament August 10. "Why has the Government of National Unity not as yet taken appropriate steps in the current labor unrest which is spreading like wildfire through our country?" asked Trevor Lee of the National Party.

Mbeki responded that "government is...of the view that we must respect the process of collective bargaining." Queried about the implementation of affirmative action plans, Mbeki said that the "constitutional guarantee of job security has to address at the same time the questions of gender and race discrimination" in public service jobs.

The government launched a multimillion rand (1 rand = US\$27) public works program at the beginning of August, a key element of the ANC's program to radically reduce massive unemployment in South Africa.

The goal is to employ hundreds of thousands in the construction of roads, development of rural areas, and other projects to develop the warped South African infrastructure. Initial plans will give priority in hiring to unemployed youth and women.

Chiapas, Mexico, convention urges defeat of ruling party at all costs

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The National Democratic Convention, sponsored by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), took place August 6-9 in the southern Mexico state of Chiapas. Estimates of those attending ranged from 5,000 to 6,000 delegates and observers. The meeting's central political feature was its backhanded support to the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in the August 21 presidential elections in Mexico. Cárdenas is the candidate of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), the liberal capitalist opposition to the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). According to recent opinion polls, the PRI's candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, is widely favored to win the vote.

A broad spectrum of groups that speak in the name of the working class in Mexico participated in the meeting. A large number of PRD partisans sporting signs and posters were in attendance. Some delegates chanted "Death to the PRI!" Peasant organizations and community groups were also represented.

A resolution to openly endorse the Cárdenas candidacy failed, but the delegates

declared a central priority to be defeating the PRI at the polls. For all intents and purposes, the convention was a clarion call for the Cárdenas campaign, with EZLN support. Cárdenas's advisers had worked to distance him from the convention's actions, however, worried that open backing from the EZLN would erode his electoral support among a growing middle class and sections of the Mexican bourgeoisie.

Cárdenas was a prominent PRI government figure until he split from the ruling party in 1987. He ran for president the following year, in a bid that attracted the support of virtually the entire Mexican left.

There are no fundamental disagreements between Cárdenas and the candidates of the two other major capitalist parties contesting the election — the PRI, and the right-wing National Action Party (PAN). All support the steps being taken by the capitalist families in Mexico to restructure the mainly agricultural country into one that will serve as both a market for consumer commodities and a platform for exporting manufactured goods. The ruling families on both sides of the Rio Grande

stand to make a hefty profit in this common effort, in which the North American Free Trade Agreement was but one step.

An opinion column by Cárdenas in the August 12 *Wall Street Journal* was headlined "Mexico's Left is Committed to Market Reform."

"It is vital that investors and all people of good will understand that the government and its party no longer guarantee economic health, the promise of social reform or the political stability that we have strived so hard to accomplish," Cárdenas argued. He insisted that "wage increases should be the result of profits generated each year through the increase of productivity."

Peasant rebellion and EZLN trajectory

EZLN leader Subcommander Marcos addressed the convention in Chiapas on August 8. He gave support to the threat issued by Cárdenas supporters and other delegates that massive civil disobedience will occur if the election is marked by fraud. The PRD maintains that the ruling PRI won the last presidential elections through tampering with the election returns.

The EZLN had earlier demanded the resignation of Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Marcos said it would be up to the participants in the convention to decide whether the election was fair.

In an interview published in the July 28 *Miami Herald*, Marcos stated, "In the extreme case that [the PRI] wins and is not ready to follow the democratic convention's program, there could be a government in rebellion."

The EZLN attained prominence through its organization of a peasant uprising that began January 1 in Chiapas, one of the most backward regions of Mexico.

The peasants demanded land, better living conditions, and expanded democratic rights. The Zapatistas have since worked toward alignment with liberal and social democratic forces in Mexico. They have targeted the PRI's decades-long control over the government under the guise of democratizing Mexico.

Since the widespread corruption, thievery, and fraud organized by the ruling party, along with its belt-tightening moves, are hated by millions of working people, EZLN demands have gained a broad hearing.

Convention workshops issued pronouncements on topics such as "Transition to Democracy," "Peaceful Means of Change and Elections," and "Constituent Assembly and New Constitution."

Thousands of marchers in Belfast demand 'British troops out now!'

Continued from front page

ster Constabulary officers who combed the housing estates for an hour and a half leading up to the march. Hundreds more members of the security forces in full battle dress, dozens of armored Land Rovers, and other armored wagons lined all major junctions along the entire length of the march route.

Many marchers carried banners from their particular area or from the movements they represented, such as the campaign to ban the use of plastic bullets, or in support of the prisoners jailed as a result of the British occupation. Others carried cards with the names of prisoners or posters bearing the slogan "Bring all our prisoners home." One prisoner who served 19 years of a 25-year sentence and had been released for a weekend's home leave joined the demonstration. Phelim O'Hagan brought a message to the end-of-march rally from the prisoners in the H-Blocks of the Maze prison (previously known as Long Kesh).

Other messages were given by Larry Quinn of Noraid, from representatives of Basque nationalists, and from the Troops Out Movement in Britain.

For the first time, the authorities permitted the march to rally at Belfast City Hall. In previous years, attempts to march to city hall were met with fierce repression from the security forces. The new stand of the authorities was evidently part of the series of moves that have surrounded what has become called the "peace process" — the attempt by the Westminster government in London, with the backing of Dublin, to establish a new governmental arrangement in relation to Northern Ireland. London is prepared to jettison the old constitutional setup in an attempt to safeguard the best conditions for the exploitation of labor. On the eve of the demonstration, the Royal Ulster Constabulary chief, Sir Hugh Annesley, announced that an IRA cease-fire would be met by "a reduction in the level of army support and coverage."

The main speaker at the rally, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams, said the issue of peace was a priority for his organization. Ending the conflict could only be done through dialogue, the Sinn Fein leader said, as he called for "an end to the Loyalist death squads, British troops off our streets, an end to all armed actions, and the prisoners must go free."

FOR FURTHER READING

- ◆ **The Coming Revolution in South Africa** by Jack Barnes
- ◆ **The Future Belongs to the Majority** by Oliver Tambo
- ◆ **Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola** two speeches by Fidel Castro. In *New International* no. 5. \$9.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail please include \$3.00 to cover postage and handling.

New International

THE COMING REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The future belongs to the majority

Why Cuban volunteers are in Angola

— 5 —

Workers support framed-up unionist

BY NAOMI CRAINE

(Last in a series)

"This demonstrates a small but real victory for the campaign for my defense and freedom," wrote Mark Curtis in July, describing his new job on a "gate pass." Prison officials had just granted Curtis permission to work outside the gates of the John Bennett Correctional Center in Fort Madison, Iowa. Curtis, a union activist and socialist, has been jailed for nearly six years on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. A gate pass is considered a step on the road to minimum security and eventual release.

This small concession did not come from out of the blue. Hundreds of workers, youth, farmers, and supporters of democratic rights wrote to the Iowa parole board and other state officials calling for Curtis's release in the months before the decision, making it difficult for the prison authorities to justify their stance of refusing Curtis any advancement.

The previous eight parts of this series reviewed the facts in Curtis's case, including the immigrant rights fight he was part of at the time he was arrested, beaten, and falsely charged with attempting to rape a Black teenager; what happened at his trial; his victory in an anti-police-brutality lawsuit; and the continuing fight by Curtis and his supporters around the world to politically break the frame-up and get him out of prison.

The day after Curtis began his new gate-pass job as a janitor in the maximum security prison next door to John Bennett, a federal judge in Des Moines turned down his petition for writ of habeas corpus. In this appeal, Curtis argued that the state of Iowa was holding him in violation of basic constitutional guarantees of a fair trial and due process of law.

Federal district judge Charles Wolle rejected the appeal July 14, claiming the "petitioner's theories for habeas relief are without merit."

What were Curtis's "theories?" The petition filed by his attorneys gave numerous examples of how the unionist's rights were violated at his 1988 trial. These include not allowing Curtis to present evidence that the cop who arrested him had been disciplined in a previous case for brutalizing a suspect and lying about it, not instructing the jury that Curtis's alibi during the time of the alleged assault was grounds for acquittal, and refusing to allow the defense attorneys to present evidence and a legal case that the Des Moines cops framed up Curtis because of their institutional bias against him.

All this was alright for the court, however. "Petitioner argues the cumulative effect of the excluded evidence rendered his trial fundamentally unfair," Wolle wrote. "But 'cumulative error does not call for habeas relief, as each habeas claim must stand or fall on its own.'"

Role of the courts

Wolle's ruling is a sharp reminder to those who toil for a living: workers can't look for justice in the capitalist courts — something many working people know from daily experience. Judges across the country routinely turn down appeals like Curtis's with little regard for the facts. And one aspect of the government's so-called war on crime has been to limit the rights of prisoners to appeal.

The job of the courts, like the cops, is to protect and serve capitalist rule. Overturning police frame-ups and false convictions does not fit with serving those ends.

One well-known example is the case of Gary Graham, a young Black man on death row in Texas. Despite several witnesses who came forward to say Graham was not the man they saw commit the 1981 murder he was convicted of, the government repeatedly refused to give him a hearing, saying new evidence could not be introduced more than 30 days after the original trial. Only under the political pressure of years of campaigning by the Gary Graham Defense Committee did the Texas Court of Criminal Appeal agree in April 1994 to consider the new testimony. Even now, the government is demanding that Graham must prove his innocence — instead of the prosecution having to prove his guilt.

In cases of political prisoners, the government can be even more blatant. Native American rights activist Leonard Peltier has won widespread international support during his 18 years in prison on frame-up charges of killing two FBI agents. His requests for a new trial or parole have been consistently denied, despite evidence that the FBI lied and falsified affidavits and the admission of the prosecutor that the government doesn't know who shot the cops. So Wolle's ruling on Curtis's appeal is no big surprise.

To working people, however, the "cumulative error" of excluded evidence in Curtis's case is not a small or unimportant question. The democratic safeguards that have been shoved aside by the prosecutors and prison officials in this instance are needed by the entire working class, especially when strikes and other fights break out.

For this reason, Curtis's defense case is very attractive to workers and young people who are engaged in struggles around the world. Messages of support have come from as far away as meatpackers in New Zealand and members of the Movement of Rural Landless Workers in Brazil to civil rights activists in Des Moines.

Workers on strike, trade unionists, revolutionary minded youth, activists in battles against police brutality and frame-ups, and other fighters can easily identify with Curtis's fight for justice.

Letter from Yellowknife miners

"I'm writing on behalf of Al Shearing and myself," stated framed-up unionist Tim Bettger. "I'd like to express my admiration for you at this time and also to say a most heartfelt thanks. There are no small contributions. Every one is great, because it is funds we never had before."

Shearing and Bettger are members of the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers union charged last October with a series of offenses because of their role in an 18-month strike against Royal Oak Mines at Yellowknife, Northwest Territories in Canada. Union brother Roger Warren was also framed on nine counts of first degree murder in the death of nine replacement workers who were killed by an explosion in the mine Sept. 18, 1992.

The miners pushed back the company's attempt to slash safety inspections, discipline injured workers, and roll back seniority rights. After a determined struggle they returned to work with a contract and their union intact. But frame-up charges against three of the unionists still stand.

"We empathize deeply with your situation," Bettger wrote Curtis. "We were a little preoccupied with the situation at hand. Namely the erroneous charges being leveled at Al and myself by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. Incidentally, we refer to them as the ROMPs, the Royal Oak Manipulative Police."

"I'm pleased to be able to tell you that after our preliminary hearing, Al and myself were released on bail and tasted fresh air and freedom for the first time in eight months and four days on June 22 of this year. During the hearing...the judge dismissed many of the charges against us.... Al and I are not worried about our trial, but we have certain concerns for Roger Warren. His trial begins in September.... There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that Roger is innocent," Bettger wrote.

"Mark, I know that you have been incarcerated for a much longer time than we spent in. I know the frustrations you must be feeling, as we felt them too," the unionist said. "While we were not physically assaulted [by the police] as you were, we did go through 13 months of the most intense character assassination when the ROMPs were openly telling anyone who would listen that Al and myself were the murderers."

"I want you to know that when this is all over we will be doing whatever we can to get a retrial for you and a settlement for previous ills suffered. These things don't often happen for labor prisoners, especially not political labor prisoners," Bettger wrote. "But we have learned some useful strategies, which hopefully, we can utilize. I have heard from impeccable sources that you are a fellow of indomitable spirit and



Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

Mark Curtis defense table at Free Leonard Peltier rally, Washington, D.C., June 26.

you are to be commended for this."

The union activist closed his letter of solidarity to Curtis by writing, "We salute you. We now know the true meaning of the words, 'an injury to one is an injury to all.' And some other words, which were taught to me by my good friend Harold David of the CAW [Canadian Auto Workers]—illegitimus non carborandum est! (don't let the bastards wear you down). With solidarity we are strong."

Supporters of the cops and prosecution often point out that Curtis was a rank-and-file union member, not an official, to assert that the cops had no reason to frame him. But this is precisely why Curtis came under attack. He was part of a vanguard of fighters who were coming forward in packing-houses and other struggles.

At the time of his arrest and frame-up, Curtis was involved in a fight against victimization by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of 17 Latino coworkers at the Swift meatpacking plant in Des Moines, Iowa. He had taken part in supporting the wave of strikes that swept the meatpacking industry in the mid-1980s in response to the bosses' unrelenting drive to speed up production while slashing workers' wages and benefits.

The young political activist was also part of fights to defend women's right to abortion, against police brutality and racism, and other social struggles. When they beat him in the Des Moines jail following his arrest, the cops called Curtis "a Mexican lover, just like you love those coloreds," revealing the real reason for the frame-up.

Workers like Curtis who think and act independently to defend the interests of the working class are a danger to the bosses and their government. And in today's conditions of working-class resistance in the midst of a worldwide depression, there will be many more Mark Curtises.

Tens of thousands of workers in the auto, rail, rubber, and other manufacturing industries across the country are taking part in strikes and labor battles. Many more are looking to these fights and think-

ing out how to wage their own struggles.

This is a better time than any in the last couple of years to win support for Curtis's case. The response of workers in central Illinois, where labor battles against the bosses at Caterpillar, A.E. Staley, and Firestone are going on simultaneously, illustrates the possibilities.

Staley workers

Two recent endorsers of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee are Frank Travis and Fred Hicks, workers who have been locked out by Staley for more than a year. Both are among the nearly 30 "Road Warriors" in their union local who travel around the country winning support for their fight among other workers.

In a phone interview, Travis explained why he decided to endorse Curtis's defense effort. "I saw an injustice," he said. "That's why I'm willing to write a letter [to the Iowa parole board] and support him in any way I can. 'Being a Road Warrior, I've been all over the country,' he said. 'There is truly a war with labor going on in the United States.'"

Working people involved in different struggles "need to get together and talk about things," Travis said. "We need more people willing to fight. [Curtis] was a fighter — that's how he got in trouble with the police."

Five other unionists in Illinois asked to be on the defense committee's mailing list at a June 25 rally to support the Staley workers, including two striking Caterpillar workers.

As Curtis and his supporters gear up for another campaign to press for his release on parole this fall, it is among these working-class fighters and others who look to their struggles that the defense campaign will win the best hearing.

The first eight parts of this series appeared in the April 19, May 3, May 17, June 7, June 28, September 6, September 27, and December 20 issues of the 'Militant' in 1993. They can be ordered for \$1.50 each from the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

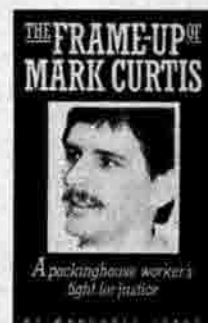
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Mark Curtis Defense Committee

The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis

A Packinghouse Worker's Fight for Justice

The story of the frame-up of unionist and political activist Mark Curtis on rape and burglary charges. His real crime, in the authorities' eyes, is that he is part of a layer of young workers active in supporting the rights of immigrants, strengthening the unions, and campaigning against U.S. government intervention from Cuba to the Mideast. Pathfinder booklet. \$5.00



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• **Freedom and Justice for Mark Curtis: An Answer to a Slander Campaign.** Pamphlet. \$2.00

• **The Frame-up of Mark Curtis** 49-minute video produced by Hollywood director Nick Castle. \$15.00

FOR INFORMATION OR TO ORDER, WRITE TO: MARK CURTIS DEFENSE COMMITTEE, BOX 1048, DES MOINES, IA 50311.

Sales pick up before drive

BY PAT SMITH

Sales of the socialist press have been picking up even before the 10-week drive to win thousands of new readers begins September 3.

Volunteers petitioning to get the Socialist Workers slate on the ballot in New York visited a spirited picket line of Mexican and Greek workers on strike against the Viand coffee shop in Manhattan August 11. "The workers," reported one of the campaigners, "have been turning away customers and replacement workers by explaining the extremely long hours they were forced to work at subminimum wages and the abusive working conditions they face. Some have even been slapped by the boss. Now they are chanting, leafleting, carrying banners and signs and organizing rallies."

"We were warmly greeted by the strikers, who were very young and militant," the socialist campaigner said. "We sold a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* as well as three single copies."

In cities all over the world, supporters of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International* have found a similar response to the socialist periodicals, as they take part in political activities shoulder-to-shoulder with fighting workers and youth.

Distributors in Miami sent sales teams to Pensacola, Florida, immediately after the murder of Dr. John Britton and his escort Jim Barrett. Seth Galinsky reported that team members talked with workers and youth there and sold 15 copies of the *Militant* in an hour and a half. A Pepsi-Cola



Militant/Lisa Potash

SWP candidate for Congress Ed Warren selling *Perspectiva Mundial* in N.Y.

driver who defends a woman's right to abortion, told distributors, "I need some dignity on my job." He was responding to a *Militant* article on the Caterpillar strike.

Many workers in factories, unemployment lines, and working-class communities of Miami picked up the paper to find out more about the mobilization of half a million Cubans defending the socialist revolution featured on the front page of last week's issue.

Four members of the United Steelworkers of America at Mag Corp. in Salt Lake City, Utah, purchased the *Militant* at the plant gate this week and wanted to discuss several of the articles, particularly those on the Caterpillar strike. Distributors there organized a special sale to talk with the steel-

workers, whose contract expires soon.

Distributors in Detroit regularly organize sales in places where young people get together. Cindy Jaquith discussed abortion rights with dozens of young people at the Ferndale Art Festival in the Detroit suburb. "A lot of people shouted 'keep up the good work' and 'I support you' as they walked by our table and sign reading 'Defend a woman's right to abortion,'" Jaquith reported.

A group of male high school students approvingly declared, "you women gotta do what you gotta do!" Many young women and men stopped to talk about the murder of Dr. Britton at a clinic in Pensacola, Florida. They were very receptive to the *Militant* editorial that called for sending federal troops to defend abortion clinics. A number of them connected the attack on abortion rights with the rightist assaults in Wedowee, Alabama.

We urge distributors who have not already notified the *Militant* business office of the targets they adopted for the sales campaign to do so by Tuesday, August 23. In making final decisions on local goals, please note that the targets for *Militant* subscriptions and copies of the *New International* do not yet add up to the overall goals.

All subscriptions and reports of sales of the *New International* received in the *Militant* Business Office by noon EDT each Tuesday will appear in that week's chart. We urge readers to send short notes and photos of sales experiences every week.

WHERE WE STAND

Goals by distributors in each area

	Militant	Perspectiva Mundial	New International
Australia*	30	8	18
Britain			
London	70	3	37
Manchester*	50	3	20
Sheffield	40	1	14
Britain total	160	7	71
Belgium	2	2	1
Canada			
Montreal*	80	25	45
Toronto	90	17	35
Vancouver	85	13	27
Canada total	255	55	107
France	4	5	6
Greece*	11	1	6
Iceland	13	1	4
New Zealand			
Auckland*	75	5	30
Christchurch*	35	1	8
Wellington*	5	0	4
NZ total*	115	6	42
Puerto Rico*	2	5	4
Sweden*	40	20	15
United States			
Albany	10	1	3
Albuquerque	7	2	2
Atlanta*	105	15	25
Birmingham*	75	5	15
Boston*	115	36	52
Brooklyn*	110	36	65
Chicago	145	32	50
Cincinnati	10	5	4
Cleveland	95	16	20
Denver	5	3	2
Des Moines*	85	36	35
Detroit*	100	11	27
Edinboro	6	1	3
Ft. Madison	2	1	2
Greensboro	65	4	15
Hartford*	5	1	4
Houston*	60	12	18
Los Angeles*	230	101	105
Miami*	120	55	70
Morgantown	55	1	17
New Haven*	10	2	8
New York*	145	40	70
Newark*	140	35	50
Philadelphia*	125	30	47
Pittsburgh	105	12	26
Portland	2	1	2
Salt Lake City*	110	16	35
San Francisco*	150	42	70
Seattle	80	12	23
St. Louis	80	6	22
Twin Cities*	125	17	35
Washington, D.C.	85	30	35
U.S. total	2,562	617	957
TOTAL	3,194	727	1,231
DRIVE GOALS	3,300	700	1,250
*ADOPTED GOALS			

Committees of Correspondence attracts 300 to national conference in Chicago

BY JOHN STUDER

CHICAGO—A little more than 300 people gathered here over the July 22-24 weekend for the second national conference of the Committees of Correspondence. The organization—which refers to itself as CoC—was formed after a third of the delegates left the national convention of the Communist Party in 1991, naming themselves after a group active in the U.S. struggle for independence from Britain in the 1770s, CoC leaders say.

The group reached out to "network" with other political activists and held a national conference in July 1992 in Berkeley, California, which attracted 1,300 people.

"Many of us are 'former-somethings'—Communists, Maoists, Trotskyists, social democrats, etc.," the booklet welcoming people to the Chicago gathering said. In addition to former members of the Communist Party, others came from the now-dissolved Line of March organization; activists formerly associated with other Maoist groups such as Carl Davidson; a split-off from Socialist Action, a group which calls itself Trotskyist, led by Barry Sheppard and Malik Miah; and followers of a progressive investment counselor in Berkeley, Peter Camejo. In addition, members of other groups attended, such as the Workers World Party.

Many of those involved in the

conference have evolved different political views in attempting to come to grips with momentous changes in world politics following the 1987 stock market crash and the disintegration of Stalinist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Carl Davidson, for instance, now serves as the managing editor of *cy.Rev.*, which its editors describe as "A journal of Cybernetic Revolution, Sustainable Socialism & Radical Democracy."

The conference was projected as a meeting to form a new radical organization in the United States. Documents were circulated in the group's newsletter for discussion, including a perspectives document entitled "For a democratic and socialist future," a draft national program, and a paper on electoral perspectives.

"Coming out of the Reagan/Bush years, we have yet to regain much of what was lost politically and economically," the Draft National Program states. "The character of the next three to five year period, therefore, must first of all be the defense of working people and our communities."

"Our work," the document continues, "must proceed from the fact that the socialist/left/progressive movement has become marginalized to a great extent." Among the practical tasks listed were developing "an effective fightback against racism and anti-immigrant attacks," demands for full employ-

ment, and "an approach to defending the rights of the working class of the future—our children and youth."

There was little discussion at the conference on the labor battles now unfolding across the United States, such as the national strike against Caterpillar.

Many CoC supporters had high expectations on attendance because of the size of the group's gathering two years ago. But many participants seemed clearly disappointed in the small size of the Chicago event. Several speakers during the conventions' sessions complained about what they called overwhelming pressures in trying to find their political bearings in the world today.

Manning Marable, a national cochair of the group, said that since 1980 "we have experienced years of pessimism and retrenchment on the left." He ended his remarks by pointing to some recent developments in the world that conference delegates could look to for "hope for a return to the romance of radical democracy and the promise of revolution." Those included the victory of the ANC in South Africa's first ever nonracial elections, he said, the revival of what he described as "reform minded" leaders of the former ruling Stalinist party of East Germany (now called Party of Democratic Socialism), the presidential campaign of Cauthémoc Cárdenas in Mexico, and the direction of the

NAACP under the leadership of Benjamin Chavis.

The convention considered a list of nine possible names for the group, including Alliance of the Democratic Left, Committees for Democratic Socialism, Movement for Democratic Socialism, Socialist Alliance, United Demo-

cratic Left, United Socialists of America (USA), Alliance for Democracy and Socialism, and Movement for Socialism. The delegates voted to retain the name Committees of Correspondence.

On Saturday night, organizers

Continued on page 10

Pathfinder launches \$125,000 fund

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

OBERLIN, Ohio — Pathfinder, the publisher of books featuring the struggles of the working class and the works of its revolutionary leaders, launched a \$125,000 fund drive at a rally at Oberlin College here August 6. More than 700 people attended, including industrial workers and high school and college students. They responded enthusiastically to the fund appeal, shouting out in unison the pledges and cash donations they made, cheering on emcee Maggie Trowe, jumping up and down, and doing the "wave."

By the end of the 45-minute rally, pledges and cash contributions totaled \$99,186. "It's a wonderful response," said Trowe, a representative of Pathfinder. "It bodes well for going over the goal by the November 15 deadline." The event took place at the closing of an international socialist conference that coincided with the 37th convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

The fund was launched to help Pathfinder keep in print and continue to upgrade its entire backlist of some 300 titles, and publish new books. This fall, Pathfinder will publish the definitive English-language edition of the *Bolivian Diary* of Ernesto Che Guevara, one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution. It will include detailed maps of Guevara's itinerary and interviews with some of his



Some of the 750 participants at rally launching Pathfinder Fund at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, August 6 chant pledges and contributions they and others made.

co-combatants, with whom Guevara fought to extend the socialist revolution in the Americas in the 1960s. Previous editions of the book have long been out of print. The fund will also help Pathfinder continue its half-price offer to any prisoner who orders any book that Pathfinder prints.

"The book industry is undergoing a major restructuring with enormous economic pressures from a falling rate of profit," said Trowe in an interview. "This has led to a shrinking number of bookstores and the development of superstores. The smaller chain stores are retrenching, keeping books

on the shelves for shorter periods of time. Many independent stores are closing due to the rising competition. Some small publishers have responded by cutting their backlist or older, slower selling books to concentrate on the faster, better sellers," she said.

"Pathfinder, however, is committed to keeping its entire backlist in print, publishing the books working people need, regardless of any immediate profit to be made," Trowe added. "These books represent the irreplaceable, accumulated political experience of the working class, presented in the speeches and writings of communist leaders."

Jack Willey, a 19-year-old member of the Socialist Workers Party, spent \$70 on books at the convention. Willey said, "I think it's important to read the classics of [Karl] Marx and [Frederick] Engels, in order to develop the fundamentals of Marxism. It's the key to everything we do in order to get a firm grasp of what's happening in society."

Tami Peterson, a 17-year-old high school student from Utah, said, "It's exciting to see the Caterpillar workers on strike. That's why I bought [the book] *Teamster Rebellion*, because I wanted to understand the continuity in these struggles. I bought *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* because it provides a good explanation of politics today and explains why the Socialist Workers Party's membership has jobs in industry. I want to get a job in industry too," she added.

Willey and Peterson were among more than 100 activists who participated in a meeting of socialist youth that took place during the SWP convention. Young socialists and others at the conference purchased \$10,000 worth of books published and distributed by Pathfinder. Titles by Marx, Engels, and V.I. Lenin were among the best sellers. At the rally, socialist workers who are members of industrial unions reported a wide interest among striking workers and other unionists to the new Pathfinder edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes. The book has already sold more than 900 copies since it was reissued in May.

Pathfinder publishes in English, Spanish, French, Swedish, Farsi, Russian, and Icelandic. Several of its titles have also been translated into Greek, Japanese, and other languages. Pathfinder recently launched a project to reprint some books in Russian. Some participants in the rally remarked that they had attended the Havana book fair in February and had been approached by a number of Cubans — many of whom had become fluent in Russian while living in the former Soviet Union — asking for books in Russian by Leon Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders. Several of these Cubans volunteered to help with translation of books like Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* from the original Russian text into Spanish.

"The Pathfinder Fund will make it possible to continue all these projects," said Trowe. "Hundreds of militant workers, rebellious youth, and others will be eager to contribute in addition to those who made pledges and donations at the rally here."

Readers wishing to make a contribution can send a check, made out to Pathfinder, and mail it to 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014, or contact Pathfinder at the nearest distributor listed on page 12.

Marxist classics are top sellers at international socialist conference

BY MAGGIE PUCCI

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes the writings and speeches of working-class and communist leaders who have made central contributions to the forward march of humanity against exploitation and oppression. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

Participants in the August 3-7 international socialist conference at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, purchased more than 1,000 books and pamphlets, worth over \$10,000. This was the most successful sales event for Pathfinder this year, eclipsing sales of \$8,000 at the book fair in Tehran, Iran, in May. More than 300 people visited the Pathfinder booth and bought socialist literature during the course of the five-day conference, which was held con-

ual volumes of the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels were sold — making it the top overall seller — as well as 18 individual volumes of the *Collected Works* of Lenin.



Maggie Pucci selling pamphlets by Marx and Engels at Pathfinder table.

In addition, four entire sets of the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels, and three of Lenin, were sold.

A central theme in the discussions at the conference was the strike wave underway in the United States. Many participants in the conference and convention pointed to Pathfinder's labor titles as indispensable tools in understanding and being able to explain to coworkers and radicalizing youth the revolutionary character and potential of the world working class. Eighteen copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes and 17 copies of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs were purchased.

Several classes and events throughout the course of the conference spurred the sale of related titles. An informal screening of footage from the 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku, Azerbaijan, inspired conference participants to purchase *To See the Dawn*. A total of six copies were sold. Ma'mud Shirvani, who coauthored the introduction to the book, narrated the silent film. *To See the Dawn* is the record of the proceedings from this congress, which was organized by the Communist International.

Sales of *Ireland and the Irish Question* by Marx and Engels jumped after a class

on "Ireland and the Crisis in the United Kingdom." Thirty-two copies of this book were sold.

Pathfinder author Jonathan Silberman was on hand to discuss events in the former Yugoslavia. Silberman is a coauthor of *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*. A dozen people spent more than two hours talking with Silberman. All four copies of the book on hand were sold.

Pathfinder editor Mike Taber answered questions about the forthcoming book *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*. More than 20 conference goers discussed the book, Guevara's ideas, and the role of the Cuban revolution in world politics with Taber for two hours.

The *Bolivian Diary* is due out October 8, the 27th anniversary of Guevara's assassination by the U.S.-backed Bolivian army. This book will be the definitive version of this classic of revolutionary politics. Pathfinder editors have compiled, translated, and annotated the work, provided photos and designed maps — all to make this book accessible to a new generation of fighters.

Requests for the Education for Socialists bulletin *From Mississippi to Boston: The Demand for Troops to Enforce Civil Rights* exploded following discussion at the convention on the demand for federal troops to defend abortion clinics. All 22 copies on hand were sold.

In all, conference participants purchased 85 Education for Socialists bulletins. Three booklets on fascism were the top sellers in this category.

PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

currently with the 37th constitutional convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

The Pathfinder booth was a magnet for discussion and debate on the politics of the convention and conference. More than 600 titles were displayed. Volunteers from several countries helped staff the booth. They eagerly helped people new to the arsenal of communist literature decide which books to buy.

Pathfinder offered hundreds of titles at steep discounts at the conference. The sale of pamphlets drew a huge response from the more than 100 young people attending the conference. Special offers of three pamphlets for \$6, or six for \$11 resulted in 347 pamphlets being sold. The top-selling one was *Genesis of Capital* by Karl Marx. The 10 best-selling pamphlets included *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Frederick Engels, *On the Jewish Question* by Leon Trotsky, and *The Second Declaration of Havana* by Fidel Castro.

In the days leading up to the conference, Pathfinder purchased hundreds of books and pamphlets by Marx, Engels, and V.I. Lenin from an importing firm in New York, in order to offer them at incredibly low prices to conference participants. Many people were able to fill in gaps in their personal libraries. Forty-five individ-

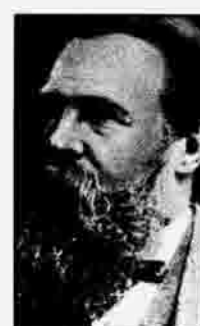
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'Federal troops to abortion clinics'

SWP candidate condemns torching of facility in Minnesota

BY TOM O'BRIEN

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota — "No matter what your position on abortion," said Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Minnesota Jon Hillson during a debate here August 14 with seven other gubernatorial candidates, "I urge you to join me in demanding federal troops be immediately sent to abortion clinics throughout this state to push back ultrarightist terrorists who kill doctors and escorts and burn clinics to the ground. I challenge each one of you to denounce these outrageous acts of violence."

Around midnight August 11, unknown arsonists torched and destroyed a Planned Parenthood clinic in rural Brainerd, in north central Minnesota. The clinic provides abortion referral services, but not the operation. Four other businesses in the immediate vicinity were also destroyed or damaged.

Planned Parenthood had held a major fund-raising event that evening in Brainerd. Checks from the affair were burned in the fire that wrecked the clinic, which serves 2,000 mainly working-class women

annually.

"We'll rebuild," Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Diana Harvey stated, "we don't intend to turn our backs on the women of Brainerd." The fire, according to antiabortion activist Brian Gibson, executive director of Pro-Life Action Ministries, "could have been done by the father of a teenage girl who got contraceptives for free. You just don't know."

The Minneapolis debate featured eight gubernatorial candidates, including Republican nominee Alan Quist, who is backed by the rightist Christian Coalition; Democratic nominee Sen. John Marty, a well-known liberal; and Marty's three primary election opponents, including a supporter of ultrarightist Lyndon LaRouche and contenders from the Grassroots Party and the Libertarian party.

They addressed 120 people at the three-hour forum, which was sponsored by United We Stand America, a group founded by supporters of Ross Perot's 1992 presidential bid.

The socialist candidate, wearing his union T-shirt, was interrupted by applause

when he announced, "I'm proud to be one of 1,100 workers on strike against the Canadian Pacific-owned Soo Line railroad, proud of my fellow strikers, proud of our 3,000 coworkers who honor our picket lines, and proud to be part of a new wave of labor resistance as we fight to defend our unions, our rights, and our dignity."

Hillson said the union movement must throw its weight behind defense of women and medical personnel who try to exercise their democratic rights at clinics. He also urged supporters of abortion rights to join picket lines of striking workers.

Citing a recent chronology by the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Hillson noted that the Brainerd fire was the 13th major attack on an area clinic in the last 17 years, during which time "there has not been a single arrest, a single prosecution, a single conviction. Each and every inaction by so-called law enforcement sets up the next assault, the next bombing, the next fire, the next shooting."

The SWP candidate participated in summer-long defense lines at the suburban Minneapolis Robbinsdale clinic in 1992,



Militant/Marea Himelgrin
Socialist Workers candidate Jon Hillson

and was involved in escort training for a major effort to counter a national campaign by Operation Rescue to shut abortion clinics here in the summer of 1993.

"Blame for this terror rests on every bipartisan governmental blow to abortion rights," the socialist candidate said, "from the imposition of waiting periods on women who have already decided to get abortions, to forcing teenagers to get consent from their parents. You can trace increased antiabortion attacks to the White House, to Congress, to the Democrats and Republicans at the State House in St. Paul."

The government has the resources and power, Hillson said, "to create a climate of intimidation aimed at those who bomb and shoot in daylight and darkness, by ringing the clinics with troops. Today, federal marshals patrol only 12 of more than 3,000 clinics in the United States, leaving the rest unprotected targets."

The candidates debated crime, taxation, housing policy, education, health care, and other issues. In his summation, carried in part by the NBC affiliate here, Hillson reiterated the demand to "defend the clinics, to protest, march and rally, to protect the rights of women, the rights of working people." None of the other gubernatorial aspirants mentioned abortion during the three-hour debate.

22,000 sign to put SWP slate on N.Y. ballot

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

NEW YORK — While Larry Lane was gathering signatures on petitions to place the Socialist Workers candidates on the New York ballot, several people said, "So, you're the guy with 30 for 40!" Lane is the Socialist Workers candidate for governor. He has been campaigning for a 30 hour workweek at 40 hours pay in order to create jobs.

This demand has received widespread attention in the Capital District of New York, where the giant General Electric (GE) company is reported to have plans to lay off 500 to 1,000 white collar workers. GE recently announced a record quarterly profit of \$1.5 billion. Lane is a machinist at GE's huge Schenectady facility, where more than 300 workers have signed petitions for the socialist candidates. "Many GE workers are viewing my campaign as a way of getting back at the company," Lane reports.

On August 13, supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign successfully completed a giant effort to collect 22,000 signatures on petitions to place the socialist candidates on the New York state ballot. This is 50 percent over the 15,000 signatures required by the state. Volunteers collected more than 8,000 signatures during the final week of petitioning, while also organizing literature tables, nightly discussion groups, and public forums.

On the final day of petitioning, more than 50 people packed the Pathfinder bookstore in Manhattan to hear Brock Satter, Socialist Workers candidate for comptroller, give an eyewitness account of events in Wedowee, Alabama, and Jackson, Mississippi.

The controversy surrounding the racist school principal in Wedowee has grabbed national attention. Jackson was the site of a multistate mobilization to defend an abortion clinic there in the wake of the

murder of Dr. John Britton and his escort in Pensacola, Florida.

Many who came to hear Satter had met campaign volunteers when they were approached to sign a petition. One individual came to a nightly discussion with one of the socialist candidates on the use of federal troops during the civil rights movement and its relevance to defending abortion clinics today. He returned for more discussion at Saturday's forum, staying late into the night with dozens of others, talking about politics. He left with a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* under his arm.

The heart of the week's campaigning was carried out by a group of volunteers, most of them young, who came from across the country, as well as from the United Kingdom, Iceland, and Holland. Many had just participated in the founding of a new nationwide youth organization, the Young Socialists, at a meeting at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. Most had never been part of a socialist campaign before. Some joined the petitioning teams on the spot after signing up to put the socialist slate on the ballot.

A Cuban youth living in Brooklyn, stopped by a table of petitioners because of a sign saying, "Stop antiabortion terrorism! Support the socialist campaign!" After learning more about the socialists' political perspective, he joined the team for the rest of the day, telling passersby about the candidates who were campaigning to defend the abortion clinics in Pensacola, Florida, and around the country. Later that evening he joined the volunteer petitioners from Brooklyn in a discussion on the Cuban revolution, which was led by Jack Willey, a leader of the Young Socialists who participated in the Freedom to Travel Challenge trip to Cuba in June.

In the Flatbush area of Brooklyn, many Haitians stopped to talk with campaigners about the socialists' opposition to a U.S.

invasion of Haiti and their call to open the U.S. borders to Haitian refugees. One young Haitian agreed that past U.S. invasions have never helped anyone except the U.S. government and big business, but he could see no other way to defeat the dictatorship. A shopkeeper eagerly signed the petition, because he strongly opposed an invasion of Haiti. He sent his partner out to talk to the petitioners who also signed to help place the socialists on the ballot.

Many people in Harlem were attracted to the campaign table by a sign proclaiming, "Defend the Cuban revolution," petitioners reported. "Your candidates support Cuba," one said, "then I'll sign."

Communist League announces election campaign in Quebec

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Supporters of a socialist alternative to capitalism's economic depression, racism, national oppression, and war, have launched a campaign in the September 12 Quebec provincial elections.

The Communist League is running three candidates in the elections in the Montreal area: Michel Prairie, the editor of *Nouvelle Internationale*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, who is running in Westmount/St. Louis; Annette Kouri, who works at Canadair — a major aircraft manufacturer — and is a member of the International Association of Machinists, in St-Laurent; and Guy Tremblay, an unemployed steelworker and member of a newly formed organization of young socialists, in St. Marie/St. Jacques.

The Quebec provincial election is widely considered to be the first stage in a process that could lead to Quebec's separation from Canada. The opposition Parti Québécois, the front-runner in the electoral contest, has promised to call a referendum on the establishment of a "sovereign" Quebec within 10 months of forming a government. It claims that only the establishment of an independent Quebec can resolve the deep going economic crisis that has hit this province particularly hard.

The Liberal governments in Quebec and in Ottawa both claim that a "united Canada" is essential to establishing economic prosperity and overcoming unemployment, which has remained above 10 percent since the end of the 1990-91 recession, according to official figures.

Prairie said in an interview that the battle between the Liberals and the Parti Québécois over the province's status in Canada is basically a fight between different wings of the capitalist class trying to place themselves in the best possible position to defend their profits against their business rivals in Canada and internationally.

"Working people should not line themselves up behind either wing of the ruling rich in their chauvinist campaigns aimed at

dividing working people and defending their profit system at our expense," Prairie said. "Instead, we should support all demands aimed at overcoming the national oppression of Quebecois and of Native people, including their right to freely decide their own future. We should also oppose Ottawa's current efforts to deport immigrants and refugees and scapegoat them for crime and unemployment."

Internationalism essential

"This internationalist working-class perspective is essential," the socialist candidate maintained, "if we are to build a fighting labor movement capable of uniting workers and farmers against attacks by the employers on our wages, social services, and democratic rights."

At a public meeting attended by 200 people to discuss the situation in Haiti, Tremblay argued that the aim of Washington, Ottawa, and other imperialist powers who are considering whether to invade Haiti is not to defend democracy for the Haitian people as they claim but rather to assert imperialist domination in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Americas. "Working people are the only force who have an interest in restoring democracy in Haiti," he stressed.

Following the launching of the campaign, Tremblay left with some 90 others, mainly young people, on a three-week trip to do voluntary labor in Cuba and bring back to Canada the truth about that country's socialist revolution. Defense of the Cuban revolution in face of the political campaign being waged against it by Washington, Ottawa, and other imperialist powers, is a key aspect of the Communist League's campaign.

Kouri began her campaign by traveling to Illinois with three supporters in order to find out firsthand information on the latest developments in the strike by 14,000 members of the United Auto Workers against the antiunion practices of Caterpillar, the giant manufacturer of earthmoving machinery.

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COSMETICS FASHIONS AND THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN



Abortion rights foes set back

Continued from front page

clinic escort Jim Barrett at the Ladies Center clinic in Pensacola, Florida, where abortions are performed. Pro-choice forces also kept the clinic open in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Meanwhile, a grand jury in Florida handed down a federal indictment August 12 against antiabortion rights terrorist Paul Hill for the brutal slaying of Britton and Barrett. Hill also wounded Barrett's wife, June Barrett, another clinic escort.

The abortion rights opponent was indicted under the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law. He was charged with three counts of interfering with the ability to provide reproductive health services, with the three shootings cited as the underlying act.

If convicted, Hill faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without parole. On August 9, he was indicted under Florida state law on two counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted first-degree murder that could bring a possible death sentence. Hill is being held without bail in the Escambia County jail.

Florida governor Lawton Chiles, in a halfhearted letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, had urged the filing of federal charges to send a message to "any other potential assassins" that the governor is committed to "preserve public safety."

In response to the indictment, Hill supporter and key abortion rights foe David Trosch, a suspended Catholic priest from Mobile, Alabama, declared, "It's not going to deter anybody from doing anything we're planning to do anyway."

Meanwhile, there has been no comment on the murders from President Bill Clinton who claims to be a supporter of abortion rights. More than 60 people attended a meeting of the Escambia County chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) August 9 in Pensacola to discuss the situation.

Chapter copresident Chicky Desmarais opened the meeting by placing responsibility squarely on the local and federal government. "Over 120 calls about violence and harassment were made from The Ladies Center clinic in the last three years," she said. "Elected officials did nothing although arrests could have been made under existing laws."

During the discussion the urgent demand for federal troops to physically defend the clinics was raised. Later, in informal discussion, participants recalled the positive impact that federal troops had during the civil rights movement, while others hoped that things would calm down and "it won't come to that."

A number of young activists from the area and around the country, who recently helped defend clinics in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Jackson, Mississippi, offered to volunteer as escorts in Pensacola.

In response to a pressure campaign by pro-choice activists, the city council held an emergency meeting the following night to discuss enacting a "buffer" zone ordinance. Desmarais said that the right wingers threatened to escalate violence if a buffer zone were established. City officials did not set perimeters for a zone, or take any other action, and stalled further discussion until September.

However, the possibility that antiabortion rights forces will picket the homes of individual escorts and doctors has led to a discussion of a "residential picketing ordinance" by the Pensacola Economic Development Commission.

Meanwhile, in the days following the cold-blooded killings, local and national press articles have sought to vilify the doctor in the media. The *Miami Herald* quoted a *Gentlemen's Quarterly* magazine article saying that Britton had shabby clothes, stained teeth, and seedy offices.

Some of his medical colleagues have attempted to paint a picture of incompetence. But patients and women's rights supporters recall a sympathetic, competent, and generous doctor who, for example, accepted bartered goods from those who could not pay. "We were given fish, even a goat, in exchange for his services," said Patricia Britton-Coleman, the doctor's daughter.

Attacks in Melbourne and Fargo

Laura Ward, who recently had an abortion at The Ladies Center, said that Dr. Britton had reassured her in the face of pressure from antiabortion rights protesters outside the clinic. Ward said that it was Britton's manner that convinced her to sign up at as a clinic escort on her way home.

Since the slayings of Britton and Barrett, women's health clinics in other states have faced attacks and threats.

In Melbourne, Florida, the Ku Klux Klan has scheduled a protest for August 20 at the Aware Woman Clinic, where four federal marshals have been dispatched. Klan organizer John Baumgardner said the Klan was "upset that the federal government intervened in the abortion issue by sending marshals to clinics around the country," according to the *Miami Herald*.

Clinic defense director Phyllis Erwin has said she is "confident police and marshals could maintain control in front of the clinic" on the day of the demonstration, writes the *Herald*. Clinic escorts will be present that day as they are every day that surgical procedures are performed.

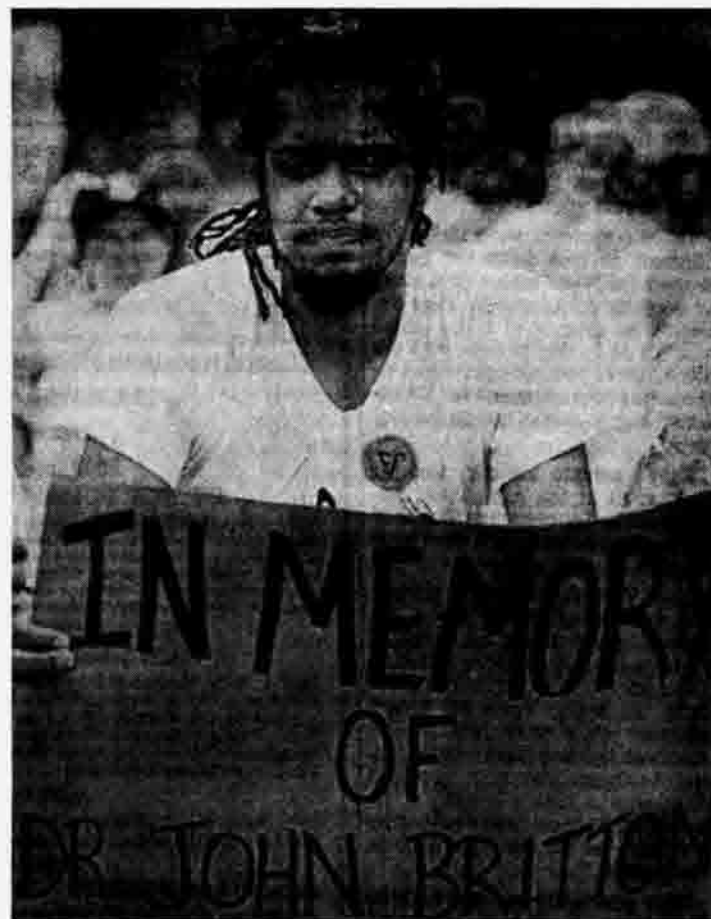
In Fargo, North Dakota, on August 14, close to 1,000 abortion rights opponents mobilized and marched 16 blocks through downtown to protest at the Fargo Women's Health Organization, the only clinic in the state where abortions can be obtained. This medical facility has been burned and vandalized in the past.

Addressing a rally at the clinic was the national director of Priests for Life, who flew in from New York.

Clinic administrator Jane Bovard told the media that the demonstration was "incredibly irresponsible" in light of the murders in Pensacola.

During the demonstration, "two federal marshals, stationed at the clinic since the day after the Florida shootings, sat in their cars behind the building," said *The Forum*, a North Dakota newspaper.

In another victory on August 1, a court hearing in Atlanta ruled that the city's



The picture above appeared in the August 12 issue of the *Houston Chronicle* with the following caption: "Brock Satter, of Brooklyn, N.Y., tries to keep cool in the hot Mississippi sun Thursday with a chunk of ice on his head. Satter and other demonstrators protested outside a Jackson clinic."

deputy fire chief, Thomas Perrin, will go to trial on criminal charges for attacking two clinic escorts at the Northside Women's Clinic in Chamblee, Georgia, in May of this year.

Perrin, who drove to the clinic in a government car, picketed the clinic with an "abortion is murder" sign. When escorts Karyn Hudson and Larry Dunn attempted to photograph the car, Perrin knocked the escorts to the ground, resulting in injuries to both. Hudson's nose was broken during the assault.

Several pro-choice groups, including Georgians for Choice, Planned Parenthood, NOW, the Pro-Choice Action Committee, and the American Civil Liberties Union, held an August 1 press conference to support the escorts and speak out against the Pensacola killings. A pro-choice rally was held in Atlanta August 9 where several young people signed up to be clinic escorts for the first time.

Contributing to this article were Beth Hanon and David Berg, members of the Young Socialists in Birmingham, Alabama, and Lea Bockman and Ellen Haywood from Atlanta.

Clinton's crime bill fails in Congress

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a major rebuke to President Bill Clinton, the House of Representatives on August 11 refused to consider a \$33 billion so-called anticrime bill. The measure, which has been one of the main priorities of the White House, targets the democratic rights of working people.

"Mr. Clinton is facing the deepest crisis of his presidency," stated an article in the August 15 *Wall Street Journal*. "The House vote was far more than a procedural motion; it was tantamount to a vote of no-confidence in the president and his ability to govern."

A joint House and Senate committee had given its backing to the bill two weeks earlier. The measure allocates \$8.8 billion over the next six years to hire 100,000 additional cops and \$8.3 billion to construct and operate prisons. It also expands the use of the death penalty to include about 60 federal crimes. The vote not to bring the legislation to the floor of the House was 225 to 210. Many who voted against the bill wanted even harsher measures to be included in the final version. David Dryer, a California Republican congressman, for example, charged that the 100,000 new police officers that the bill promised was a sham. "We'll be lucky to get one-quarter of that," he said. Others opposed the provision banning the sale and possession of 19 assault weapons.

"This is one of the reasons that I ran for president," proclaimed Bill Clinton at a ceremony at the Justice Department with hundreds of police officers at the end of July, when he thought the bill would easily sail through Congress. Clinton, who has been campaigning for this bill for months, called the legislation "the toughest, largest, smartest federal attack on crime in the history of our country." The defeat means the measure will now return to a joint congressional

sional committee for further consideration.

Shortly after the bill's defeat, New York City's Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani joined Clinton at a meeting of the National Association of Police Officers in Minneapolis August 12, in an effort to win new support for passage of this legislation.

The proposed crime bill requires mandatory life sentences for people convicted of three federal felonies or drug offenses and provides \$1.8 billion to reimburse states for costs of imprisoning undocumented workers. It also encourages more students to become cops by providing partial college scholarships for those who agree to join the police force after graduation.

100,000 more cops

By hiring 100,000 new police officers, this measure will increase by one-fifth the number of cops throughout the country. The federal government also plans to set up grant programs to help states finance the building of more prisons to ensure that individuals can be incarcerated for longer periods of time.

The White House claims that some \$30 billion to cover most of the cost of the bill will come from axing 265,000 workers from the federal payroll over the next six years.

"State and local governments are unable to deal with the problem and the federal government has to jump in," stated Charles Schumer a Democratic congressman from New York who has been in the forefront of fighting for a massive increase in federal funding for cops and prisons.

The crime legislation initially passed by the House of Representatives included a so-called Racial Justice Act, which would have allowed death-row inmates to challenge their sentences as motivated by racial bias. This provision, which was strongly promoted by the Congressional Black Cau-

cus, was not included in the Senate version of the bill. Fearing a fight around this issue, the joint House-Senate committee dropped this item from the final legislation. This led 11 of the 38 members of the Black Caucus to vote against the measure.

Campaigning against the bill prior to the August 11 House vote, the *Wall Street Journal*, in an editorial entitled "Clinton Republicans," called the proposed legislation a "monstrosity." It "weakens the 'three strikes and you're out' provision so that it will cover only some 300 to 400 (out of thousands of) violent federal criminals a year," complained the *Journal*.

While congressmen are debating how to toughen the provisions of Clinton's crime bill, state legislatures are in the process of passing similar measures that gut democratic rights.

The New Jersey legislature, for example, is considering a package of bills that would force those convicted as sex offenders to prove that they have been rehabilitated or spend the rest of their lives in prison. If enacted, this law would be among the most stringent in the country.

Among the proposals being discussed among capitalist politicians in New Jersey is one to allow the involuntary commitment to a psychiatric hospital of individuals who authorities still deem dangerous even after they have served their maximum prison sentence.

In addition, those convicted as sex offenders would have to register with local police and undergo what New Jersey governor Christine Whitman described as "a special sentence of community supervision" of 15 years after they are released from prison.

Whitman said she supported the aims of these bills, promising to sign them as long as the final version is "constitutional and uniform."

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Spirits are high among UAW strikers in York

Continued from front page

line with 16 to 20 strikers outside the plant. The agreement caused considerable discussion among strikers. "We'll have to hold our rallies down the street," said one striker. Another was angry at the outcome. "You can't be as effective two blocks away," he said. "It's better to be playing on the field than sitting on the sidelines."

On August 16, Caterpillar informed 12 York employees by mail that they were fired. The company accused the workers of acts of violence. Harold Booze, a company spokesman, said the workers were guilty of damaging vehicles and in one case painting the word "scab" on "workers' property." Caterpillar is offering as much as \$25,000 for information leading to the arrest of union members they claim are responsible for these actions.

These firing come in the context of a stepped-up campaign by the company in the daily press to paint the strikers as violent and undisciplined.

Workers continue solidarity efforts

Unionists continue to come to the picket lines to express their solidarity. A member of the teachers union stopped by recently, handing out \$20 donations to those on the line. After running out of \$20 bills, she began writing checks. Strikers estimate that she contributed more than \$500 on the spot.

UAW Local 786 members are invited to attend an August 20-21 softball tournament in Fairmont, West Virginia, sponsored by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), with proceeds going to Caterpillar strikers. During the miners strike last year, unionists at Caterpillar col-

lected three truckloads of food for the UMWA. Some 50 UAW members drove in a caravan with the trucks to the coal fields. The miners are now reciprocating the solidarity.

In addition to the recent firings, Caterpillar continues its pressure tactics against the strikers. According to workers on the picket line, Caterpillar is threatening to

deny pension benefits accrued while workers are out on strike. Workers scheduled to retire soon are being told that they may not be able to retire on schedule, unless they return to work first. Pensions are a big issue, since more than 60 percent of the workforce will retire in the next few years. But workers on the picket line are hanging tough. We "wouldn't even consider going

back without the union behind us," explained one.

Kathy Mickells is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 6-901 in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania. Lisa Potash, a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in New York contributed to this article.

Caterpillar strikers assail bosses threats

BY CARL JAMES

PEORIA, Illinois — As the United Auto Workers (UAW) strike against Caterpillar Inc. enters its seventh week, the company is struggling in its efforts to win public opinion to its side and defeat the union. On August 8, Caterpillar staged a press conference at its nearby Mossville facility to proclaim the ineffectiveness of the strike in slowing down production.

The following day, UAW Local 974 held a meeting and rally on the Bradley University campus that drew 3,000 union members and their families.

Chants of "We are union" could be heard throughout the surrounding neighborhood. This meeting was the last in a round of events in the Caterpillar chain to respond to a back-to-work drive mounted by the company, which was to begin August 1. These activities were extremely successful, mobilizing thousands of workers and supporters in actions that beat back the company's offensive.

The aim of Caterpillar's press conference, along with a company-sponsored tour of the plant, was to convince the pub-

lic and Caterpillar workers that production was back to normal. Reporters who covered the event were tightly controlled and no picture taking was allowed.

Even the slavishly pro-Caterpillar *Journal Star* was driven to complain in an editorial the following day that the "community needs talks, not tours."

"Remember way back when the leaders of communist countries would take western journalists on those propaganda tours," complained the *Star*. "Nothing wrong here. Everybody's happy. And of course reporters had to take the leaders' word for it, because they weren't allowed to talk to anybody else who might have a contrary view." Despite this protest the *Star* editorial went on to promote Caterpillar's claim that it is producing products at a prestrike level. The massive Mossville complex produces engines of all types for Caterpillar and other customers. The company views this operation as essential to its production goals.

Amid scab workers wearing buttons that proclaimed "I like Cat," company representatives said at the press event that

Caterpillar is building in excess of 500 engines a day. This tops daily prestrike production levels of between 475 and 500 engines.

Caterpillar claims it is meeting all quality standards with its strikebreaking workforce made up of salaried and management personnel, retirees, some new hires, and union members who crossed the picket line. Management claims about 2,800 scabs are now working in the complex.

Caterpillar contends that about 25 percent of UAW members have crossed the picket lines. Union officials place the number at somewhere between 15 percent and 20 percent. These figures do not include other scabs the company is aggressively recruiting to get out production.

Union files charges against company

The union has filed charges against the company for forcing managers and other scab personnel to work seven days a week, which is illegal in Illinois without filing for a special permit.

On August 12 UAW officials went to Wall Street to plead their case to investors that Caterpillar is misleading them. Caterpillar preempted the UAW meeting by releasing figures showing that sales in July had risen 20 percent over last year's levels.

UAW International Secretary Treasurer Bill Casstevens told investors and analysts that shipments of parts from Caterpillar plants in Aurora and Pontiac were down and that the plant in Joliet, which is organized by the International Association of Machinists and not on strike, is crippled because it can't get enough parts. Caterpillar managers contradicted these claims.

The Wall Street investors appeared to be generally unmoved by the UAW message and by the end of the day Caterpillar stock had risen \$2.13 cents a share to \$105.13.

Meanwhile, Caterpillar is seeking to step up the pressure on workers by stating it will no longer give strikers credit toward retirement for the time they remain on the picket line. The company claims that this will save it about \$1 million a week, and keep workers from retiring off the picket line as some are eligible to do. Local 974 president Jerry Brown immediately responded to this probe, saying that the company doesn't have the right to change the pension without negotiating it with the union.

"They have done everything," said Brown, "but they are not getting enough people to cross. They are not able to break our solidarity."

Firestone, Pirelli strikes remain solid

BY MIKE GALATI

DES MOINES, Iowa — Bridgestone/Firestone management announced August 12 that it is going to implement its final contract offer at its struck tire plants. Some 4,200 members of the United Rubber Workers (URW) union voted down this same contract on July 12 and walked out of Firestone plants in Akron, Ohio; Noblesville, Indiana; Decatur, Illinois; and here in Des Moines.

The "final offer," which Firestone says will go into effect August 18, includes demands for health insurance copayments of as much as \$68 per month; a seven-day production schedule with 12-hour shifts and no premium pay for overtime after eight hours or for weekend work; a wage cut of more than \$5 per hour for some jobs; and a 30 percent cut in pay for new hires.

In forcing union members to strike, Firestone management refused to sign a contract like the one the URW recently agreed to with Goodyear. In recent years it has been normal for the rubber union to negotiate with one of the major companies and then for the other large tire makers to sign patterned agreements.

Firestone has mailed union members videos that detail the contract demands, claiming these are necessary to sustain company profits. The *Des Moines Register* reported that the company may be getting ready to bring in scabs.

In spite of company threats, the strike remains solid. Workers on the picket line here told the *Militant* that management is

trying unsuccessfully to intimidate them into crossing the line.

In a related strike, URW Local 164 members here decided August 12 not to vote on a company back-to-work proposal, effectively deciding to continue their four-week strike at the former Pirelli/Armstrong plant. The proposal to the union came from Titan Wheel International Inc., the new owner of the Des Moines factory. The 680 workers walked out July 15 as part of a nationwide strike against Pirelli when contract talks broke down over the sharp concessions being demanded by the company, and its decision to cancel all health care benefits to retirees as of October 15. Shortly after the strike began, Pirelli announced the sale of its Des Moines plant.

Titan attached a number of conditions to its proposal that the striking workers found unacceptable. They included the company's stated goal of initially calling back only 478 of the 680 workers. The company was balking at calling back workers based on seniority and demanded that before returning to the job workers must submit to a drug, alcohol, and hearing test as part of a complete physical examination. Adding insult to injury, Titan management also declared that the workers would have to pay for these tests out of their own pockets. They also insisted on the right to contract out warehouse work previously done by union members.

"The company is trying to force out those with over 30 years in the plant and those on light duty," one striker said.

"We're a strong union and hang together. We went out together, and so far we're holding strong. The company is trying to get workers as cheap as they can," the striker emphasized.

"We're striking just to keep what we have," said one woman on the picket line. "We're not greedy like they try to make us out to be. If people knew the conditions we work in, they'd support us."

The walkouts are part of the largest wave of strikes to hit the U.S. tire industry in almost 20 years. Currently there are almost 8,000 URW members in nine states on strike against four separate tire makers. These companies have all refused to sign contracts patterned after the agreement reached between the union and Goodyear Tire. International union officials, emphasizing that the companies are "foreign-owned," have announced that strikers will be traveling to Chicago August 18 to picket the Japanese embassy there. One local official said the union was "sending a message to Tokyo."

Mike Galati is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Committees of Correspondence

Continued from page 6

put together a public rally to lift spirits and demonstrate international links with other groups. Speakers included Angela Davis, representing the CoC, Charles Nqakula, general secretary of the South African Communist Party, Dulce Maria Pereira, of the Workers Party of Brazil, and Andre Brie, a representative of the Party of Democratic Socialism from the former East Germany.

The rally was publicized widely in the Chicago area but only drew 500 people.

Other international guests addressed sessions of the conference. They included a representative of the Communist Party of Cuba and Allen Myers, editor of the *Green Left Weekly*, representing the Australian Democratic Socialist Party.

Charlene Mitchell, national coordinator of the CoC, gave the main speech at the Saturday plenary session. She pointed in particular to the need to focus on electoral activity. "The reality is that there is an organized Right that includes the Christian Right that is intent on capturing both houses of Congress," she said.

Based on this motivation, delegates sub-


sequently voted to concentrate for the foreseeable future on defeating Republican candidates backed by ultrarightists, rather than promote independent political action, which had been presented as one of the goals in the Draft National Program.

The conference elected five co-chairs, Manning Marable, Charlene Mitchell, Sushawn Robb, Rafael Pizarro, and Leslie Cagan. Fifteen additional delegates were elected to serve on a national coordinating committee, but the final results of the election are not yet available.

The election results were calculated by computer, organizers said, and cannot be finalized until a check is made of the program.

During the last session of the convention, members of a youth caucus formed at one of the workshops took the floor and demanded that the rules be suspended to allow eight of their members to be elected to the national committee to redress age discrimination. This proposal was adopted by acclamation.

The final conference resolutions, as amended at the convention, are also not yet available.



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Track workers join UTU strike actions

BY JON HILLSON

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota — Angry shouts of "scabs, scabs, stay away, we will fight you all the way" echoed off the concrete canyon walls of downtown Minneapolis as 150 rail unionists, their spouses, and children picketed the U.S. corporate headquarters of the Canadian Pacific (CP) railroad.

The August 15 protest was called by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) whose solid unity in honoring picket lines of United Transportation Union (UTU) members since they walked off the job July 13 has been a pillar of the UTU strike against the CP-owned Soo Line railroad.

Spirits of striking UTU members on regular picket duty at the corporate offices were boosted with the arrival of the sign-carrying BMWE members, who were joined by unionized engineers, clerks, and members of other labor organizations.

The BMWE action was prompted by an August 10 announcement by the rail bosses that they planned to hire nonunion contractors for work that would employ up to 200 BMWE members on the Canadian Pacific rail line. This maintenance work is covered under the basic agreement between the union and the company.

On August 16, the BMWE announced an "overwhelming" vote by the membership to authorize a strike if the issue isn't settled.

"We won't allow scabs to take our jobs," Wade Birnbaum, one of two BMWE general chairmen on the CP, told the expanded downtown picket line August 15, after a meeting with railroad officials. "We have a legal contract and legal right to support a legal [UTU] strike."

"This is a threat to try to get our people to cross the picket line," he said, "but we will not stand for that."

Proving that point, CP spokesman John Bergene told the media, "We're going to contract that work. When we get bids, we'll talk to them again. If the BMWE wants to do the work, it's there."

Birnbaum said in an interview he informed the company that the union considered the intended action a unilateral violation of its contract.

The current UTU strike is the longest walkout on a major U.S. railroad since the 82-day Norfolk Western job action in 1978. It pits 1,100 UTU members in 11

midwestern states against the Canadian Pacific, a Montreal-based carrier. The CP is the 25th largest transportation company in the world, according to Forbes magazine, with \$12 billion in assets and newly announced second quarter profits of \$145 million.

Railroad workers honor UTU pickets

An additional 3,000 railroad workers in 16 unions, nearly 1,100 of them in the BMWE, are respecting UTU picket lines in 11 midwestern states, including Iowa, an emerging key battleground of the strike.

In the face of mounting pressure on grain shippers and elevator operators, the Iowa Farm Bureau urged President Bill Clinton to appoint an emergency board empowered to order rail strikers back to work. The Canadian Pacific, a major grain hauler in Iowa, makes a quarter of its income from agricultural freight.

The bureau's move comes amidst widespread publicity in Iowa and Minnesota about the impact of the strike on the ability to transport a bumper crop of soybean and corn, due by the end of August. Storage elevators already brim with harvested grain, particularly wheat.

On August 12, an Iowa Department of Transportation task force on the strike, "vowed to increase pressure on the Soo Line Railroad, its union, and Washington" to end the strike, according to the Des Moines Register.

The CP has made no effort to run scab trains on its Iowa grain belt main track. Its main rival, the Chicago and Northwestern, lacks the capability to take up the slack. According to trucking industry spokesman Scott Weiser, "There is not a large capacity of trucks to move grain."

"The bottom line is that we need the railroad running again," stated Rick Keith, a grain manager at West Bend Elevator. "and we need it soon. We've got a perishable commodity here."

Some strikers welcome the idea of gov-



Militant/Jon Hillson

Some 150 members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and the United Transportation Union picket CP-Soo Line headquarters in St. Paul, August 15. Thousands of rail workers are honoring UTU picket lines in 11 states.

ernment intervention, in hopes of getting a favorable contract.

When government comes in

"I say that's like waving a flag and you can kiss your ass good-bye," countered Dave Lorendo, chairman of BMWE Local 928. The strikers need something "they can vote on, something to ratify. When the government comes in, we get screwed," he said.

Visibility of the strike has increased in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where 350 UTU members are based, and nearly 1,000 rail unionists honor picket lines. Top officials of 17 railway labor organizations met here August 9 to discuss the strike. They organized a widely covered march together with striking workers through a downpour to the CP's corporate headquarters.

"This isn't just the UTU's individual fight," assistant UTU president L. W.

Swert told the nearly 80 drenched unionists. "This is a fight for rail labor."

The UTU's national contract with the rail industry expires Jan. 1, 1995.

Twenty UTU strikers and fellow engineers were guests of the United Auto Workers Local 879 at their annual picnic August 13, spending hours talking with the unionists about their strike, which is a big issue in the plant.

Jeff Hause, a worker on the Twin Cities Ford Truck assembly line, explained to a group of strikers how the night shift rivet line organizes colorful chanting to educate CP scabs who switch out the plant. "It's the highlight of the evening," the UAW member said. "We've driven two scabs out so far."

Jon Hillson is a member of UTU Local 1882 on strike against the CP Rail in St. Paul.

Capitalist farmers in Iowa demand gov't intervention against rail strike

BY ANGEL LARISCY

DES MOINES, Iowa — With the U.S. Department of Agriculture's announcement August 11 of a record corn and soybean harvest, capitalist farming interests are scrambling in the face of the Canadian Pacific-Soo Line rail strike to get crops shipped out. Four hundred of the 1,100 United Transportation Union (UTU) strikers reside in Iowa and the big-business media is increasingly trying to pit the state's working farmers against the strikers.

Management personnel are running some trains through the eastern part of this state but the rail line in the northern portion of Iowa remains shut down.

The Iowa Farm Bureau, a big business farm interest group, is urging the White House to appoint an emergency board capable of ordering the strikers back to their jobs.

In response to an outcry from grain elevator executives, capitalist farmers, and various farm organizations, Governor Terry Branstad has formed an Iowa Department of Transportation task force to help find alternative ways of shipping crops and to pressure the federal government to intervene in the strike.

Since the mid-1970s big farming interests and shippers have extended some \$27 million in interest-free loans to the railroad. One-quarter of the Soo Line's revenues come from agriculture.

The press coverage here is hypocritically urging the state government to come to the rescue of farmers who are being put in jeopardy by the strike. These articles fail to note the different circumstances faced by working farmers and large capitalist farms. This year's record harvest comes on the heels of last year's flooding, which put many small farmers on the brink of disaster.

The situation has prompted wide discussion among workers in Iowa. Two rubber

workers on strike at the Firestone plant in Des Moines said in an interview they couldn't believe working farmers would join with elevator operators against the striking railroad union. Both workers used to farm in nearby Melcher. One noted how the grain elevators traditionally rip off farmers with docking fees, moisture indexes, and other scams.

Larry Ginter, secretary of the Iowa American Agriculture Movement, noted,

"If Terry Branstad was concerned about family farmers he would fight for a fair price. He has never stood beside the grassroots farmer and he is notorious for being against the unions. This is just another way to divide us and keep our minds away from the real problem—bosses and the big business concerns."

Angel Lariscy is a member of the United Auto Workers Local 270 in Clive, Iowa.

St. Paul auto worker describes support for CP rail strikers

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Here's an update about United Transportation Union workers on strike against the Canadian Pacific [Soo Line] railroad from a member of United Auto Workers Local 879 at the Ford Twin Cities assembly plant.

The CP still has safety and delivery problems to the plant. The warehouse forklift operators have worked at least one Saturday to unload trucks. Not all stock is coming by rail like it should.

They also derailed three more cars today [August 12]. There was an incident two weeks ago in the plant where a forklift operator was unloading a [railroad freight] car. While he was inside the car it started moving down the track. Luckily, the load plate caught on something and stopped the car.

The inside house is about 20 feet and parallel to the rivet line in the chassis department. Someone down the line has a train whistle and blows it when they bring cars in to signal people down the line. The chant "SCABS, SCABS, SCABS" grows louder and louder. When they leave, the rivet line gives them a few more descriptive words.

We will continue this and come and support you on your picket lines until you win this fight.

In solidarity,
Russ Penning
UAW Local 879 member at
Ford's plant in St. Paul

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Cuba: Thousands protest murder of officer

Continued from front page

show that a class polarization is sharpening in Cuba in the middle of a serious economic crisis.

While workers are hardest hit by inflation and other difficulties, support for the revolution among them remains strong. "Because of the revolution, my children had possibilities that I never had," Hector Viltre, a cigar factory worker, told the *Christian Science Monitor* August 12. At the same time, a growing number, especially among middle-class professionals, respond with despair and many flee Cuba.

"The patriotic fervor in Cuba today is as vibrant as in the most glorious moments in the history of the revolution," Rafael Dausa, press spokesperson for the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., said in a telephone interview August 15. "The streets belong to the revolution. There are discontented elements who wish to leave but the overwhelming majority support the revolution."

Press conference by Castro

On Thursday night, August 11, Fidel Castro held a special press conference to explain the facts surrounding the murder of Lt. Reyes and answer Washington's hypocritical stance towards Cubans who want to leave the island.

In unprecedented television coverage Miami's Channel 7 and at least one local Spanish-language station, Channel 23, carried this press conference live along with CNN. While CNN carried the entire hour-and-a-half-long news event, Channels 23 and 7 cut coverage off after Castro gave a detailed picture of the hijacking and murder of the navy lieutenant and was beginning to explain the role of U.S. government policy on immigration.

"We have the absurd situation," Castro said "that they have a whole fleet trying to stop the Haitians from arriving in the United States, a huge wall thousands of kilometers along the border with Mexico and throwing out hundreds of thousands of Mexicans each year. They have a coast guard between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico and how many thousands of Haitians must have drowned as a result of their measures."

Castro explained the policy of the Cuban government, "We explained the other day: We provide facilities to emigrate legally; we provide facilities to travel abroad and return; we provide facilities to travel to Cuba and return to the country of origin. That's our policy. And they — they do the opposite. Promoting and encouraging ille-

gal departures through every means."

"If the United States does not take quick and efficient measures to end the provocations for illegal departures from the country," Castro stated at an earlier press conference, "then we feel obliged to instruct our coast guards to not block any vessel that wants to leave Cuba and to not block the exit of U.S. vessels that want to pick up relatives or other Cuban citizens. We cannot continue guarding the U.S. coasts."

Government officials in the White House and in Florida strongly protested this stance by the Cuban government and said they are opposed to a mass immigration of Cubans to the United States. Rightists like Jorge Mas Canosa of the Cuban American National Foundation took a similar stance.

Janet Reno, the U.S. attorney general, stated August 11, that federal authorities will seize any U.S. vessel that is attempting to smuggle Cubans into the United States and criminal prosecutions may result. "Federal, state and local authorities and the Florida community all agree that it is not in the interest of the people of the United States or the people of Cuba to permit another Mariel-type exodus from Cuba," said

a statement by Reno's office released August 11.

In 1980, following a series of U.S.-promoted provocations, the revolutionary government opened the port of Mariel to a boatlift by which some 125,000 Cubans emigrated to the United States.

Within two days following Reno's statement customs agents seized two U.S. boats and detained at least three Cuban-Americans from Miami on charges of smuggling Cubans into the country. Up until now, hijackers, smugglers, or other criminals have virtually never been arrested or prosecuted when their target is Cuba.

6,000 Cubans enter U.S. this year

These actions by U.S. officials come at a time when record numbers of Cubans, mostly on rafts, are arriving in South Florida. As of August 15, more than 6,000 Cubans had entered the United States since the beginning of this year, the highest number since the Mariel boatlift. Last year 3,656 Cubans entered the country.

The increased emigration and the class battles unfolding in Cuba have prompted some spokespeople for the capitalist class to predict once again the speedy downfall

of Castro and insist that maintaining and tightening the U.S. embargo is the way to go for Washington. "The long autumn of the world's dictators continues, while each awaits the winter of cold exile or colder death," said an editorial in the August 12 *Wall Street Journal*. "And now the choice appears to have arrived for Fidel Castro."

"We had been inclined to the view that lifting the embargo would sensibly benefit Cuba's people," the *Journal* editors continued, "but that may be inadvisable now if the dollar flow merely paid for Fidel's political resuscitator."

After the recent mass mobilizations of working people and youth in Cuba, however, others in the big-business media have felt compelled to comment on the support for the revolution in Cuba.

An article in the August 12 *Christian Science Monitor*, for example, stated, "Despite the problems, Castro retains immense personal popularity among the majority of Cubans." In a front page article, the August 14 *Miami Herald* said, "Castro, most people say, is not in any immediate danger of falling. Even some of his enemies concede that he still has majority support."

Miami factory workers discuss Cuba events

BY FRANCISCO PICADO

MIAMI — Under the impact of recent events in Cuba, trade unionists here who support the Cuban revolution report widespread discussions on the job on the anti-working-class character of U.S. immigration policy.

Washington has claimed for years to be providing political asylum to those escaping the "hell of communism" in Cuba. The White House asserts the only thing preventing most Cubans from fleeing the island has been Cuban government repression. Now, several workers here say it appears that it is U.S. officials and rightist opponents of the revolution who are trying to prevent Cubans from leaving the Caribbean island.

Yvonne, an aircraft engine machinist in Miami who supports the Cuban revolution, reports that coworkers in her shop, recently organized into the International Association of Machinists, have been discussing emigration from Cuba. In the midst of news coverage on the arrival of a growing number of Cubans in South Florida, Vera, an African-American coworker, asked a union brother from Sri Lanka if he thought there would be another Mariel boatlift. Some 125,000 Cubans emigrated to the United States in 1980 from Mariel Harbor.

"I don't think that as many will come," cut in Rich, a Gulf-War veteran born and raised in Miami. His grandparents and mother left Cuba in the early 1960s. "Most are staying to fight [Fidel] Castro. Ten

thousand people demonstrated against him in Havana this past week," he said.

"But more than 500,000 people turned out in support of the socialist revolution this past Sunday [August 7]," Yvonne pointed out.

"Yes, but they were forced to come out," Rich replied. "The [Cuban] government takes pictures and if you are not in there, you're in trouble," he said.

"They forced 500,000 people to rally for

something they don't believe in?" Vera asked him. "I don't think that could happen." The worker from Sri Lanka agreed with her.

"You wouldn't believe how bad things are there," Rich insisted. "I have pictures of my family, their house, and how thin they are. And my grandmother told me we used to have a plantation and they just came and took people's land, just like

Continued on page 14

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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Speak Out Against Assaults on Abortion Rights! A panel discussion. Speakers: Pat Nixon, Socialist Workers Party, member, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 1-547; and others. Sat., Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. 2546-C W. Pico Blvd., (2 blocks west of Vermont). Donation \$4. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

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The Fight Against Racism and the Crisis of Leadership. Speaker: Maceo Dixon, former Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Boston. Sat., Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

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Strike in Britain. Speakers include eyewitness reports on Caterpillar strike in the United States, and RMT members. Sat., Aug. 27, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut, (nearest tube Waterloo). Donation £2. Tel: 071 401 2409.

Cuba — Defending the Socialist Revolution. The meeting will discuss the recent antigovernment riots in Cuba and the mass demonstration in defense of the revolution on August 7. Speakers include eyewitness Chris Morris, just returned from Cuba. Sat., Sept. 3, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut, (nearest tube Waterloo). Donation £2. Tel: 071 401 2409.

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Abortion Doctor Murdered in Florida — Defend a Woman's Right to Choose. Send Federal Troops to Defend Clinics Now! Sat., Aug. 27, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Tel: 09 379 3075.

Pathfinder bookstore in Sheffield, England, appeals for support following two attacks

BY ANNE HOWIE

SHEFFIELD, England — Supporters of the Pathfinder bookshop here are launching a campaign in the wake of two incidents at the premises earlier this month.

On the night of August 2 the shop was broken into. A grill was pried off and a rock thrown through a six-foot plate glass window. A small quantity of money was taken from cash boxes, along with an answering machine. All telephone lines to the building were cut.

On the night of August 14, another break-in was attempted. The lock on the front door was badly damaged, and a panel of glass smashed. The alarm system was disabled and telephone lines to the building were again cut.

In response to these attacks, supporters of the bookshop are organizing a broad meeting September 3 to highlight the importance of free speech and the right of workers and young people to have available books containing speeches and writings of revolutionary leaders from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels to Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela. A fund-raising appeal has been launched to cover the costs of repairing the damages — some £450 (US\$675). Messages of support and donations to the fund should be sent to: Pathfinder Bookshop, 1 Gower Street, Sheffield S4 7HA.

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"Peace dividend" — Night goggles developed for military helicopter pilots are being used by New York subway cops to sneak up on graffiti artists and to spot homeless people living "illegally"



Harry Ring

in the subway tunnels.

The caring system — National Medical Enterprises (NME), the hospital chain biggie, accepted legal responsibility for the suicide of a 13-year-old at one of its psychi-

atric units. Gross neglect stemmed from slashing staff to the bone in a "cost containment" drive. Earlier, NME admitted to paying millions in bribes to doctors and referral services to provide patients. Many were held until their Medicare or other insurance ran out.

Part of the overhead — National Medical Enterprises is paying a \$362 million fraud fine for its massive victimization of patients. This may sound like real money to you and me. But one business report assured, "the accord is not expected to pose serious financial problems for the company."

No supervisory jobs open? — Fred Dahl, an L.A. cop, was convicted of repeatedly ramming the car of Hang Ba Mai, assaulting

Mai when he got out of the car, and fleeing the scene. Dahl was ordered to pay Mai \$8,129 restitution and to do 12 days, less two already served. He was barred from carrying a gun for 10 years. The prosecutor speculated that this could mean Dahl might have to give up his police job.

That's a relief — In Inglewood, outside Los Angeles, one cop was fired and 14 others suspended for up to 30 days for involvement in an illegal betting ring. An official noted that the 15 represent less than 10 percent of the police force. "It's an alarming number," he said, "but not a shocking number."

Cops not tough enough to

chew them? — Someone's been dumping nails in areas on Florida highways where cops hide with radar to catch alleged speeders. Authorities claim that at least 60 tires have been damaged. They use a big magnet to pick up the nails.

Time is money — A federal judge concluded that in a bankruptcy case a big time Los Angeles law firm had charged for unnecessary and repetitive work and excessive hours. He seemed particularly irked that the company added a \$99,000 charge for the time spent preparing the bill.

You can get a mortgage? — Children's playhouses are enjoying a comeback — at today's prices. One company offers a two-

story townhouse with balconies, French doors, etc. The deluxe model, \$3,700.

The no-waste system — With a recently patented device, you won't have to listen to the ringing while waiting for someone to answer the phone. After the first ring, you get a commercial. Buy a picture phone and get the ad in living color.

Really? — To help companies that peddle their wares to preteens, an ad agency set up a special research unit on "kids." One of their findings, according to a news report, "is that children are repelled by advertising that speaks to them in voices that they deem condescending or patronizing."

United workers angry at 'stock ownership' plan

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — The greetings among coworkers at the United Airlines flight kitchen were different on July 12 after management's announcement that they had switched over to what they called employee ownership. "Hey, less talk and more work, you're costing me money," and "Since I own the company I think I'll leave early today," were among the many jokes. They reflected the grudging acceptance by some and the clear opposition by many more to the massive concessions that United workers are taking under the misnamed employee stock ownership plan (ESOP). The plan had just been voted up by 70 percent of the shareholders at UAL Corporation, the parent company of United Airlines.

The deal had been approved a few months earlier by the leadership of the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) and by a close vote of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), which represents mechanics, ramp workers, kitchen workers, cleaners, and others.

It calls for \$4.9 billion in pay and benefit concessions and work rule changes from these union and nonunion workers at the airline in exchange for company stock. The flight attendants organized by the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) have so far refused to join the deal and are working under their still existing contract.

Some workers who tended to accept the ESOP deal before are angry now that they see the real extent of the concessions. These include a wage freeze for almost six years and pay cuts of almost 15 percent for pilots and 8 percent for nonunion workers.

IAM members are told that we are getting a nearly 10 percent drop in pay. In fact, the pay cut for IAM members is much higher. In May, a contractual 5 percent raise went into effect for IAM members. This money was put into an escrow account and will be distributed in the next several weeks. After this runs out the pay cut will kick in, thus making the real drop in wages not so noticeable. In addition, our paid lunch has been taken away so that we now work a half hour more each day, bringing our cut much closer to 20 percent.

While jobs are supposedly guaranteed under the ESOP plan, there are provisions

that allow the company to contract out up to 20 percent of maintenance work and to establish the United Shuttle as a low-cost, short-haul airline within United. This is set to begin in October to directly compete with Southwest Airlines.

Southwest has announced that it will retaliate against United by organizing bargain flights along United's long-haul routes. Since Southwest's competition on short-haul flights was a main reason for management's concession demands, the competition on long-haul flights could very well be the excuse for more concessions.

The ESOP gives the IAM and ALPA one seat each on the 12-member board of directors. Stephen Wolf, the chief executive officer before the ESOP, has walked away with a package in the tens of millions of dollars.

Miguel Torrente, an IAM member who is a driver in the Miami flight kitchen, said, "The ESOP is a joke on the workers who the company is trying to brainwash." He added, "The stock that we're getting will go the same way as Eastern [Airlines]. It'll go down and we'll get nothing from it. That's my opinion." Torrente explained that he had worked at United from 1970 to 1983 and that he made \$10 an hour when he left. He came back to United in 1991 and is now making \$8.03, which will drop to about \$7.25 with the ESOP.

The Airline Pilots Association officials played a key role in pushing through the ESOP. Management is already using the support of many pilots for the ESOP to build divisions between the pilots and other employees. On the same day the ESOP went through management told cleaners and mechanics at La Guardia airport in New York that the pilots had ordered them to cut down the use of air conditioning on planes they were working on since this wasted fuel.

Only one mechanic out of the 10 or so interviewed by this reporter on the day the ESOP was approved supported it. Unfortunately, one of the ways that some mechanics have used to protest the IAM officials pushing the ESOP has been to look to the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA). This pro-company outfit has recently filed with the federal mediation board more than 10,000 signatures from



Part of United fleet. So-called employee stock ownership plan demands massive wage cuts, benefits concessions, and work rule changes from workers at airline.

IAM mechanics, fuelers, and utility workers calling for a union representation election at United. The goal of AMFA is to separate off the mechanics from the other airline workers, claiming they can get better pay and benefits at the expense of the

"less skilled."

Ernie Mailhot is a United Airlines worker in Miami and a member of IAM Local 368. He is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida.

-25 AND 50 YEARS

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People
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CHICAGO — Despite a rainy Saturday afternoon, 1,300 people turned out for a demonstration through Chicago's Loop in memory of the brutal bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to demand "U.S. out of Vietnam, Japan and Okinawa."

The march, composed mainly of high school students, was very spirited. Chants of "Bring all the GIs Home, Now!" and "Free Speech for GIs" drew at least one sailor off the sidewalk and into the march.

The enthusiasm of the demonstrators showed they were not in the least bit taken in by the phony troop withdrawals of the Nixon administration.

The front ranks of the march were sprinkled with GIs and sailors from the area. After the march, demonstrators assembled at General Logan Statue in Grant Park, across the street from the scene of the bloody police riot at the Conrad Hilton during last year's Democratic Party national convention.

THE MILITANT

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

August 26, 1944

The Mexican rulers act like a class half-frightened at their own success. They

hardly expected so great a victory over world imperialism in regaining their natural resources for themselves. The very fact that they must turn to the self-same imperialists for the finances to fully exploit their victory, serves now to cause them to frame all their policies with a view to placating the foreign bankers. Cárdenas was forced to turn to the Axis when the United States and England put on the economic screws by boycotting Mexican oil. But the exigencies of the war changed all this, and President Camacho can turn freely for aid to the United States.

The apparent change in policies under Camacho with respect to the Mexican working class is more than a matter of placating the foreign holders of the money bags. It is a necessity for effecting the dual exploitation of the Mexican masses on the new foundations.

The masses rallied enthusiastically to the support of the regime when the struggle was commenced to expropriate the resources held under the claws of the imperialists. This was a common cause. But now — overnight — the masses are beginning to learn that the fruits of the common victory will go to the small, privileged ruling class, and not to all. The gains made by the workers were meant to be only temporary. Already the capitalists are wiping out these gains that had seemed destined for permanent social betterment.

Open clashes have not been wanting. Camacho has included the most reactionary anti-labor elements in his Cabinet. The President's brother, Máximo Camacho, has been for years the local dictator in the state of Puebla. When Governor of Puebla, Máximo was quoted as saying: "I never have labor troubles: I answer workers with machine guns."

THE EASTERN AIRLINES STRIKE

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ERNIE MAILHOT, JUDY STRANAHAN, and JACK BARNES



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Join battle with Cuban workers

The *Wall Street Journal* and other mouthpieces of big capital drool that "Castro's last winter" is approaching fast — once again making plain their deep class hatred for the Cuban revolution and its communist leadership.

The *Journal* advises the U.S. government, correctly from their class point of view, that now is not the time to drop the trade embargo, travel ban, and other aggressive policies against Cuba. The masters of the imperialist beast in Washington believe that the fighting men and women of Cuba must be taught a lesson in order to discourage all those the world over who are unwilling to bow to Uncle Sam.

But as usual, the *Journal's* editors misjudge the class that counts in Cuba — the working class.

In the last two weeks hundreds of thousands of working people in Cuba have demonstrated their capacity and determination to defend the revolution's socialist conquests.

Half a million poured into the streets of Havana August 7 to express their outrage at the killing of a police officer by would-be hijackers. The mass mobilization followed an unprecedented battle two days earlier on the *Malecon*, Havana's waterfront, between hundreds of antigovernment rioters and thousands of workers who support the revolution. Members of the Blas Roca Contingent — a unit of workers who organize themselves on a voluntary basis to carry out priority jobs in construction and agriculture — were at the forefront of the spontaneous mobilizations.

A week later tens of thousands turned out in Camagüey to honor the life of Roberto Aguilar Reyes, a navy officer murdered August 9 in another hijacking. And thousands filled the streets in the port of Mariel August 15 and 16 to support the government's actions that ended the takeover of an oil tanker by 700 people who wanted to leave the island,

without any bloodshed or repression of those involved.

Working people in Cuba are affected most severely by a formidable economic crisis. But a broad mass vanguard among them are neither worn down nor demoralized — as are growing numbers especially among middle class professionals — and are ready to defend the revolution in the factories, farms, schools, and in the streets.

Six thousand have left Cuba since the beginning of this year. Most of them have come in rafts, because Washington continues to deny legal entry to those who want to emigrate, while welcoming those smuggled by boat through the Florida straits.

The U.S. government hypocritically accuses Havana of trying to engineer another Mariel boatlift. But as Cuban president Fidel Castro has explained, those who want to leave the country can do so; it is the policy of the White House, which promotes hijackings and other provocations, that endangers the lives of thousands. It is the same imperialist policy that forces thousands of Haitian refugees fleeing a military tyranny, to incarceration under inhuman conditions in a prison camp in Guantánamo — on Cuban soil that the Pentagon occupies against the wishes of the Cuban people.

Youth and working people in the United States and around the world should join the Cuban government in demanding that those responsible for the recent hijackings and murders be prosecuted or returned to Cuba. Class-conscious workers should also fight shoulder-to-shoulder with their brothers and sisters in the Caribbean island by telling the truth about the socialist revolution in Cuba and organizing to broaden opposition to Washington's trade embargo and travel ban.

Support CP rail strikers

Increasingly high stakes are being raised as 1,100 members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) press their fight against the giant Canadian Pacific (CP) Railroad — and its wholly owned subsidiary, the Soo Line, the ninth biggest U.S. railroad. The walkout, is the longest strike on a major U.S. railroad since 1978.

This rail fight contributes to and is enriched by a wave of union battles, which began with the coal miners and flight attendants strikes in 1993, and with Teamsters, steel, garment, transit, rubber, and other industrial workers who have taken strike action this year.

The weightiest current battle in the labor movement is being waged by 14,000 members of the United Auto Workers union against Caterpillar, the world's leading manufacturer of earthmoving equipment.

In an impressive display of solidarity, the UTU's picket lines are being honored by 3,000 allied workers organized in 16 additional CP-Soo Line unions. Only a handful of these unionists have broken ranks and returned to work.

At the same time, Canadian Pacific appears to be going to the mat for the major U.S. carriers, whose national contract with the UTU expires Jan. 1, 1995, leaving no doubt that the outcome of the CP-Soo Line strike — for better or worse — will set the tone for upcoming negotiations.

The Soo Line bosses are determined to inflict pain and suffering on the UTU as they seek to slash crew sizes in half. They want to operate road freight hauling and yard switching jobs with an engineer and a conductor only, making already dangerous work even more so. And Canadian Pacific seeks to deepen divisions among workers by creating a third class of virtually rightless new hires.

The rail capitalists offer the union a 6 percent wage in-

crease to cover the last six and a half years in which UTU members have worked without a salary hike of any kind at all.

These attacks explain why the resolve of the strikers has deepened as the walkout has gone on, thus puncturing the carrier's arrogant expectation that unity among rail workers would collapse within days.

Instead, despite its immense bank account, the CP is beginning to pay an economic price, and lose some political capital as well, for its attempted union-busting. Midwestern farmers, particularly in Iowa, soon start to harvest a bumper soybean and corn crop with dwindling hope that the CP will ship it, as usual.

Agribusiness and the Iowa government now seek presidential intervention to halt the strike. In time-honored fashion, they campaign to enlist working farmers to blame the UTU for the crisis. Larry Ginter, a leader of the American Agricultural Movement in Iowa, counters correctly that "this is just another way to divide us and keep our minds away from the real problem — bosses and the big-business concerns."

By telling the facts of their struggle, the embattled rail strikers will find powerful allies. Support can be won from other unionists, working farmers, small businesspeople, students, and youth. They will especially find strong support from other industrial workers, such as the Caterpillar strikers, who are going through their own struggles against rapacious bosses.

Winning and mobilizing such solidarity is a pressing challenge not only for these fighting rail unionists, but for all working people and youth who back their struggle against concessions, for a decent contract, and for dignity.

Oppose any crime bill

The hue and cry over Clinton's failure to push his crime bill through Congress obscured the real issues for the working class in the so-called crime debate.

The administration's package — or any of the several variants to it proposed by Democrats and Republicans alike — substantially escalates the assault on democratic rights by the scoundrels in the White House and Congress.

The bill failed to come up for a vote largely because politicians of both parties demanded even harsher measures than those in the Clinton package. It's likely that some version of this piece of antiworker filth will be approved by Congress in the weeks ahead, as both parties, in a hypocritical show of unity against the "crime wave," close ranks behind the antidemocratic measures in the legislation.

All the proposals by capitalist politicians in Congress have several things in common. They would make it more likely that higher numbers of working people would be on the receiving end of a cop's nightstick, serve longer prison sentences on convictions, or be put to death in an electric chair.

But the biggest criminals in the United States reside in the White House, Congress, the Pentagon, and corporate board rooms throughout the country. These are the culprits responsible for killing 150,000 people during the assault on Iraq; the incineration of dozens of people in the Waco, Texas, religious compound last year; attacks by cops on picket lines; and frame-ups of fighting unionists. And they

walk around with impunity.

The petty as well as violent crimes committed against, and sometimes by, working people today are the result of the dog-eat-dog system of capitalism, which breeds alienation and lumpen elements who prey on workers for their livelihood. The only solution to the crime problem is building a social movement capable of overturning this violent, criminal system. In the process of doing so, millions will become disciplined fighters who recognize their own self-worth.

The political campaign accompanying the crime legislation aims to atomize the working class in preparation for coming clashes between working people and the bosses. It seeks to smooth the way for choking off opponents of Washington's wars, and any worker or young person who stands in the way of the employers and their government.

The sex offender bills under consideration in New Jersey, for example, and the one already passed in Iowa, illustrate how dangerous this campaign can be. New Jersey legislators are considering making it mandatory for sex offenders to prove they have been rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the state, or spend life in prison.

Working people should oppose all these laws, which have nothing to do with stopping crime, but which will criminalize growing sections of the working class and narrow democratic rights won in struggle.

Miami workers



Canadian Press

August 14 ceremony in Mariel. Massive turnout by Cuban working class, youth are the largest in years.

Continued from page 12
that."

"If she had a plantation," Yvonne said, "she also probably controlled the lives of workers faced with seasonal unemployment who lived without electricity or running water."

"Like slaves," interrupted a Puerto Rican supervisor who was listening in. "They probably had outhouses while your grandmother had indoor plumbing."

"No wonder it was taken away," laughed Vera.

A Central American garment worker at Five Hundred Fashions (FHF) in Hialeah, Florida, asked, "So, what is the deal? [The U.S. government has] been giving rights to the Cubans that get here, which are privileges compared to what the rest of us get." The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) member said, "But now that any Cuban can come, the U.S. government says it won't allow them to get here."

Cuban-American workers in that garment factory who are opponents of the socialist government in Havana responded differently. In a discussion about recent news reports, a number of Cuban-Americans denied that Washington was taking any measures to prevent immigration of Cubans. "It is Castro who is stopping them from leaving. You can not blame the US government," one Cuban-American floor worker said. Others denied that there were any massive demonstrations in support of the Cuban revolution. Some stated they were convinced that the August 7 march of half a million people was in opposition to the government, despite the news coverage showing otherwise.

"So what if they killed that navy officer," another Cuban sewer told the worker who sweeps the floor. "Fidel kills people everyday."

Cuban-American workers travel to Cuba

Several Cuban-American workers at FHF, however, are preparing to travel to Cuba to visit relatives and are ignoring comments of "betrayal" from many in the plant. Unlike in the past, they have lost any fear of disapproval of their trips to Cuba and say so when they get a chance.

"I think people should be able to come here and it is wrong that they are not given visas by the U.S. government," said one presser who is making travel plans for Cuba. "People should come any way they can, but I'm totally opposed to murder. That can not be justified," she said, referring to the recent hijackings and killings of two Cuban police officers and a navy lieutenant.

At IBA, another ACTWU-organized shop in the city, Rollande Girard, a pocket sewer and Socialist Workers Campaign chairperson, explained that she was surrounded by coworkers in a discussion about developments in Cuba. "I agree with [Jorge] Mas Canosa and President Clinton that the Cubans in Cuba should not come and stay here," a sewer who left Cuba five years ago said in response to Girard's denunciation of U.S. government policy.

Cuban American National Foundation president Jorge Mas Canosa made declarations in support of Bill Clinton's immigration policy in mid-August. Mas Canosa asked all Cuban émigrés to refrain from going to get their relatives.

Other workers had no qualms about speaking their minds, in open disagreement with right-wing views. "Fidel is right about the immigration situation," a Cuban steam presser told Girard, "it is the U.S. who is responsible."

Francisco Picado is member of ACTWU and works as a presser at FHF in Hialeah. He is the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Florida.

Machinists strike Florida's Kennedy Space Center

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines

"We have more togetherness than the scabs. I come down here all the time, these are my real friends. We're fighting for the future of my children and yours."

The strike has become a magnet for other unionists in the area. Teachers and electrical workers walk the line and donate food and sodas. Another 1,000 members of IAM Local 2061 work for Lock-

The negotiations take place in the context of an upturn in the forest industry in British Columbia. Profits in lumber were Can\$1.2 billion in 1993 (Can\$1-US\$72). While pulp and paper companies announced a loss of \$479 million in 1993, a ton of pulp is now selling for as much as \$600, compared to \$390 in late 1993. British Columbia's mills produce 25 percent of the world's softwood pulp.

The contract expired in the pulp and paper industry on April 30. About 12,000 workers in 21 mills are represented by the PPWC and the CEP.

In 1993 the employer's association unilaterally dissolved industry-wide bargaining, which had previously existed for 50 years. Their aim is to weaken union power by negotiating local contracts. The British Columbia Labor Relations Board ruled in the employers' favor July 15, saying the unions cannot strike over the issue of the format of bargaining. A meeting of delegates from the two unions July 19-20 accepted this decision and resolved to target Fletcher Challenge in the negotiations. Some 2,400 members of both unions work in Fletcher Challenge's three pulp mills.

In the wood sector, where the IWA represents about 33,000



Kennedy Space Center strikers and supporters picket at entrance to the facility in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Other unionists in the area support their action.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

Nearly 700 painters, insulators, plumbers, janitors, roofers, life support technicians, and other workers went on strike at the Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in Cape Canaveral, Florida, July 5.

The workers, members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 2061, rejected a contract proposal that includes a 2 percent pay raise over three years and drastically increased health insurance costs.

A year ago, the union agreed to an extension of their contract with no pay raises to help their employer, EG & G Florida, underbid competitors for a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Strikers are angry because EG & G reneged on their promise. The company laid off close to 50 union members and gave huge bonuses to top company managers.

"We're 93 percent strong," said picket Lorie Foster, a structural painter with seven years at KSC.

heed inside the facility. Their contract expires next year and they actively support the strike.

The Transport Workers Union, which has about 2,500 members who work for subcontractors at KSC and the two adjacent air force bases, voted to join the picket lines before and after their shifts and to set up a food bank for the strikers.

Woodworkers walk out at two Canada mills

Approximately 45,000 forest industry workers are currently involved in negotiations in British Columbia. Since July 18, 400 members of the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers Union of Canada (PPWC) have been on strike at two saw mills in Mackenzie in northern British Columbia. The main issues are job security and contracting out of work. Three thousand members of the International Woodworkers of America-Canada (IWA), angry with the pace of negotiations, conducted a one-day strike at saw mills in the Fraser Valley July 27. Also involved in negotiations is the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP).

workers, contracts on the coast expired June 15 and in the interior of the country on June 30.

Transit workers in L.A. settle nine-day strike

Members of the Amalgamated Transportation Union approved a new contract with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) August 2, ending a nine-day strike. Some 1,900 mechanics employed by the MTA walked off the job July 25. More than 5,000 bus and rail drivers, organized by the United Transportation Union (UTU), honored the strike, essentially shutting down the nation's second-largest transit system.

The new agreement provides for no wage increase the first year, a 30 cent an hour raise the second year, and a 1.5 percent raise the third year. A cost-of-living clause is built into the pact. Newly hired

maintenance assistants will start at \$12.50, a 23 percent cut.

The main issue of the strike was the issue of subcontracting out of work to private nonunion companies that pay substantially less. The MTA was demanding the right to have an unlimited amount of work done by outside contractors. Under the old agreement, 10 percent of mechanical work could be subcontracted. Resolving this issue was left to a joint union-MTA committee, which will review bids for subcontracting.

The following people contributed to this week's column: Maggie McCraw, member of IAM Local 368, and Rick Walker, member of Transportation Workers Union Local 568, in Miami; Joe Young in Vancouver; and Naomi Bracey, member of UTU Local 1607, and Craig Honts, member of UTU Local 1544, in Los Angeles.

LETTERS

Belgium's role in Rwanda

The article on Rwanda in the July 11 *Militant* was much appreciated by readers here in Belgium. It sets straight the facts on events in Rwanda since last April and gives much needed historical background, as opposed to the distortions in the big-business press. However, some important facts about Belgian imperialism's role are missing.

Rwanda was a Belgian colony from the end of the First World War up to 1962. It was the Belgian colonial administration that instituted the pass system arbitrarily classifying Rwandans as Hutu or Tutsi. Members of the native aristocracy were Tutsi by definition. So was nearly all of the tiny section of the population that was allowed to get a formal education under the Belgian boot.

At the end of the 1950s, some of these intellectuals developed anti-colonial and Rwandan nationalist views. In 1959, they participated in an African nationalist congress called by Patrice Lumumba, who was then leading the struggle against Belgian colonialism in neighboring Congo (now Zaire).

At the end of the same year, a massive peasant rebellion broke out, as famine hit Rwanda. The Belgian colonial army was sent in to crush it. In order to physically eliminate any potential political leadership of the peasantry and to prevent a revolutionary struggle for independence from taking place, the military dictatorship, with the active support of the Belgian Catholic Church, scapegoated the Tutsi elite for the famine and organized sections of the Hutu population to carry out large-scale pogroms against people labeled as Tutsis.

In the years since, this pattern of



counterrevolutionary terror along 'ethnic' lines, organized in close cooperation with the Belgian imperialists, has been repeated periodically, each time the puppet regime went through a crisis.

Although the Belgian government has been successful in having the capitalist press at home and abroad covering this up, it has remained the biggest prop for the Rwandan dictatorship, even after French imperialism increased its influence from the mid-1970s on.

Eric Wils
Antwerp, Belgium

Clinton's 'crime wave'

Mark Curtis's article in the August 8 *Militant*, made a powerful argument against the Clinton crime bill. Here are some official Justice Department statistics that prove the so-called crime explosion is nothing but anti-working-class propaganda and media hysteria. According to the U.S. Justice Department National Crime Victimization survey, the 1992 murder rate was 9.3 victims per 100,000 people; essentially the

same as in 1973, when they began the survey. In the same survey, the rate of violent crime victimization was 45 victims per 100,000 just like it was in 1973. So we ask, what crime wave?

In a report released March 7, 1994, Robert Lichter, director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, said, "people's fear of crime doesn't come from looking over their shoulders, it comes from looking at their television screens." The report went on to document a 300 percent increase in TV crime coverage from 1992 to 1993. This media blitz just happened to coincide with Clinton's drive for the crime bill. No, there is no coincidence at all, we are seeing a pogrom agitation sponsored by Bill Clinton. An agitation that is attempting to stir up a lynch hysteria against the poorest layers of the working class.

During the 1980s, while the violent crime rate remained static, the incarceration rate skyrocketed. According to the Justice Department, the number of prisoners climbed from 150 per 100,000 in 1980 to 350 per 100,000 in 1992.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union Sentencing Project, the actual 1992 incarceration rate was 450 per 100,000; giving the USA the dubious distinction of being the most repressive country on planet earth. Pre-freedom South Africa, de Klerk's apartheid regime, came in second with an incarceration rate of 350 per 100,000. Makes me wonder how American politicians have the nerve to preach about human rights to countries like Cuba.

Roy Inglee
Wilmington, Delaware

Abolish death penalty

During a recent discussion with a coworker about capital punishment, I pointed out that it is not a question of whether or not an execution is deserved or even who has the right to decide such matters.

When a government such as the United States government is empowered with the authority to kill, many innocent people die. For example, if it had been decided or was convenient, Mark Curtis could have as easily been framed for murder and been executed. I wonder how many like Mark Curtis have died. Abolish capital punishment now!

Laura Kamienski
Sunbury, Pennsylvania

Immigrants harassed

My job recently gave me a front row seat to observe the racist effects of U.S. immigration policy. I am a technician with the U.S. Geological Survey. In June I spent 10 days working on Isla de Mona installing a weather station. Isla de Mona is a small island located midway between the islands of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola, the island shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

I was on the dock when a boat with 26 Cubans and two Dominicans arrived from the Dominican Republic. The Cubans were welcomed to the land of "freedom" while the Dominicans were put in handcuffs. The Dominicans were the darkest-skinned people on the boat. Within a few days the Cubans will be free to move to anywhere they want in the United States and its colonies while the Dominicans will be deported.

The United States government refuses to allow Cuban and Dominican immigrants to travel in safety and comfort. Even though the Cubans will be granted entry into the United States, it is better propaganda if they arrive in open wooden fishing boats after a 30-hour journey rather than in the comfort of a modern airplane. There are hundreds of Cubans who have emigrated to the Dominican Republic and are waiting for a chance to sail to Puerto Rico.

Ron Richards
Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico

'Militant' gets around

I'm at a military base and I'm getting made fun of but I don't care. One of my roommates is a socialist and I let him read the *Militant*. I've told him of Mark Curtis. Could you do an article on Mumia Abu Jamal, the prisoner in Pennsylvania on death row?

B.S.
Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland

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.

New Zealand gov't threatens largest city with drinking water catastrophe

BY RUSSELL JOHNSON

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Claiming an impending water crisis, Auckland's civic authorities are threatening to impose drastic cuts in water usage. At the same time, they are pushing ahead with plans to pipe the polluted water from the nearby Waikato River into the city's water supply system.

According to local government officials, the region faces an imminent and potentially catastrophic water shortage caused by an unanticipated drought. In June, water storage dams were less than one-third full and, at current usage rates, would allegedly be emptied by May 1995.

The only way this scenario can be avoided, the authorities claim, is if everyone voluntarily reduces their water usage by 25 percent, and allows the city to override opposition and rush ahead with a NZ\$70 million pipeline to divert millions of liters of water from the Waikato River into the Auckland water supply system (NZ\$1 = US\$0.59). The project would be funded by raising rates (city taxes).

Otherwise, officials threaten, household water supplies will be cut off, compelling the population to line up with buckets at street-corner standpipes.

To underline the severity of the situation, top police, military, and civil defense officials were called together in June to plan for enforcement of such unpopular measures.

Bypassing environmental safeguards

The government established a water crisis committee to examine ways of bypassing the environmental safeguards required under a Resource Management Act, and fast track the pipeline.

The Tainui Maori Trust Board has filed a claim to ownership of the Waikato River before the Waitangi Tribunal, the indigenous land rights court. The board agreed to reverse its initial opposition to the pipeline in exchange for the Auckland region's mayors backing the Tainui ownership claim and agreeing to pay a water rental to the board.

The Waikato, the country's longest river, drains a very large populated area with extensive industrial and agricultural development. It has been described as an "open sewer" into which is pumped the partially treated sewage from Hamilton, the country's fourth largest city. Pesticides, fertilizers, and other farm run-off; and industrial wastes from pulp and paper, dairy, geothermal power, and other industries drain into the river.

"Some of these things are banned from our sewers. Why aren't they banned from our drinking water?" one critic of the scheme commented to the *New Zealand Herald*.

Watercare Services Ltd., the company that supplies Auckland's water, reports that residents angry at the water restrictions have stoned some of its vehicles.

Watercare Services was established as part of the corporatization and privatization program of successive Labour and National Party governments to transform public utilities and social services into profit-driven enterprises. Its shares are currently held by the Auckland Regional Services Trust, the first elected local body to be controlled by Alliance Party politicians. The Alliance coalition is a grouping of minor capitalist parties, which has drawn substantial electoral support away from the Labour and National parties, the traditional ruling parties.

National and Labour Party politicians claim that the water crisis proves the Alliance should never be trusted to run the country. The Alliance counters that the crisis is the responsibility of National and Labour parties, because corporatization

has meant that the Trust has no direct control over Watercare Services' operations.

Some of the most drastic proposals for cutting water usage are coming from within the Alliance. This includes urging Watercare to unilaterally cut water supplies by 25 percent to each of the city councils in the region, forcing local bodies to impose similar cuts on residents in their areas.

Another Alliance proposal is to impose a harsh "user pays" regime that would sharply increase household water charges.

For someone living in Auckland where it rains, often heavily, almost every day, it defies common sense to claim that the region is suffering unprecedented drought conditions. On July 25, for example, Auckland's emergency services were placed on "deluge alert" in anticipation of flooding from heavy rainfall.

Capitalist-made crisis

In reality, the serious shortage of stored water in the city is a man-made, or more accurately a capitalist-made, crisis. It is the product of the profit-driven, short-sighted and anarchic character of capitalism, whose interests local and government politicians represent. The situation is exacerbated by the competitive pressures of a worldwide depression.

Auckland University climatologist Dr. Chris De Freitas wrote in the *Herald* that "as long ago as 1986 an investigation commissioned by the then Auckland Regional Authority reported that in the greater Auckland region the risk of water supply shortage beyond 1989 was much higher than is normally acceptable in well-developed countries."

Town planning authorities were warned

that they could not rely on rainfall levels of the recent past being repeated year after year, ignoring the probability of sharp fluctuations that are "a special and enduring characteristic of climate." Given the expanding demand for water in the region, the existing water storage system would not be able to cope with any drop-off in rainfall. Instead, the authorities gambled that heavy enough rains would keep falling.

Pressure for 'cheap government'

The narrow Auckland isthmus is the economic hub of the country. Its environs encompass 40 percent of the national market and a third of the population. The demand for water in the region has expanded apace as competitive pressures have forced industry to relocate to the biggest market, and workers to follow there from other regions and countries to find jobs.

At the same time, more than 10 years of economic stagnation and falling profit rates have increased the pressure from business for "cheaper government." They want to decrease the share of the surplus value produced by the working class that is taken by the government in some form of taxation.

At the local level cheap government has meant corporatizing public utilities and services, and slashing their workforces. It involves cutting back on so-called non-essential capital projects to maintain or improve infrastructure, like the decades-old water supply system.

Cost-cutting by Watercare Services has contributed materially to the water shortage. Electric pumps that transferred overflow water from lower dams in the storage

system to higher dams were turned off. Other dams were drained on the eve of the crisis to carry out long-postponed maintenance work.

Business pressure for rapid building of the Waikato pipeline has also been mounting out of fear that uncertainty of water supply would reduce Auckland's manufacturing, construction, and tourism boom; undermine investor confidence; and derail the largest economic upturn for 20 years.

Auckland's water crisis has highlighted the curtailing of democratic rights that has gone hand in hand with the corporatization and privatization of public utilities and services. Many of these were previously run by elected public boards or councils whose operations were open to public scrutiny.

Commercial secrecy

Now, in the name of commercial secrecy, the doors of the boardrooms have been slammed shut. Employees who leak the anti-working-class plans of these public servants are threatened with dismissal and court action.

This makes it more difficult for working people to unravel the facts and counter the claims of the rulers that we must sacrifice our right to clean, drinkable water for their save water campaign.

Auckland's water crisis is a symptom of the international crisis of capitalism today. It reveals how the rulers seek to shift the burden of this crisis onto working people, and highlights how working people need an independent political voice to speak in defense of our own class needs.

Russell Johnson is a member of the Engineers Union in Auckland, New Zealand.

Maoris demand land rights in New Zealand



Maoris protest New Zealand government's land policy in Helensville, February 1994. The first land rights march in almost 10 years in Auckland took place in July.

BY JAMES ROBB

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — In the first march for Maori land rights to hit the streets of this city in nearly a decade, 180 people, mainly Maori students, marched here July 15. They were protesting a proposal by Minister of Justice Doug Graham to place a ceiling on Maori land claims. Graham is discussing the plan, known as the fiscal envelope proposal, with representatives of Maori tribal authorities.

The government has not made details of the proposal public. However, it is reportedly based on trading future land claims for shares in state-owned enterprises as they are sold off.

A similar agreement was reached with respect to fishing rights last year, after much debate. All Maori claims for fish quotas based on the Treaty of Waitangi were relinquished, in return for a major Maori shareholding in Sealords, the largest

fish-processing company in New Zealand. A large banner reading "Sealords says no fishing rights, Fiscal Envelope says no land rights," led off the march.

The British Crown took possession of New Zealand in 1840 under the Treaty of Waitangi. The pact promised the indigenous Maori people full and undisturbed possession of their land, forests, and fisheries.

Under pressure from growing land rights protests in the 1970s and early 1980s, the government set up the Waitangi Tribunal, which for the past decade has held hearings on land grievances and paid some compensation for past injustices.

'We're not interested in shares'

"It's not a question of the size of the settlement," Moana Sinclair, one of the organizers of the march, told the crowd. "We're not interested in shares, in buying into corporations, while we can't touch our land."

"We're a new breed, a new generation," she said. "All over the world indigenous people are standing up. We have to join that movement."

Phyllis King, from the rural town of Clevedon, told rally participants of an incident in May, where racist thugs attacked a group of Maoris conducting a religious ceremony to bless a piece of land. The rightists, who were organized by the farmer who leases the land, shouted, "Mud people, mud people," and beat the group with ax handles and other weapons.

King explained that despite reporting the incident and the attackers' identity to the police, the cops have done nothing. "It's time this government-endorsed racism and violence on our people stopped," she said.

James Robb is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Auckland.