

# THE MILITANT

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## Young Socialists call nat'l convention

BY JACOB PERASSO  
AND VERÓNICA POSES

SAN FRANCISCO — Some 30 young people participated in a lively West Coast educational conference here September 5-6 sponsored by Young Socialist chapters in California. Youth came from California, Washington state, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Young Socialist members and other participants shared their experiences and discussed how to advance in building disciplined YS units that meet on a regular basis, have a serious approach to finances, and can effectively participate in the increasing resistance by working people and youth. At the end of the conference, participants voted enthusiastically to call a national convention of the Young Socialists for late November in Los Angeles.

The National Executive Committee of the YS had asked the young people participating in the conference who were of Young Socialists age (between 14 and 26 years old) to vote on whether or not the weekend's deliberations indicated that the call for a YS convention was warranted.

Young Socialists in California decided to call the Labor Day weekend regional conference after a spurt of recruitment to the organization in Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco. The influx of new members has helped YS members in California begin transforming their chapters into increasingly active and effective organizations

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## Fidel Castro gets hero's welcome in South Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — "This is a proud moment for us, to welcome Fidel Castro and thank the Cuban people as a whole," said Andile Vanto, a 21-year-old student who took part in a September 2 march and rally welcoming the Cuban president to Durban, South Africa. "Cuba is a symbol for the whole world of a people who can stand up against American terror."

Castro conducted a state visit to this country September 4 and 5 at the invitation of South African president Nelson Mandela, following the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban.

The Cuban president addressed a special sitting of the National Assembly, paid a visit to Nelson Mandela's old cell on Robben Island, held meetings with Mandela and South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, was the guest of honor at a state banquet, spoke in Soweto, and held a meeting with Cuban doctors working here.

Castro was accompanied by Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina and several members of the Council of State.

The example of the Cuban revolution, and Castro's personal example, made for a popular welcome among millions of South Africans who know of Cuba's international

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## Support the Northwest Airlines pilots' strike!

The entire labor movement should throw its support behind the more than 6,000 pilots on strike at Northwest Airlines. The stakes in this fight — the first major airline strike since Eastern Airlines workers defeated owner Frank Lorenzo's attempt to run a nonunion carrier — are high. If the pilots win, the 27,000 ground service workers and 11,000 flight attendants at Northwest will

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have more leverage in their own battles for better wages, benefits, and working conditions and against the company's demands for concessions. If the pilots lose, it will put wind in the bosses' sails — and not just at Northwest.

The airline is waging a slick media campaign to play up the high salaries most pilots earn, in an attempt to cut across broader labor support for their fight. Seeking to pit other union workers against the pilots,

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Militant/John Sarge

Northwest flight attendants rally for a contract September 5 in Detroit

## Unionists at Northwest resist bosses' profit drive

BY MARY MARTIN  
AND JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) members joined with Teamster-organized flight attendants, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), and others at Labor Day weekend events around the country to press their contract demands. The strike of 6,000 Northwest Airlines pilots has entered its second week.

After the pilots walked out August 28 over wages and job security, Northwest laid off most of its 27,000 ground operations workers as well as 11,000 flight attendants. All three union groups have been without new contracts at Northwest since 1996, and each is demanding a wage raise and job security provisions.

ALPA also announced it will expand its present picketing locations at airports in Anchorage, Detroit, Honolulu, Memphis,

Minneapolis, and Seattle, to include Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Orlando, Florida.

Meanwhile, Northwest took the provocative step of naming the head of its strike preparation efforts, Mickey Foret, as its new chief financial officer. Foret was president of Continental Airlines under Frank Lorenzo, the notorious union-busting boss at Continental and Eastern Airlines in the

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## Thousands rally at Million Youth March N.Y. city gov't unleashes 3,000 cops on Harlem event

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

NEW YORK — Thousands of people — the overwhelming majority of whom were Black — participated in the Million Youth March (MYM) event in Harlem September 5. Many people came to express national pride and dignity, as well as to protest police brutality and New York mayor Rudolph

Giuliani's unsuccessful attempts to prevent the rally. When the event ended hundreds of participants raised their fists in the air and cheered.

The police assault on people at the end of the rally and attempts to arrest organizers in the following days continue to be a topic of debate in this city.

The *New York Times* reported 20,000 people participated. Police said the turnout for the event was 6,000, while organizers put the number at 50,000. The majority of participants came from the New York-New Jersey area. Hundreds of others came by bus, van, and car from cities including Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C.

"We came here together peacefully," said Eric Sanders, 26, a book clerk at Harlem City College who attended the rally. "Every day there's cop brutality and false arrests. Sometimes they grab you and take you to jail without reading you your rights. And when you go to court they tell you what you did — after you've spent the night in jail."

Camilo Reyes, 62, of the Dominican Workers Party, explained why he and more than 20 members of his organization came. "We solidarize with the Afro-Americans in the fight for social justice in the Harlem community and against police repression." Addressing Giuliani's campaign against the demonstration, Reyes explained, "We are within our rights to demonstrate because this is the sentiment of all those who fight for social justice, not only in the United States but in all of Latin America."

"I am here to support Black and Latino unity," said Yolanda Rodríguez, a Puerto Rican activist.

"I hope this action will help all of us to fight for self-determination and free politi-

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### S. Korean auto workers nix Hyundai strike settlement

About 26,000 rank-and-file auto workers at Hyundai voted down a proposed strike settlement September 1 by a 2-to-1 margin. The deal, which union leaders earlier agreed to, would have allowed the company to cut 277 jobs, a retreat from the 1,500 Hyundai workers struck and occupied the plants for a month beginning July 20. At the same time, south Korea's largest auto parts supplier, Mando Machinery, resumed partial operations September 4 after 8,000 riot cops broke up a 18-day-old strike there. The workers had walked out over proposed layoffs. Police used tear gas on the strikers and arrested hundreds. But many others refused to return to work at Mando, which sells 80 percent of its parts to Hyundai.

### Indonesia: gov't cuts subsidies

In accordance with mandates by the International Monetary Fund for a \$43 million loan, Jakarta is moving to implement austerity measures against workers and peasants there. The government cut price subsidies for three key food items — sugar, flour, and soybeans — September 2, and is attempting to sell off 12 state-owned companies.

Food prices have soared in recent months, with inflation at 70 percent. One-fifth of Indonesia's 92 million workers are unemployed, and 75 million people — or 37 percent of the population — are expected to fall below the official poverty line by the end of the year. Some estimates put the number at 100 million by 1999.

In response to these conditions more than 2,000 students demonstrated at the parliament in Jakarta September 7-8 demanding the ouster of President B.J. Habibie. Police attacked the students with teargas and bayonets. Thousands of students also rallied against rising prices in Indonesia's second-largest city, Surabaya. They are the largest protests since former President Suharto was forced to resign in May.

Protests are also continuing in the province of Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra island, which Indonesian troops have occupied for years in an attempt to put down an

### Texas protesters oppose nuclear dumping



Residents of Sierra Blanca, Texas, demonstrate in August against a government proposal to dump nuclear waste in their town. Other protests included a hunger strike and other actions in Washington, D.C., and Austin, Texas. Three other sites were withdrawn after residents protested. Most activists say the reason for choosing Sierra Blanca has to do with the fact that two-thirds of those living in the working-class town are Mexican or Chicano.

independence movement. When protests broke out September 1 in Lhokseumauwe, Aceh, soldiers shot at the crowds, killing two and wounding at least 10.

### Russian Duma rejects Yeltsin's prime minister once again

The lower chamber of the Russian parliament voted a second time September 7 to reject Victor Chernomyrdin as prime minister. The proimperialist regime of Russian president Boris Yeltsin fired his entire cabinet August 23, after only five months. The recent move by Yeltsin to rename Chernomyrdin is aimed at attempting to stabilize the tumultuous economic and social crisis in Russia.

Strikes over unpaid wages remain a daily occurrence. Workers at three Russian nuclear research factories in the Urals Mountains region walked out over that issue September 7. "Conditions have become intolerable and socially dangerous," said union-

ist Vladimir Gorshkov. Workers at two of the nuclear plants have not been paid for five months, and overall the government owes more than \$11 billion in back wages.

### Proposed settlement in Kosova

National chauvinist president Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia and Ibrahim Rugova, head of the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), announced in early September they had reached an agreement under which Kosova would become an autonomous region within Serbia, with final status talks put off for three to five years. As repression by Serbian forces against the 90 percent Albanian majority in Kosova has intensified, the desire of many Kosovar Albanians for independence has grown. The Kosovan Liberation Army (UCK) does not support the U.S.-mediated agreement.

Earlier, a Serbian court in Prizren sentenced nine Albanian student leaders to a total of 32.5 years imprisonment August 24. Eight are leaders of the Independent Students' Union at a local high school. All were convicted of "terrorism," an indictment that has been used in hundreds of trials in the last five months. The trial took one day and the student leaders were interrogated, severely beaten, and tortured.

### 300,000 strike in Israel

After 300,000 public sector workers — one-seventh of the workforce in Israel — went on strike September 3-7, members of the Histadrut Trade Union Federation won a wage increase of 1.5 percent. Workers shut down government offices and slowed seaports, railways, hospitals, and state-run utilities. Teachers remained on strike. Israeli

prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the strike irresponsible in light of the worldwide financial meltdown and a supposed need to increase military spending. Netanyahu said he would set an example by requesting a 5 percent wage cut for the highest-paid workers. Workers in the prime minister's own office are also on strike.

### U.S. court indicts right-wing Cubans in plot to kill Castro

Seven right-wing Cuban-Americans were indicted August 25 on charges that they conspired to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro while he was in Venezuela last year. They include at least one board member of the prominent Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). Many of those indicted — José Antonio Llama, José Rodríguez Sosa, Alfredo Otero, Angel Alfonso Alemán, Angel Hernández Rojo, Juan Bautista Márquez, and Francisco Secundino Córdova, had been affiliated with the CANF at one time or another.

Those indicted were caught last October by the U.S. coast guard with sniper rifles, one of which was registered to José Francisco Hernández, president of CANF.

### U.S. gov't won't let businessmen go to Cuba

On September 3 Washington announced it was rejecting permission for a group of U.S. businessmen to visit Cuba in mid-September, saying the trip violated U.S. interests. According to Kirby Jones, president of the business consultancy firm Alamar Associates, the three-day visit with Cuban officials was made with "every arrangement in full compliance with U.S. law." The U.S. Treasury Department rejected Alamar's request for a license because the "proposed activity is inconsistent with current U.S. policy aimed at bringing about a peaceful transition to democracy" in Cuba.

Jones said the license denial came after he met with Michael Ranneberger, head of the Cuba desk at the U.S. State Department, and refused the U.S. official's request that participants in the trip meet with Cuban counterrevolutionaries, make critical comments about Cuba to the media, and announce at a press conference that they would do business "only with a freely democratically elected government."

### Parts of 1996 immigration law ruled 'unconstitutional'

A U.S. federal appeals court declared September 1 that a key provision of the 1996 immigration law was unconstitutional. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the section that prohibits immigrants from using federal courts to fight deportation by Washington. The elimination of all judicial review of detention is also known as "court-stripping." The Immigration and Naturalization Service told the press that it would most likely appeal the ruling.

— MEGAN ARNEY

## THE MILITANT

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Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

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# Chicago: hundreds protest FBI frame-up of Palestinian

BY JOHN VOTAVA

CHICAGO — "The sentiment against this unprecedented action is not just shared by Muslims but by anybody looking in an unbiased way.... These people must be given a chance to defend themselves." This was the statement by Ibrahim Elgindy of the Muslim Americans for Civil Rights and Legal Defense just before the beginning of a prayer meeting and protest organized at the Federal Office building here August 14.

Elgindy was referring to moves by the FBI in June to confiscate the house and personal bank accounts of Mohammad Salah, a Palestinian who has lived in Chicago for more than 25 years, leaving him and his family without any means of support. FBI agents also seized assets of the Quranic Literacy Institute, whose primary endeavor is to produce a new English interpretation of the Quran. The confiscations were based on a complaint that government officials filed in federal court claiming "probable cause to believe that the defendant properties constitute funds or property traceable to funds... to be used in support of a conspiracy involv-

ing international terrorist activity."

To this day the FBI has failed to file any criminal charges against either Salah or the QLI. However, based upon a civil forfeiture provision of a law supposedly aimed at alleged drug dealers, they are expected to prove their innocence in order to get their assets back. Under the guise of investigating their allegations against Salah, FBI officials have visited more than 50 Muslim families in the area. Elgindy said that "people are now reluctant to support the Institute, and this will affect its work."

In response to this attack on democratic rights, 300 people, most of them Muslim, came to the Federal Plaza protest to show solidarity with the defendants and to oppose this attempt to intimidate Arabs and Muslims in Chicago.

Seema Iman, who spoke at the rally following the prayer meeting, gave much of her time to the theme: "I'm proud to be a Muslim." Kamron Memom, who chaired the event, declared, "We consider this our country, to be our home, and we are not going anywhere."



Militant/John Votava

About 300 people protested attack on Mohammad Salah in Chicago August 14

The Muslim Americans for Civil Rights and Legal Defense organized a rally in Westmont, Illinois, August 23 that about 500 people attended. Jonathan Rothstein, an attorney at the same law office as Matt Piers, who represents Mohammad Salah, gave one of the main presentations. This case "fits into a pattern," he said, noting that in earlier decades there were attacks and witch-hunts against anarchists, communists, civil rights activists, and those opposed to the Vietnam War. "This is another attack of that kind."

He also described how thoroughgoing the harassment of Mr. Salah is, "He cannot hold

a job, go on a bus, or go to the store" without checking with the FBI. "He needs permission to see a doctor." Rothstein said the government's case against Salah is his alleged confession under duress to charges by the Israeli government of supporting the Palestinian organization Hamas, for which Salah spent five years in an Israeli jail. Also speaking at the rally was Rep. Paul Findley.

The next step in the case will be September 18, when Mohammad Salah and his lawyers will file motions before a federal judge outlining the steps they intend to take in the attempt to have his personal assets returned.

## Minnesota farmers: prices don't meet our costs

BY DOUG JENNESS  
AND HEATHER WOOD

SAUK CENTRE, Minnesota — "Farmers can't get a price to meet the cost of production!" This was the refrain echoed by speaker after speaker at a public hearing held here August 27 to hear testimony from farmers and others on the crisis facing rural communities in Minnesota. Nearly 100 people, mostly working farmers, participated in the meeting called by the Agriculture Committee of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

The farmers came from throughout the state and included dairy producers, turkey growers, and hog farmers, as well as corn, wheat, barley, and soybean growers.

Many speakers presented statistics showing the general downward trend of commodity prices in the past eight years. Jeff Kunstleben, a dairy farmer from Albany and president of the Minnesota Dairy Producers Board, offered one of the most telling figures. He reported that for every dollar a

consumer pays for dairy products in the supermarket, the farmer gets 23 cents today, compared to 37 cents in 1980. He attributed this to the "unfair practices of big food companies" and to "farmers not having direct access to grocery store shelves." The consumer pays more and we get paid less, he said. The problem is the "middlemen."

Kunstleben explained that the cooperatives, to which many dairy farmers belong, are not working in the interests of the producers. "Where's the democracy in the co-ops?" he asked.

Mike Kliber from the Minnesota Farmers Union said that every time farmers find a responsive voice in the co-op boards "a change in personnel is made to make the board more remote from farmers."

Kunstleben said that the federal procedures and restrictions on pricing milk are so complicated that few dairy farmers can understand them. One thing they do know, he said, is the price differences for different parts of the country based on how far they

are from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is unfair to Minnesota dairy farmers today.

Representative Steve Wenzel, chair of the Agriculture Committee, suggested that farmers lobby their congressmen to get a pricing compact like the one in New England, that sets milk prices above federally determined levels.

Delores Swoboda, a hog farmer from Redwood Falls and a veteran activist from the farm protest movement of the 1980s, testified, "I thought I saw the worst farmers could see in the '80s — until now." She said that Groundswell, an organization that tries to help working farmers, receives 8-16 phone calls a day on its hot line from farmers seeking assistance. She has been a board member of Groundswell since 1985.

Swoboda also described the damage this year to farmland and crops as the result of tornadoes, hail, and heavy rain. "And this comes on top of the millions of dollars of damage done a year ago by the flood in the Northwest," she said. Several participants

addressed the inadequacy of the disaster relief that had been provided so far. When farmers work on such tight margins, aid that only pays a portion, even 80 percent, of the damage won't stop them from going under. In northwestern Minnesota, for example, thousands of farmers are going under as a result of wheat scab and the damage done by last year's flooding of the Red River. A report in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* estimated that last year 20 percent of the farmers in that region went under.

Minnesota is a major producer of turkeys. According to Calvin Jackson, a turkey farmer from Little Falls, turkey producers are having an increasingly difficult time making enough to live on. "Many turkey farmers," he said, "are afraid to speak out for fear of losing contracts with Jenny-O," a processor owned by Hormel. He said, "I've reached the point where I don't care any more. I'm going under anyway unless something is done."

A grievance of many participants was that the 1996 "Freedom to Farm Act" removed subsidy payments, which, as one speaker explained "served as a safety-belt." As a transition from the previous price support system, the federal government is making annual transition payments for five years. The USDA has announced that it will make 1999 payments this year. As one farmer explained, that "may help cash flow this year, but it will leave us worse off next year."

Wenzel and other state legislators present said they are pressing the governor to call a special session of the state legislature to discuss the farm crisis.

From the floor one farmer stated, "By the time you get around to supporting a fair price, half of us will have lost our farms."

Several activists who are working to organize a speaking tour for a Black farmer involved in the \$2.5 billion class action suit filed last year against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for racial discrimination also attended the hearing. They distributed some fliers on the suit, and Arrin Hawkins, a student at the University of Minnesota, made an announcement about the plans for the tour.

Several candidates or representatives of candidates in the 1998 elections spoke during the hearings. Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Minnesota, participated and submitted a series of proposals for organizing a fight to protect farmers from the accelerating crisis of capitalism. He explained: "The worsening conditions in the countryside coincide with deep attacks on wage workers in the country's factories, mills, mines, and transportation centers." Fiske pointed to the growing resistance of working people in response to these conditions and to the solidarity needed between workers and farmers.

## Fiji cane farmers fight for better conditions

BY BRENDAN GLEESON

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — In mid-July, sugar cane farmers in Fiji led by the National Farmers Union (NFU) began supplying cane to mills for processing, six weeks after the NFU's annual convention had announced a boycott of the harvest. The NFU called off the boycott after the Fijian Parliament agreed to provide financial assistance to farmers affected by a severe and long-running drought.

The NFU initiated the boycott at its annual convention in late May, after the government offered cash-strapped farmers a F\$40 million loan (F\$1 = US\$0.50) and food handouts. Demanding direct assistance, the NFU General Secretary Mahendra Chaudhry described the loan proposal as a "slap in the face for farmers."

Amid reports that this year's sugar harvest will be the worst in 30 years, Chaudhry said that of the 20,000 small landholders growing cane, 8,500 had lost their crops and would have no income this year. Sugar is the main export of the country of 800,000 people, and accounts for 10 percent of its Gross Domestic Product. The drought multiplied the effects. The economy is heading for a second year of negative growth.

Hundreds of tons of cane were burned in the fields as the boycott was enforced. The owners' attempts to restart mills failed, as only a trickle of cane was presented for crushing. As the boycott took hold, the government mobilized police into the cane fields. In a reflection of the militancy among farmers and laborers in the cane-growing

areas, a by-election held in the Labasa constituency just after the boycott resulted in a defeat for the sitting National Federation Party (NFP) and a victory for Labour.

In opposing the government's original proposal to provide loans instead of grants, farmers pointed to the high level of debt they already carry. Their debts to commercial banks total more than F\$106 million.

Farmer Pritam Singh told the *Fiji Times* that a loan brings with it the "dilemma of paying it off." Even worse off, he said, are the laborers, who have "nothing. We do try and help these people but even the shops have stopped giving out loans."

Adding to the reluctance of farmers to incur more debt is the nature of their land tenure. Three-quarters of sugar farmers in the country are descendants of indentured laborers brought out to Fiji during British colonial rule, often called Indo-Fijians, who occupy native land under various lease agreements. Some 2,000 leases will expire in the next 12 months. Renewal of long-term leases is opposed by those who pose as protectors of indigenous Fijian rights.

Just over half of the country's population are classified as native Fijian. The percentage of Indo-Fijians has declined from 50 percent to around 43 percent since 1987. That was the year of two military coups organized by the then-Brigadier Sitiveni Rabuka. These overthrew the Labour Party-led government of Timoci Bavandra.

In 1992 Rabuka was elected prime minister under the post-coup "apartheid" constitution, which, among other measures dis-

criminating against Indo-Fijians, stipulated that the prime minister must be native Fijian. Such explicitly racist clauses are gone in a new constitution that has just been adopted. The new document does enshrine the powerful position of the traditional tribal chiefs. Defense of chiefly privilege is often the motivation behind rhetoric in support of "indigenous rights." It was also the motivation behind the 1987 military coups.

The sugar farmers' boycott followed a one-day general strike on April 23, involving more than 50,000 workers. The Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC) called the strike over layoffs, a government-imposed 3 percent general wage increase, and the withdrawal of "checkoff" — the employer deduction of union fees in the hotel and sugar industries. Workers throughout the islands participated in the strike and associated pickets and protests, which included rallies in the capital city of Suva reportedly involving 10,000 people.

Buoyed by the success of the general strike, the Fiji Trade Union Congress resolved to call a further strike for June 2. The call was canceled May 20, after Prime Minister Rabuka offered to hold "tripartite" talks involving government, employers, and unions. Having already called off the controversial wage order, Rabuka has advised government representatives on the board of the Fiji Sugar Corporation to consider reinstating the checkoff system for unionists.

Brendan Gleeson is a member of the Engineers Union in Auckland.

# 'Red Weekend' volunteers prepare Pathfinder graphics

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS .  
AND LISA ROTTACH

As the *Militant* went to press this week, workers in Pathfinder's print shop were binding *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*. This is the fourth book produced this year as a joint effort of volunteers from around the world and the print shop. It was also the first title that supporters of the communist movement put into electronic format cover-to-cover.

"We are now within two days of sending to Pathfinder *Cuba for Beginners* by e-mail," said Bobbi Sack in a September 9 telephone interview from her home in Cincinnati. Sack and Mike Shur from New York organize a team of 15 volunteers who are putting into digital form internal graphics and covers of Pathfinder books.

On September 6-7, during Labor Day weekend, more than 120 members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Leagues in Canada and New Zealand, and Young Socialists volunteered their labor at the Pathfinder building in New York, which houses the publisher's editorial facilities and printing factory. During this "Red Weekend," they prepared materials for virtually all internal illustrations and covers of books and pamphlets to be sent to those digitizing graphics.

The supporters of the communist movement organized by Sack and Shur live in Detroit, Cincinnati, London, Minneapolis, New York, Seattle, and the San Francisco Bay Area. They communicate largely through the Internet and their work of putting graphics into electronic form is supervised by the Pathfinder Volunteer Steering Committee based in the Bay Area. This steering committee organizes about 150 volunteers worldwide who are converting Pathfinder books into digital files — from text to illustrations to covers.

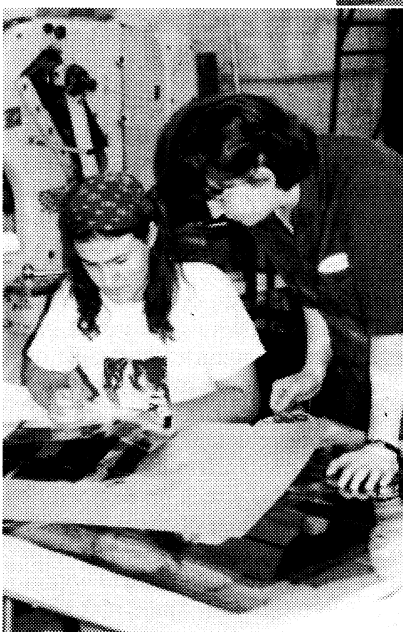
Digitizing photos and other art work is

the latest accomplishment of this international brigade. Their persistent efforts are making it possible for Pathfinder to keep in print its entire back list of some 350 titles by cutting labor time necessary to produce the books, lowering the skill levels needed to work in the print shop, and driving down production costs while sacrificing nothing of Pathfinder's quality standards — in fact improving readability and overall quality of many reprints.

*Cuba for Beginners*, for example, consists of 153 pages of illustrations by the Mexican cartoonist Rius. The book sketches the history of Cuba and its socialist revolution. This title was first published in 1970. Pathfinder produced a second edition a year later. In the quarter century that followed the publisher has reprinted the book 10 times to meet sales demand. For each printing the book was reproduced from film flats stored in drawers for years. Dust and occasional scratches from repeated use caused deterioration of the film flats, used to burn printing plates. Producing new flats to avoid printing with lower quality, or to make it possible to reproduce the book on new presses Pathfinder's print shop acquired over the years, required hand stripping of film — a highly skilled and labor-intensive process. With the conversion of the book into electronic form, "Scratches and other imperfections can be fixed much quicker and easier in the computer," Sack said. And the labor to strip film is no longer needed.

## Red Weekend

"Over the weekend we burned a bridge to the past," said Sarah Katz, a member of the YS National Committee and a garment worker in Chicago who took part in the Red Weekend. "And we took a step that was necessary to prepare books for printing by volunteers utilizing modern computer technology. This could only be done with a col-



Preparing film with book graphics to be sent to volunteers digitizing Pathfinder titles (left). Cleaning salt residues from inside of east wall of Pathfinder building (above).



Militant/Megan Arney (left); Hilda Cuzco (above)

lective effort."

About 75 of those who joined the volunteer effort at the Pathfinder building September 6-7 worked on preparing materials for graphics. They disassembled some 5,000 flats, separating film with photos, cleaning it, packaging it properly, and cataloguing it so it can be sent to the team organized by Sack and Shur. After this process was completed for every book, the film flats containing book text were discarded. This step removed the safety net of going back to producing the books with the old methods. All titles on Pathfinder's back list can now be reprinted only from the electronic files provided by volunteers.

In addition to preparing materials for internal illustrations of all 350 titles Pathfinder publishes or distributes, volunteers prepared the film for covers of nearly 320 books and pamphlets to be sent to those who will convert them into electronic files. Work on the covers required knowledge of stripping film because of the many colors involved. Most of those who worked on this project had done stints in Pathfinder's print shop in the past. Shirley Peña, for example, now an airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists in Miami, said that years ago she personally stripped the film flats of the first book she prepared for digitizing during the Red Weekend. The bulk of the work on the covers was completed September 6-7. Four volunteers used time off work over the next couple of days to virtually complete the project. A handful of volunteers with stripping skills will return for a day over the next week to finish preparing the remaining 30 book covers.

Those who participated included dozens of socialist workers, 23 members of the Young Socialists, and eight supporters of the communist movement from 12 U.S. cities as well as from Canada and New Zealand. Many participants also took part in the Million Youth March in Harlem the day before, a Militant Labor Forum in Brooklyn protesting the U.S. bombings of Afghanistan and Sudan, and a class on "The vanguard role of the Black nationality in the coming American revolution."

Red Weekend volunteers also completed restoration of the east wall of the Pathfinder building. With a lot of elbow grease they removed salt residues on the inside of that wall, which had been accumulated from water leaks. The outside of the east wall had been repaired earlier in the summer, sealing it off from water penetration. Volunteers cleaned and organized the basement of the Pathfinder building into a maintenance area for the machinery and physical plant as well. These steps were necessary for the structural soundness of the building and for improving the appearance and working conditions in the editorial and other production departments.

The trade unionists and young fighters who took part also had a chance to get a glimpse of and discuss publication of new revolutionary literature, necessary for building the communist movement. An Education for Socialists bulletin titled *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution* had just come off the presses (see ad on page 5).

The draft cover design of issue no. 11 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, that will be published by October 1 was on display in a computer screen at Pathfinder's editorial offices. "I am particularly thrilled about the publication of the pamphlet *Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity* by Rafael Cancel Miranda," said José Sánchez, a Puerto Rican living in Washington, D.C., who recently joined the Young Socialists and came to New York for the Red Weekend (see article and ad on pages 8-9).

Volunteers also had a chance to tour the print shop, see the labor savings from beginning to organize the factory around a digital flow of work, and get a more concrete idea about the interrelationship between the effort to revolutionize production of communist literature and to strengthen and transform the structure and cadre of a communist party. The electronic files of books sent by supporters of the communist movement are used by the shop to output book pages properly arranged for printing on film flats through an upgraded imagesetter, acquired by the print shop in July. The flats are then used to burn printing plates. This step will be bypassed too when the shop gets computer-to-plate technology that allows production of printing plates directly from the digital files.

To acquire this equipment a Capital Fund has been launched. One of the volunteers during the Red Weekend decided to up their pledge to this fund by \$2,000.

Mike Fitzsimmons, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Cleveland and organizer of the SWP's Trade Union Committee, used his days off work September 8-9 and was part of the crew that completed the preparation of most covers for digitizing. "From talking with comrades in the print shop and others, it seems that the Red Weekend was a tremendous boost in morale," he said. "It generated some momentum for us, who, as part of the vanguard of the working class that's leading many defensive struggles against the employers, can take qualitative steps towards changing how revolutionary literature is produced. This is tied to proletarianizing the party's branches and union fractions."

"The accomplishments of the Red Weekend will put us in a better position to meet our goal of preparing digitally an average

Continued on Page 5

## Young Socialists conference

Continued from front page

that participate in struggles with others and can win many of those fighters to its ranks. These experiences have been uneven, so the YS chapters called a conference to help generalize their lessons.

The conference was held at Fort Mason, overlooking the San Francisco Bay. The onetime military fort has been converted into retail stores and a conference center, among other things. The fort was used 100 years ago to supply weapons and ammunition for the U.S. invasion of Guam and the Philippines during the Spanish-American War at the dawn of U.S. imperialism, and was a major troop deployment center for decades. More than 1.5 million U.S. soldiers and naval personnel passed through the fort on the way to fight in World War II and Korea.

### Young Socialists Manifesto

In the opening report to the conference, Samantha Kern, the state organizer of the Young Socialists in California, talked about the accelerating pace of the world capitalist crisis and possibilities that exist in the West

Coast to build a youth organization today.

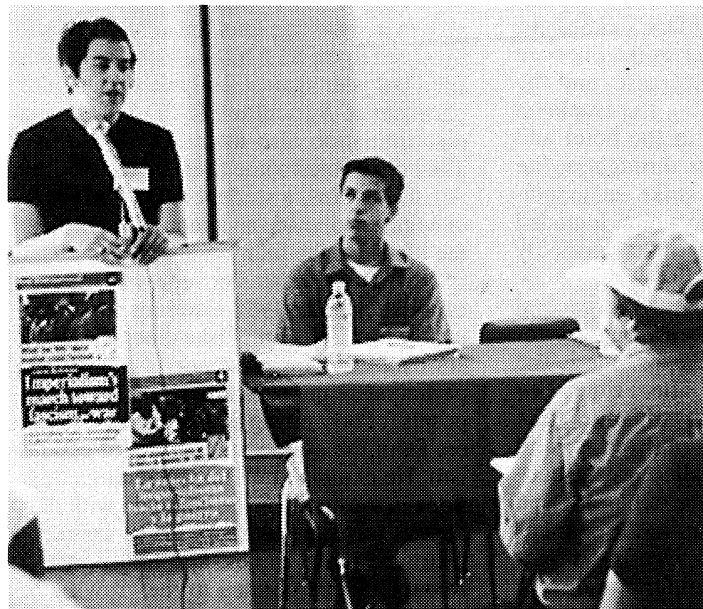
Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the magazine *New International*, joined Kern on the platform for the opening session, which some 65 participants of all ages took part in. Waters explained why the coming issue of *New International* will publish the "Young Socialists Manifesto" as its opening article.

This document was discussed and drafted by the Los Angeles YS chapter as part of responding to the growing opportunities that exist today to do political work with radicalizing workers and youth. The new issue of *New International* is scheduled for publication at the end of September. "The YS Manifesto is the keystone to issue no. 11 of *New International*," Waters said. "It's about acting as proletarian revolutionists today."

"The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists both work within the history and continuity of the modern working-class movement," she added. "The YS is a proletarian organization in program and perspective. This is the common foundation of the party and the YS."

The opening session of the conference was followed by two days of classes, panels, socials, and other sessions open only to YS-age youth and a few invited guests. A class on the book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes, led by a YS member from Seattle, was followed the first night by a panel discussion that reflected some of the experiences of Young Socialists on the West Coast. Nefta Pereda, a YS member currently living in Los Angeles, drew lessons from his

Continued on Page 14



California state YS organizer Samantha Kern speaks at West Coast regional conference September 5-6.

Militant/Amanda Hillard



# 'Militant' launches sub drive to win fighting workers, youth as readers to the socialist press

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"As we kick off the campaign to win new readers to the socialist press, we will be sending a team of activists to Hartford, Connecticut, this weekend to meet members of the Communications Workers of America on strike against Southern New England Telecommunications," said Greg McCartan from Boston. "The team will also sell door to door in working-class areas and try to get in contact with Puerto Rican activists there."

McCartan, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, will join with other socialist workers in industrial unions, members of the Young Socialists, and other supporters to launch the international drive to sell 1,300 new subscriptions to the *Militant* and 400 subscriptions to its Spanish-language sister magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The eight-week campaign, which starts September 12 and ends November 8, will also have goals for selling copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. Goals adopted by supporters of the socialist press so far total about 600 copies, but don't include projections for selling issue no. 11, which will be available by October 1. Next week's *Militant* will list goals from supporters in cities and in trade unions around the world, as well as report on the initial results of the campaign.

Many supporters participated in several events over the Labor Day weekend to campaign for the Socialist Workers candidates and warm up for the sales drive.

"We sold six subscriptions this week getting ready for the subscription campaign," said Melissa Harris from Newark, New Jersey. "We sold three *Militant* subs and a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* to unionists at the Labor Day parade in Paterson, New Jersey, while campaigning with Susan Anmuth, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress. The sales in general were very easy because many people were interested in the strike by the pilots at Northwest Airlines and other labor battles. I also talked about the struggle for Black rights and the fight by Black farmers and that helped a lot."

At the September 5 Million Youth March rally in Harlem, supporters sold 91 copies of the *Militant* and \$400 worth of Pathfinder books and pamphlets, reported rail worker Al Duncan from New York. Duncan, the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York, and Rose Ana Berbeo, the candidate for U.S. Senate, staffed a campaign table while talking to hundreds of participants at the event. "The most popular titles were on the Cuban revolution and then Malcolm X," Duncan added.



BY ARLENE RUBENSTEIN

We spent the Labor Day weekend introducing fighters to the 1998 Georgia Socialist Workers campaign. Paul Cornish, who is a member of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in the 4th CD, campaigned at a barbeque in Macon, Georgia, where 600 members of the International Association of Machinists are on strike against Lucas Aerospace.

"Almost every striker I talked to brought up forced overtime as a major issue," Cornish said. "I explained how this reflects the



Militant/Ruth Nebbia

Socialists Workers candidate Rose Ana Berbeo (left) campaigns at Million Youth March

deepening crisis of the capitalist system and how the bosses try to push us to take up the slack. Strikers seriously read the Labor Day statement put out by the campaign and we will be going back to see what they thought and follow the progress of the strike."

Supporters of the socialist press also sold seven more copies of the *Militant* at a Labor Day event, to Northwest pilots, and flight attendants. Several people expressed agreement with an article in the *Militant* on their strike that pointed to the danger of the government playing a strike-breaking role.

At the Million Youth Movement events in Atlanta, socialist workers set up a 12-foot-long table with assistance from socialist campaigners from Birmingham, Chicago, and Miami and sold 58 copies of the *Militant* and 17 Pathfinder titles.

"A lot of young people bought the paper

to find out the truth about the U.S. bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan. Many of them were suspicious about Washington's goals, but they had no way of getting the facts. We distributed 400 'Join the Young Socialists' leaflets, and some participants were specifically interested in checking out a youth organization with a revolutionary program," reported James Harris, the party's candidate for governor of Georgia.

Twenty-five people signed up for more information on the YS.



BY KEVIN DWIRE

We sold six copies of the *Militant* at the September 5 Labor Day parade in Cleveland. We also got out copies of a new campaign flier for the Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in the 10th District, Tony Prince,

## — YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD — Students back strike at Bay Area city college

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY J.P. CRAYS DALE

SAN FRANCISCO, California — On the first day of classes August 19 members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 790 surrounded Conlan Hall, an administrative building at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) where they work. The workers picketed and many locked themselves inside the building.

Following that action, about 350 workers and students who had gathered to support them proceeded to a nearby location for a rally, where the workers demanded the school give them a fair contract. The 650 clerical, technical, custodial workers, and others have worked without a contract for 14 months. Among their demands is a cost of living increase, an end to contracting out work and an end to mandatory furloughs.

In an attempt to pit the student body against the SEIU workers the CCSF board of trustees and dean Del M. Anderson pasted up "letters of apology" throughout the campus. The letters apologized to the students of CCSF for the actions of the SEIU, and claimed that those actions "deprive students of educational opportunities."

The 90,000 students at CCSF did not re-

ceive the apology letters well. Those letters that were not torn down were immediately covered with pro-union graffiti. One person scrawled "As a student I find this an insult, you should be apologizing to those who have gone without a contract for 14 months."

The evening of August 22, SEIU Local 790, still without a contract, declared a two-day strike. This was the first strike at CCSF since it opened in 1935. The next morning, the workers blocked all entrances to CCSF's nine campuses, declaring "School is closed!" As students and faculty members attempted to enter the parking lots, the SEIU workers requested that the commuters honor the strike.

The workers were soon joined on the picket line by faculty members and students, who wanted to join them in their fight. Forty-five percent of classes were canceled, due to the profusion of teachers and students who either joined or refused to cross the picket line. Many picket signs read "Workers and students unite!" Chants included "No contract... No school!" and "What do you want?... Contracts! When do we want them? Now!"

The administration was unable to make the school function without the classified workers. Teachers who did not honor the strike reported overflowing trash cans, malfunctioning elevators, and stuffy rooms due to the fact that no one knew how to operate the ventilation system. On August 28 the administration declared that the strike was illegal and threatened the workers with an injunction that would force them back to work.

The unionists returned to work August 31, but at 3:00 p.m. when their demands were still not met at the negotiation table, they walked out and returned to the picket lines. This time the strikers declared that they would not return to work until their demands were met.

## Party-building weekend

Continued from Page 4

of 10 books per month," said Bobbi Sack, "even though achieving this is still a little down the road."

Sack described both the progress and some of the challenges in putting Pathfinder book covers and internal illustrations into electronic format.

Going through the experience of preparing *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* and *Cuba for Beginners*, made it possible to put down in writing work procedures and quality controls that facilitate drawing new volunteers into the work. While Bobbi and her husband Greg Sack digitized the internal illustrations for *Cuba for Beginners*, for example, Sybil Perkins and Robbie Scherr in Seattle converted into electronic format the book's cover.

The volunteers scan the film or

original prints of photos or drawings sent by Pathfinder but reconstruct the rest of the books' multicolor designs from scratch in the computer — including the type and color tints. "This is less costly, yields the highest possible quality, and provides digital files that can be easily edited in the computer," Sack said.

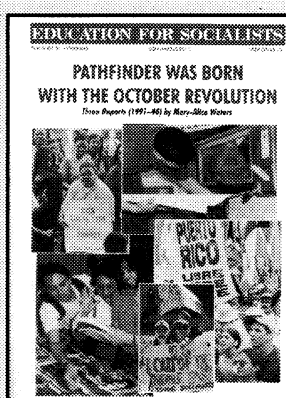
"Our main challenge now is involving everyone who has volunteered in the work," Sack said. "Right now only seven of the 15 members of the graphics team have assignments. It has taken the organizers time to learn how to do it ourselves before we could train others. This will change rapidly in the next month. And we still need more volunteers if we are going to digitize graphics and covers for at least 10 books a month, which is what's needed."

Those interested to join this effort can contact the Pathfinder Volunteer Steering Committee at rcheney3@compuserve.com

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# Fidel Castro gets a hero's welcome on S. Africa state tour

Continued from front page

ist contributions to African freedom struggles, particularly in the fight against the apartheid system of white minority rule.

"Fidel is a symbol of socialism, of people that never give up. It gives us hope that South Africans, who will never give up, can achieve the same thing as the Cubans," said Nokuthula Fakazi, a 23-year-old student at Natal Technikon, at the September 2 march and rally in Durban.

Paulos Ngcobo, provincial secretary for the Congress of South African Trade Unions in KwaZulu-Natal, said simply, "We're over the moon about Castro's visit. Cuba was with us in the dark days. And we're demanding that the U.S. lift its blockade against the people of Cuba."

"This is one of my greatest friends," Nelson Mandela said of Castro as the two presidents greeted a crowd outside the gates of Parliament here September 4.

## Thunderous welcome to speech

The Cuban leader spoke to the National Assembly in Cape Town on September 4. The speech — just over an hour with translation — was televised in its entirety that evening throughout the country.

Two parties with a combined total of 16 of the 400 seats in the National Assembly — the Democratic Party and the Freedom Front — announced beforehand that they would boycott the speech.

The Democratic Party, a liberal capitalist party that sat in the apartheid parliament for decades and today defends the social and economic privileges inherited by a small minority, said it was doing so because the Cuban leader is a "dictator." The Freedom Front, led by former apartheid military officers, simply said that it is "anticommunist. We feel Castro does not represent the kind of system we want in our country."

The reaction of the Democratic Party in particular was roundly denounced, even by newspaper editors countrywide. This city's leading morning daily, the *Cape Times*, wrote in its editorial September 7 that "even if the DP does not like Fidel Castro, it should have been aware that there are millions of South Africans who simply idolize the man... these South Africans, most of them black, feel that Castro and his countrymen have made an invaluable contribution to the freedom we all now enjoy."

Castro received a thunderous welcome from African National Congress MPs and hundreds of people jamming the public galleries, who interrupted his speech with applause more than 30 times. There was an "extraordinary and unprecedented" number of requests for seats in the public gallery, an official reported. Chants of "Cuba, Cuba" and "Fidel, Fidel" boomed through the chamber before and after the speech.

When National Council of Provinces delegate Diphuo Peters began a sentence with the words "Cuito Cuanavale..." she could not finish the sentence — the entire public

gallery and ANC MPs gave a roaring ovation. Cuito Cuanavale was the site of the decisive showdown in southeast Angola where, in 1987-88, Cuban volunteer troops, fighting alongside the Angolan military and SWAPO fighters from Namibia, dealt a stunning military blow to invading South African forces from which the apartheid regime never recovered. "Cuba is a model to be emulated by people who are struggling to change things for the better," Peters said.

Meanwhile, members of the National Party, which ran the apartheid regime from 1948 until the first nonracial, democratic elections in 1994, sat in sullen silence through the speech.

Castro took his seat next to Mandela — in the chair once occupied by P.W. Botha, the notorious president of apartheid South Africa in the 1980s.

## Two South Africas: rich and poor

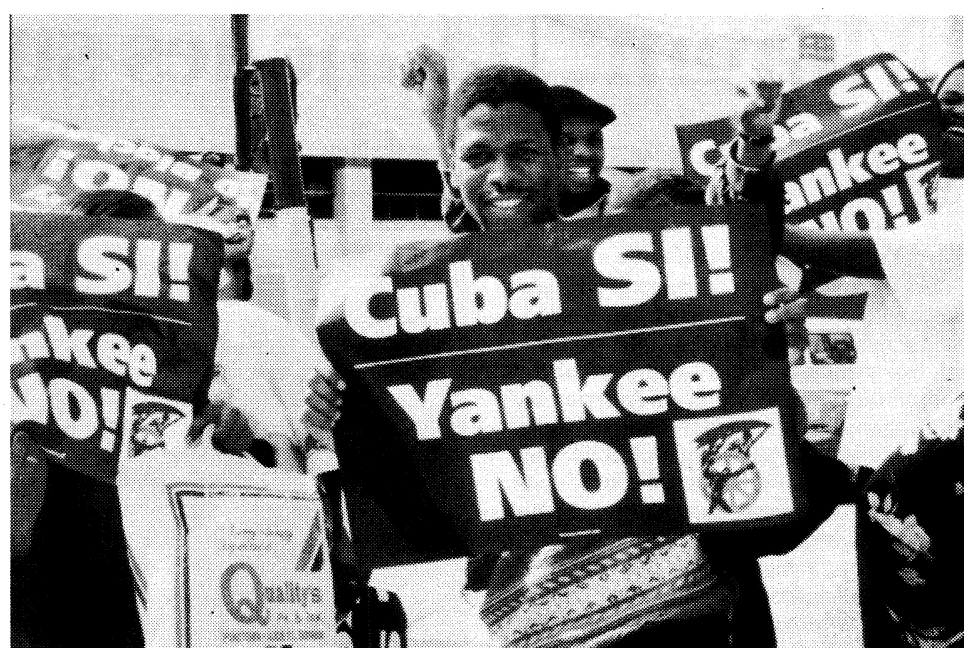
"This promising country, which yesterday was a target of isolation and universal condemnation, can tomorrow be an example of brotherhood and justice," Castro told the National Assembly.

"There are still today two South Africas, which I should not call white South Africa and black South Africa. That terminology should forever be banished if you want to build a multiracial and united country. I prefer to say it this way: two South Africas, the rich and the poor.

"One where the average family receives 12 times the income of the other. One where the children who die before their first year of life are 13 per thousand, the other where 57 die. One where life expectancy is 73 years, the other where it is only 56. One where 100 percent know how to read and write, the other where illiteracy surpasses 50 percent. One that has almost full employment, the other where 45 percent are without work. One where 12 percent of the population owns 90 percent of the land, the other where 80 percent of the population has less than 10 percent.... One that enjoys well being and freedom, the other that has conquered freedom without well being.

"Such a dreadful legacy cannot be changed overnight," Castro remarked. "There is absolutely nothing to be gained by disrupting the production system or squandering the vast material wealth, technical capacities, and productive efficiency created by the noble hands of workers under a cruel and unjust — virtually slave — system. To carry out social changes in an orderly, measured, and peaceful fashion, so that this wealth brings the maximum benefit to the South African people, is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks for human society to achieve."

"I reject demagoguery," Castro said. "I would never say a word here to stir up discontent, much less to gain applause and please the ears of the millions of South Africans who are rightly pained that the paradise of equal opportunity and justice for all, dreamed of



Militant/T.J. Figueroa

Hundreds of workers and youth welcome Fidel Castro to Durban, South Africa.

through long years of struggle, has not yet been achieved."

Many nations, he pointed out, have similar social and economic problems, the result of an unbearable distribution of wealth. "But in no other place like here has the struggle for human dignity awakened such hopes. The contradiction between hopes, possibilities, and priorities is not only a domestic affair for South Africa," but for all the world.

He pointed out that capitalism, colonialism, and slavery had left a horrible legacy for the overwhelming majority in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but added that it was always the slaves who led the revolt against unbearable conditions.

## Cuba's proud record in Africa

"Cuba is just a small island, geographically situated next to a very powerful neighbor," he said. "But we have 5,850 African students in our schools. At the same time, 80,524 Cuban civilians have gone to work in Africa," including 24,714 doctors, dentists, and nurses, as well as tens of thousands of teachers and other professionals.

In the past 30 years, "381,432 soldiers were on duty or fought in Africa, side-by-side with their African brothers for national independence or against foreign aggression," Castro added. "They took home to Cuba only the remains of their fallen comrades and the honor of carrying out their duty," he said to thunderous applause. "This is why we know better and appreciate the human qualities of the sons of Africa, much more than those who colonized and exploited this continent for centuries."

"With deep caring and pain we witness today the fratricidal wars, the economic underdevelopment, the famine, the lack of hospitals and schools, the lack of communications."

The Cuban president said that "an unavoidable and deep economic crisis, perhaps the worst in history, is threatening all of us today. The world, which has become an enormous gambling house, is seeing every day speculation in the range of \$1.5 trillion, which has absolutely no relation to the real economy."

## The coming general panic

He continued, "The value of the stock in the U.S. stock market has been rising to absurd levels. It was only historical privilege, associated with a set of factors, that made it possible for the wealthy nations to be the only ones in the world to issue the reserve currencies of every central bank in every country."

Castro said that "the value of the reserve world currency," i.e., the U.S. dollar, "has simply become a matter of confidence.... Sooner or later, the world will have to pay the bill."

"The most prosperous nations of southeast Asia have been ruined. Japan, the second world economy, can no longer prevent recession. The yen keeps losing value. The yuan is being sustained not without great sacrifices by China," he said, which would be "dangerously close to the tolerable limit for a country that has conducted an accelerated radical reform...."

"The Asian crisis is coming back," Castro warned. "The

economic catastrophe that is emerging in Russia, when that country is trying to build capitalism, is the greatest social and economic failure in history. All that despite enormous economic assistance and the recommendations and advice given to them by the best minds in the West." He pointed out that in Russia, where there are thousands of nuclear warheads, the operators of those missiles haven't been paid in five months.

"No one knows exactly when and how the general panic will be unleashed," Castro said. "Could anyone at this point be certain that there will not be a repetition of the 1929 crash?... It's just that between that time and now there is an enormous difference" in the sums of capital and number of people involved."

The Cuban leader concluded his speech by remarking that he is not a prophet, but that "great crises have always produced great solutions.... I have confidence in the need for humanity to survive."

## 'We bring no businessmen with us'

Castro visited Soweto, the largest black township in the country, on September 5. He laid a wreath at the memorial for Hector Petersen, the first youth to die on the barricades of the 1976 Soweto rebellion. There he delivered impromptu remarks for about two hours to a crowd of 1,500 people.

"Amandla! [Power!] Castro is coming," shouted the crowd. "This is an occasion that we have been looking forward to for a long time, because this man contributed to our democracy," said Gladys Nkosi.

The Cuban president told the crowd he was not a pacifist in the style of Mahatma Gandhi, because certain ideas are "worth defending with sweat and blood."

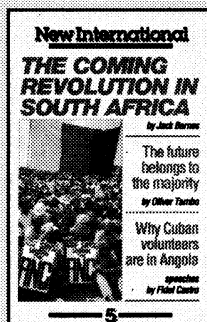
"The people who died here" during the 1976 rebellion "died not only for the inhabitants of Soweto, but for the freedom and dignity of the human race," he said.

He noted that recent visits by imperialist heads of state to Africa have been marked by their sheer greed. "They come after the gold and diamonds of Africa, they come after the cheap labor." He pointed out that U.S. president William Clinton had recently visited South Africa with an entourage of about 1,000 people, including a large number of businessmen. "They come in pursuit of profits, to do business, but the Cubans come as selfless friends... we bring no businessmen with us."

On the final day of his trip, Castro met for two hours with about 325 Cuban doctors and family members. About 400 Cuban doctors are now serving in rural hospitals and clinics across South Africa.

Nkosazana Zuma, South Africa's health minister, accompanied him. The doctors briefed Castro on their living and working conditions. The Cuban president then related his visit to Soweto and reiterated that Cuba's delegation was not present to secure more trade, emphasizing the special relationship that exists between the two countries.

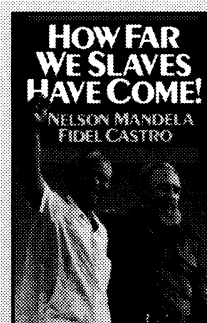
That special relationship, born in struggle, was recalled by the South African president at the state banquet in Castro's honor on September 4. "If today all South Africans enjoy the rights of democracy," Mandela said, "if they are able at last to address the grinding poverty of a system that denied them even the most basic amenities of life, it is also because of Cuba's selfless support for the struggle to free all of South Africa's people and the countries of our region from the inhumane and destructive system of apartheid."



## The Coming Revolution in South Africa

Jack Barnes

The one-person, one-vote elections in 1994, and the sweeping victory of the African National Congress, were historic steps in the democratic revolution in South Africa. This article explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of social and economic inequality. Only among the most committed cadres of this ANC-led struggle, Barnes writes, can the working class begin forging a communist leadership. In *New International* no. 5. Also includes "Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola": 2 speeches by Fidel Castro. \$9.00



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# Non-Aligned summit: Mandela, Castro speak for the majority of humanity

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

DURBAN, South Africa — "Let's be clear," Cuban president Fidel Castro told the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) here September 2. "It's impossible to accept a world order which is the complete embodiment of the principles and objectives of a system that for centuries colonized, enslaved, and looted our peoples."

Heads of governments or high-level delegations from the 114 NAM member countries attended the six-day summit. The NAM includes the majority of governments from Third-World nations oppressed by imperialism. How to confront the depression conditions increasingly spreading throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America was a constant theme of the meeting.

It was the Cuban delegation above all that staked out an uncompromising stance against political, economic, and military domination by the Yankee empire. In many cases, their positions matched those of the South African government, led by the African National Congress.

South African president Nelson Mandela opened the inaugural session of heads of state September 2. He called for a "new era." "The violence we see all around us, against people who are as human as we who sit in privileged positions, must surely be addressed in decisive and sustained manner," he said.

## Cancel Third World debt

The South African president devoted much of his speech to discussion of the international economic crisis, particularly the widespread depression conditions in the semicolonial world and the unequal trade relations enforced by the industrial capitalist countries against the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

"Today, one of the most immediate challenges that faces the developed countries is the need to remove the burden of the unbearable debt. Much has been said about this. What is needed is action by the developed countries and their partners in the south.

"From this," Mandela continued, "it would be correct to conclude that the problem of Japan is a problem of an excess of wealth. Thus... we have to grapple with such conundrums as an excess of wealth in one area of the world which contributes to the creation of poverty in another....

"There are resources within the world economy which could and should be mobilized to address the development needs of the poor of the world.

"The process of globalization has imposed on all of us a fashionable orthodox uniformity according to which we must all address such questions as budget deficits, rates of inflation, interest and exchange rates, capital movements, the flexibility of labor markets, the affordability of social welfare systems and so on.

"Might the situation not arise that these, and other phrases, occupy so prominent a place in our daily political vocabulary that, inadvertently, we end up deifying the means to an end?"

Mandela's speech was followed by remarks from heads of state or foreign ministers of all the countries represented.

## The empire and its subjects

In his brief speech on behalf of the peoples of Latin America, Castro noted, "A deep and already inevitable economic crisis of unforeseeable consequences threatens us all."

Speaking for the Cuban government later in the meeting, Castro responded to criticism in the local and international press of the NAM as an outdated talk shop. "There is no need for the Movement to apologize or ask anyone's permission to exist and continue fighting," he said. "Even the United States earnestly requested to attend this meeting as a guest — so be it. It's better that way, so that the great empire may learn how its modest subjects feel."

Returning to Mandela's call for restructuring of the United Nations, Castro said that "the Security Council's dictatorship must cease." Likewise, he said, the International Monetary Fund should be transformed. "It should no longer be... a financial gendarme for U.S. interests."

The revolutionary leader defended the rights of immigrant workers. "The acclaimed free movement of capital and commodities must also apply to that which should be above all else: the human being. No more bloody walls like that under construction along the American-Mexican border which is taking a high toll of hundreds of lives every year. The persecution of immigrants must cease. Xenophobia must die, and not solidarity."

Castro denounced "the hypocritical protests of those who strongly complain when others want to produce nuclear weapons," referring principally to the U.S. government, which is "turning to more powerful, accurate, and deadly weapons. This only encourages proliferation and will never be conducive to real disarmament."

Castro concluded by saying: "One day we will not be separated by our ethnic origins, nor by national chauvinism or borders, rivers or seas, oceans and distances. We shall be, above all else, people that will unavoidably live in a globalized world, but a truly just, fraternal, and peaceful world.

"That day we must earn by struggling," he said.

## NAM denounces embargo and bombing

Washington's embargo of Cuba was denounced by Mandela, Castro, and in the final summit resolution. The document also criticized the widening extraterritorial nature of the economic blockade and demanded the return of Washington's naval base on Cuban soil — Guantánamo — to



Militant/T.J. Figueroa  
Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro during Cuban president's September tour of South Africa.

the Cuban people.

The summit document also condemned the August 20 U.S. missile attack on Al Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant in Khartoum, Sudan, calling it "a serious violation of the principles of international law" and "a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan." NAM members denounced "the continuing threats made by the U.S. government against the Sudan" and supported Khartoum's call for full material compensation by Washington.

The 127-page resolution also lent support to the Korean people's fight for reunification of their country and for the Palestinian struggle for a homeland.

In his opening speech, Mandela said that the "narrow, chauvinistic interests" of the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu were blocking "progress towards a just and peaceful solution, including the formation of a sovereign state of Palestine."

Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat told delegates that the Israeli government "bears full responsibility for this total freeze in the peace process and for the total anarchy that is difficult to control, and that will encompass the whole area," if talks break down. Arafat emphasized in both his speech and at a press conference that he was relying on the U.S. government to "save the peace process."

Mandela's remarks on Kashmir — where the majority opposes rule by New Delhi — touched off a firestorm of controversy. The South African president said that "the issue

of Jammu and Kashmir should be solved through peaceful negotiations."

Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee vociferously objected to this remark. "Let me say this loud and clear," he told the summit. "There is no place for any third party involvement in this process. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been and will remain part of India. The real problem is one of cross-border terrorism," a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan.

Efforts by New Delhi and Islamabad to win recognition from the NAM as nuclear powers were unsuccessful. The summit condemned the failure of the existing nuclear powers to take steps to dismantle their arsenals.

## Wars in Africa

The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) was a major discussion at much of the meeting.

The governments of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe have sent troops to defend the government of President Laurent Kabila from forces that reportedly include soldiers from Rwanda and Uganda. During the NAM summit, Mandela dropped his government's objection to the participation of the Angolan, Namibian, and Zimbabwean forces, referring to Kabila as the "legitimate head" of government in Congo.

As we go to press, cease-fire negotiations broke down in Zimbabwe, as representatives of the Congo rebel forces walked out.

The threat of renewed civil war in Angola also drew attention. Mandela demanded in his speech that the United Nations — which supposedly is the guarantor of the "peace" in Angola — act to enforce agreements reached four years ago for Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to disarm. UNITA has stepped up its military activities in recent months, seizing towns and villages, with the de facto political encouragement of UN officials.

On August 31, the Angolan government announced the suspension of 70 UNITA ministers and members of parliament.

Washington immediately protested. "This decision calls into question the government's stated commitment to full implementation of the Lusaka protocols," said State Department spokesperson James Foley.

In his speech to the summit, Angolan president Jose Eduardo dos Santos announced news of a split in Savimbi's ranks. A group of leading UNITA members has formed UNITA Renovada and wants to negotiate with the government.

In opening the summit, Mandela remarked that "the greatest challenge we face... is the obligation to ensure that the objective of the rebirth of the continent of Africa should and must succeed. Without this, all declarations of the emergence of a new world will be without meaning."

## Castro's remarks on behalf of Latin America

Below we reprint the address by Cuban president Fidel Castro to the Non-Aligned Movement summit on behalf of the nations of Latin America, which was published in the Cuban weekly *Granma Internacional*. Translation is by the Militant.

Esteemed President of the South African Republic,

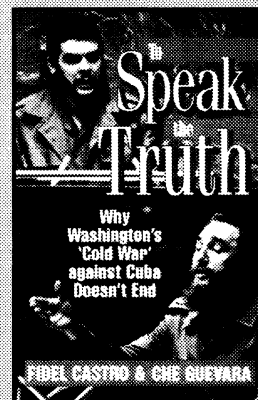
Heads of State and Government, Distinguished delegates and guests, Difficult times are approaching. A deep and already inevitable economic crisis of unforeseeable consequences threatens us all.

We are absolutely convinced that the Non-Aligned Movement, which today is more necessary than ever, now under the leadership of South Africa and its illustrious president — a son of Africa who is a symbol of tenacity, fighting capacity, wisdom and political talent — will continue to take steady steps in the process of regrouping and revitalizing the immense potential force we represent.

We are fully confident and certain that our South African brothers, who for decades confronted the ignominious apartheid regime and were able to defeat it despite its power, with the help of all of us, will raise high the banners of unity and solidarity so urgently needed to defend, with passion and determination, the aspirations and just causes of our peoples of the Third World, at a time when something more than development is at stake — our very survival as a species.

Thank you very much.

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# 'We came out of prison standing, not on

## Rafael Cancel Miranda on his political activity in jail and the campaign

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
WITH ROLLANDE GIRARD  
AND JACOB PERASSO

Rafael Cancel Miranda, a leader of the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence, is one of a group of five Nationalists who in the early 1950s conducted armed protests in Washington, D.C., against U.S. colonial policy. Cancel Miranda, together with Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, and Irving Flores, carried out an armed demonstration in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1954. Oscar Collazo took part in a 1950 attack on Blair House, President Harry Truman's temporary residence.

The five Nationalists spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons for their pro-independence actions. Faced with a growing international defense campaign, the U.S. government finally freed Figueroa Cordero in 1978 and the other four in 1979.

In an interview with *Militant* reporters Rollande Girard and Jacob Perasso, conducted April 27, 1998, in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, and in subsequent discussions with this reporter, Cancel Miranda recounted some of the background to those dramatic events and the political experiences he was part of during his years in jail.

Cancel Miranda became involved in Puerto Rico's independence movement as a youth in the early 1940s in the western city of Mayagüez.

"My father was the president of the Nationalist Party committee in Mayagüez," he said. "I was brought up among Nationalists. I grew up hearing the name of Pedro Albizu Campos. He and my father were comrades-in-arms and friends, and when he would come to speak in Mayagüez he would stay in our home." Albizu Campos was the central leader of the Nationalist Party and the Puerto Rican independence movement for several decades.

On March 21, 1937, Cancel Miranda's father and mother attended a Nationalist Party rally in the city of Ponce that was attacked by the police on orders from Gen. Blanton Winship, the colonial governor. The cops fired on the peaceful gathering, killing twenty-one people and wounding two hundred. "Blanton Winship, an American who had been appointed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was praised for 'defending democracy' by slaughtering our people," said Cancel Miranda, who at the time was six years old.

"My parents survived the massacre. My mother went there dressed in white and returned dressed in red, covered in the blood

of the dead, whose bodies she had to crawl over as the bullets flew overhead." He would never forget that image.

A couple days later, he refused to pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag in his first-grade class, and was promptly sent home.

As he grew up, Cancel Miranda found out

newspaper."

Cancel Miranda recalls meeting Albizu Campos in December 1947 when the Nationalist Party leader returned from the United States after serving out a ten-year prison sentence — first in the U.S. penitentiary in Atlanta, then in New York — on



Right: Militant/Nancy Cole  
Right, Rafael Cancel Miranda. Above, Puerto Rican Nationalists Lolita Lebrón, Cancel Miranda, and Andrés Figueroa Cordero are arrested March 1, 1954, after their armed protest in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. Irving Flores managed to avoid immediate arrest but was captured afterward. Along with a fifth Nationalist, Oscar Collazo, they spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons.

more and more about the truth behind the Ponce massacre and other brutal realities of U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico. "As the years went by I began to seek out the root of the problem, and the ideas advocated by my father and my Nationalist friends, who were serious and noble people. I wanted to be like them.

"While in school, I learned that the Yankees had bombed San Juan and killed Puerto Ricans from U.S. ships on May 12, 1898, and that they had invaded us on July 25 of that year. I learned this and other facts, and came to the conclusion that my parents and the Nationalists were right. Through my own convictions I became a Nationalist and partisan of Puerto Rico's independence.

"As a teenager, I and others organized nationalist youth committees in different towns. We had a radio program and a small

charges of conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government and "inciting rebellion" against it. "I went to welcome him as part of the Cadets of the Republic. The Cadets were the military section of the Nationalist Party. We wore black shirts and white pants."

### Jailed for refusing U.S. draft

Following World War II, widespread resistance to Washington's attempt to impose English as the main language of instruction in Puerto Rico's schools forced the U.S. government to drop that effort. Cancel Miranda relates that "in high school, when they tried to make us all speak English in class, we organized a student strike in defense of our language, and I along with others was accused of organizing it. They kicked me out of school for a year and barred me from studying in my town. I had to go to San Juan to finish school, even though I had only about two months to go before graduating."

Washington also had a hard time convincing Puerto Rican youth to join the army of the colonial master that occupied their homeland. During World War II, scores of Puerto Rican youth had been jailed for refusing to serve in the U.S. armed forces. During the 1950-53 Korean War, some one hundred thousand youth on the island refused to be drafted. In 1948 Cancel Miranda, then eighteen, was one of those who said no to the U.S. draft.

"One day," he recounts, "I was walking to school in San Juan with other students, and there was a car with four men sitting at the corner. I saw their faces and knew they weren't Puerto Ricans. They were four FBI agents. I handed my books to the other students to take them to the place where I was living, because I figured I might not return. They arrested me and charged me with refusing the U.S. draft. Later they arrested another six or eight youths.

"To me it didn't make sense to be in the same army that invades your country and massacres your people. If you're going to fight, you should fight them.

"The U.S. court here in Puerto Rico — they call it federal but it's a foreign court — sentenced me to two years and one day in prison. They put me on a plane along with five or six of us and sent us to the U.S. prison in Tallahassee, Florida."

There Cancel Miranda soon ran into trouble with the jailers for confronting racist segregation inside prison walls. Under Jim Crow legislation at the time, the prison dormitories were segregated.

"For some reason they put me in the dormitories for whites," he notes. "In the dining hall, Blacks and whites were supposed to eat in different sections, but I would go eat with the Black prisoners whenever I wanted to. There were Puerto Ricans who, because they were a little darker-skinned than me, were put in the dormitories for Blacks. One prison guard, by the name of Haynes, used a racist term against one of us who was darker-skinned. I told him in my thoughts, 'When you do that to me, I'm going to do something to you.'

"One day, when he did something to me I punched the racist guard. So I lost the five months of good time I had earned. They put me in the 'hole,' in solitary confinement, and I had to serve out the entire two-year-and-one-day sentence."

Cancel Miranda was in jail in Tallahassee when Washington launched its war of aggression against Korea in 1950. That same year, the Nationalist Party led an armed rebellion in Puerto Rico, which the colonial regime brutally crushed. Thousands were arrested, including Cancel Miranda's father.

"When I returned from prison in 1951 I got married," he continues. "But just eleven days later, they wanted to lock me up again for refusing the draft. My wife Carmen and my sister Zoraida told me: don't let yourself get arrested!

"So I went to Cuba under a different name and lived there for fourteen months. In Havana I landed a job in the construction of the tunnel under the Almendares river. I worked that job several months. Later, the dictator Fulgencio Batista, who was a U.S. puppet, put me in jail and deported me to Puerto Rico." Batista had come to power through a military coup in March 1952.

A short time later Cancel Miranda moved to Brooklyn, where he joined his wife. There he got involved in the effort to oppose Washington's attempts to prevent Puerto Rico's colonial status from being discussed at the United Nations.

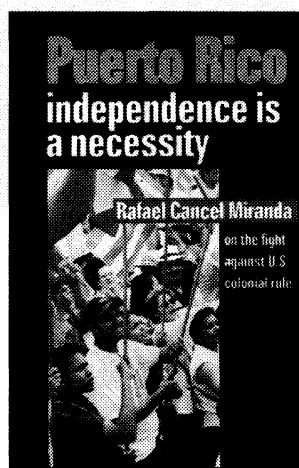
### Armed protest in U.S. Congress

"From the end of World War II until 1952, the U.S. government had to report to the United Nations on Puerto Rico," he explains. "There was a UN committee on territories that were not independent, and Puerto Rico was on that list as a colony. The U.S. government wanted to take Puerto Rico off the list so it wouldn't have to report and show its warts to the world. In 1953 they took their case to the United Nations, claiming that in 1952 we had by a sovereign, free vote become a 'commonwealth.' They claimed we were happy and content.

"I got involved in lobbying at the United Nations. A couple of times my wife went with me to speak to the ambassador of India, a friend of Puerto Rico who fought for our position at the United Nations. But the Yankees won a victory and got Puerto Rico taken off the list of non-sovereign countries. They presented us to the world as satisfied slaves." Washington even engineered the expulsion of the official observer the Nationalist Party had had at the United Nations since 1945.

In response, Cancel Miranda said, he and

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# our knees' for his freedom

three other Nationalists living in New York "decided to carry out a demonstration that would draw the world's attention to the truth about Puerto Rico, that would tell the world that there were Puerto Ricans who were willing to die for our independence and that the U.S. government was fooling the United Nations and the world — including my people — with this so-called commonwealth."

The other three were Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Irving Flores, and Lolita Lebrón. At the time, Cancel Miranda, twenty-three years old, was a press operator in a shoe factory in New York. Figueroa Cordero was working in a butcher shop, Flores in a furniture factory, and Lebrón in a garment shop as a sewing machine operator.

The U.S. rulers, Cancel Miranda stated, "had the money and the arms, but we had the moral force. We went to Washington to carry out an armed demonstration — we knew that if we went with signs we weren't going to get attention. There we fired inside the U.S. Capitol on March 1, 1954." The shots, fired from the spectators' gallery, wounded five congressmen.

"They put us on trial in Washington, D.C. They sentenced the three men to seventy-five years and Lolita to fifty years. Then they took us to New York, where we were tried for 'conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence' and sentenced to six more years. Can you imagine us thinking we could overthrow the U.S. government with little pistols? I wish I could!"

The four Nationalists were shipped off to different prisons. Figueroa Cordero was sent to the federal penitentiary in Atlanta; Lebrón to the women's prison in Alderson, West Virginia; and Flores to Leavenworth, Kansas, where Oscar Collazo, veteran of the 1950 Blair House action, was incarcerated. Cancel Miranda was sent to Alcatraz, the island prison in the San Francisco Bay.

"I've got the honor of being the only Nationalist who has ever been in Alcatraz, the worst prison they had," he says. "They thought they were humiliating me, but actually they were honoring me. It was like giving me a big medal. If they said, 'You're a good boy,' it would mean I wasn't fighting for my people."

"I was in Alcatraz for six years. There they didn't allow me to see my children for the entire six years. A couple of times my wife and I got to talk through a glass in the visiting room, using a phone. And you had to talk in English."

"Afterward they took me to Leavenworth, where I spent ten years. Andrés, Irving, Oscar, and I were in Leavenworth together for several years."



December 1947, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Welcoming crowd surrounds car carrying Nationalist Party leader Pedro Albizu Campos on his return home after serving out a 10-year prison sentence in the United States. Cancel Miranda, then a teenager, was among the pro-independence youth who greeted Albizu Campos. Top, Albizu Campos.

"In 1970 we started a strike at Leavenworth because the guards had committed abuses against some of us. We stopped working. They charged me with organizing the strike and put me in the hole for five months."

Later that year, Cancel Miranda was transferred to Marion federal prison in Illinois, where he was held until his release in 1979. "A big strike took place in Marion too," he recounted, "because the guards had blackjacked a Mexican prisoner. They put me in isolation for eighteen months. This time they put me in the 'behavior modification program' of the Control Unit. They gave us all kinds of drugs. When that didn't work they used the big stick."

The kind of treatment the Nationalists were routinely subjected to increasingly became public knowledge and fueled the campaign for their release. When Cancel Miranda's father died in 1977, his supporters campaigned to allow him to attend the funeral.

"I was in Puerto Rico for seven hours for my father's funeral," he related. "But my people jumped with anger when they learned that at the St. Louis airport, on the way to Puerto Rico, they put me in a dog cage. While waiting for the next plane, they took the dog out and put me in. I had mentioned it casually to people, because I had been in prison for years and it was a normal thing to me, but to them it was unimaginable."

## Political activity behind bars

For years, Cancel Miranda remarked, "I kept thinking up escape plans, because I wasn't resigned to die in prison of old age. When the campaign for our release began, that's when I stopped thinking about escaping because the campaign became political work for us."



The broad and growing worldwide campaign for the release of the Puerto Rican Nationalists was the product of, and part of, the deep political radicalization in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. It was fed by the victorious mass struggle by African Americans that brought down the Jim Crow segregation system, by the anti-imperialist audacity of the Cuban revolution, by the deepening opposition to the U.S. rulers' attempts to crush the Vietnamese national liberation struggle, and by the resurgence of the Puerto Rican independence movement. In Puerto Rico itself, defiance of the draft became so massive despite scores of arrests that the U.S. government eventually decided to drop most prosecutions of resisters on the island.

This social and political upheaval found expression behind prison bars as well. By the late 1960s, there were increasing numbers of prisoners engaged in political activity, and Cancel Miranda joined with them.

The Cuban revolution had a profound impact on him. "As I heard more and more about Cuba," he noted, "I realized it was not just another military coup like so many others in Latin America, but a true social trans-

formation. I internalized it to the point that the Cuban revolution has become as important to me as the fight for the freedom of my people."

When the Chicano struggle developed in the United States, "in prison I became involved in that fight, including the defense of Corky Gonzales and the Crusade for Justice," he said. Gonzales and the Chicano rights organization he led, the Denver Crusade for Justice, were the target of a government frame-up in the early 1970s.

Every September 16, Cancel Miranda would join the Mexican and Chicano prisoners in marking Mexico's independence day with a work stoppage. "I also got involved in the Black struggle. We did many other things, even producing newspapers like the Chicano prisoners' paper *Aztlán*. I also wrote a couple of articles for the *Militant*."

"In other words, I was never really imprisoned. I never felt defeated. I kept fighting inside prison and always had the hope of getting out — one way or another. When you resign yourself to the idea that you're not going to get out, that's when you become a convict. The prison becomes your world. But none of us resigned ourselves."

In the early years there was no campaign for the release of the Nationalist political prisoners. "For fifteen years or more we were buried in oblivion, in silence," Cancel Miranda commented. "Circumstances at that time were different. Maybe sometimes you might have heard a little voice somewhere asking: 'I wonder what happened to those four young Nationalists?' It was later that the campaign for our freedom began. It began in Chicago, through two young American lawyers, Michael Deutsch and Mara Siegel from the People's Law Office."

## International defense campaign

"I was locked up in the Control Unit after the big strike in Marion. This was in 1972. There was an Afro-American, Ed Johnson, or Akinsiyu, as he preferred to be called, who knew the People's Law Office. He was from the group called Republic of New Africa, and was in prison for his political ideas. Akinsiyu wrote the young lawyer, Michael Deutsch, and asked him to visit us, explaining that there were one hundred of us in the Control Unit. He said there was a Puerto Rican locked up with him who could also tell him the truth about what was happening."

"The Puerto Rican community in Chicago started the campaign. Then it grew. It spread to New York, then to Puerto Rico. In the United States, people of all kinds took part in the campaign."

The campaign spread to other countries too, especially in Latin America. The revolutionary government of Cuba was one of the most vocal defenders of the five Nationalist prisoners.

"There were committees working for our freedom in Venezuela and other countries. Even the UN Committee on Decolonization passed a resolution asking for our release," he notes.

"Thanks to thousands of people everywhere who supported us, we won a victory in 1979. We came out of prison standing, not on our knees."

Under international pressure, President James Carter released Figueroa Cordero in 1978, as he was dying of cancer. The other four were freed in September of the following year.

Some voices in U.S. big-business circles immediately protested the release of the four Nationalists, whom they labeled terrorists. "Two days after our release," Cancel Miranda recalls, "a newspaper in Chicago asked how it could be that in Puerto Rico thousands of people were waiting for us, holding Puerto Rican flags. And a few days before, in Chicago and New York, thousands of people from the Puerto Rican communities had welcomed us too."

"They could not understand how these people, who had shot up 'our' congressmen, could be welcomed as heroes by our people."

"But they were also incapable of understanding the Vietnamese people, how the Vietnamese people were able to fight for their homeland and defeat them."



"While in prison I became involved in the defense of Corky Gonzales," Cancel Miranda said. Above, Chicano rights leader Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales speaks at 1971 anti-Vietnam War rally in Denver. The development of the campaign to free the Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners was a product, and part, of the rise in the class struggle in the United States.

El Gallo

# Unionists fight bosses' profit drive at Northwest

Continued from front page  
1980s.

And the government has sent in federal mediators to press the pilots union for a settlement in the strike.

In Detroit a contingent of 400 striking pilots and supporters led the September 7 Labor Day parade, which numbered in the tens of thousands. They were followed by a smaller contingent of Northwest Machinists members. A Teamster feeder march to the Laborfest in downtown Detroit was led by a sizable group of Northwest flight attendants.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, a September 4 rally called by Northwest flight attendants organized in Teamsters Local 2000 drew 800 participants, including 70 striking pilots and about the same number of laid-off Northwest workers who are IAM members. Popular chants at the rally included, "Don't Stop Now!" and "We are United!" The rally, one of 14 held across the country that day, took place on the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol. It was called as a show of unity between the striking pilots and the other union workers at Northwest Airlines in the face of the bosses' attempts to cut across support for the pilots through negative advertising in the media. Teamsters and ALPA officials addressed the crowd.

## Opposition to government intervention

One of the issues participants discussed was how to oppose Minnesota governor Arne Carlson's public appeal for presidential intervention in the Northwest strike under provisions of the Railway Labor Act.

This law gives the federal government the power to prolong negotiations and thwart strikes by railroad, airline, and other transportation workers. After President William Clinton invoked this act against the American Airlines pilots strike last year and against striking Conrail workers earlier this summer, union officials in both strikes ended the walkouts. No progress is reported in the on-again, off-again government-mediated negotiations between ALPA and Northwest Airlines, which started up again over Labor Day weekend.

So far the Clinton administration has taken the step of sending deputy White House counsel Bruce Lindsey and Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater to Minneapolis for the negotiations, to put pressure on the pilots to settle.

Government officials also ordered two of Northwest's small affiliates, Mesaba Airlines and Express Airlines I to resume some routes. The pilots on these commuter carriers are not on strike, but they are grounded because of Northwest's layoff of ground staff.

The *New York Times* reported September 10 that Northwest "said it would offer ground support to Mesaba and Express if the department [of transportation] accepted operating plans of the two carriers that would allow a realistic possibility of recouping their costs." While no details were offered, such language usually means a request to cut corners in operations.

In Atlanta striking Northwest pilots, joined by Delta pilots, set up a picket line at Hartsfield International Airport on Labor Day and also attended a Labor Day speak-out sponsored by the Atlanta AFL-CIO Labor Council. More than 100 Northwest pilots, flight attendants, mechanics, ramp workers, and other IAM members turned out for the meeting that was called to celebrate the recent contract victory of flight attendants at AirTran, formerly Value-Jet. The AirTran flight attendants organized by the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) recently fought for and won improvements in wages and work conditions (see article on facing page).

Participants also heard a report on the organizing drive by the Service Employees International Union to organize 400 non-union contract workers at the airport. These airport workers, whose jobs are often part-time, perform duties such as operating X-ray machines that scan luggage. They are often referred to as "security workers" by the airport authorities, although they are unarmed and have no authority to make arrests. They are also among the lowest-paid airport workers.

At Los Angeles International Airport 40 striking pilots set up a picket line at the Northwest terminal. Pilots from Delta and United Airlines also came out to show support to the Northwest pilots. ALPA spokesperson and NWA pilot Charlie Cutter told the *Militant*, "This strike is about lowering expectations for all the employee groups. Management has decided to make an example of the pilots.... ALPA has taken the upper road and ending the B-scale [wage rate] is a number one priority. Under the B-scale starting pay for Northwest Pilots is \$24,000 [a year]."

Although no Northwest flights are operating out of Los Angeles, about 200 Northwest employees are still on the job at the airport, working the flights of a half-dozen airlines that subcontract their ground operations to Northwest. The bosses' have threatened to dismiss any worker who honors the ALPA picket lines, citing a clause in the IAM's contract agreement with Northwest that prohibits "sympathy strikes." ALPA has not asked the IAM or the Teamsters to honor their picket lines.

IAM members in Los Angeles told the *Militant* that the question of being forced by the company to work during the pilots strike is a constant topic of discussion. While most support the strike, some are worried that a win by the pilots will lead to the company saying it then has less of a wage "pie" to offer to IAM members who are also fighting for a new contract and wage increase.

Others, like ground service worker Ronnie Sloss, argue for helping the pilots win. He said, "The pilots are taking a stand for all the unions, showing that the company can't get away with what they want. IAM members should march with the pilots."

Another ground worker, Bud Carson agreed. "The pilots are indirectly fighting for us," he said, "especially regarding wages and job security. We should show support."



Militant/John Sarge

Air Line Pilots Association members march in Detroit Labor Day parade September 7

## Bosses driven by capitalist competition

In spite of boasting of record revenues — the company's profits have soared 325 percent since 1993, topping \$1 billion last year — Northwest Airlines has taken a hard-line stance against meeting the pilots' demands, preferring instead to lob millions of advertising dollars at a campaign aimed at discrediting the pilots' fight. Northwest is trying to wait out the pilots a little longer in hopes of getting them to back down, and at the same time shake the resolve of the next two unions it must face — the IAM and the Teamsters.

This stance is explained by Northwest's position as a capitalist competitor in the intensified worldwide profit crisis. The rate of profit in the airline industry — that is the company's return on investment — is lower than for industrial enterprises overall. And Northwest, which depends on its Asian routes for nearly a third of its revenues, has been affected by the economic meltdown in Asia more than other U.S. airlines.

The sheer mass of profit made over the last 18 months does not provide Northwest the means to oust competitors entrenched in lucrative markets and expand into new areas. Without a rate of profit that can bankroll such cut throat capitalist economic warfare, Northwest won't survive over time.

The company must try to avoid a settlement with ALPA pilots that would be read as a win and a signal to charge forward for tens of thousands of other Northwest workers. This is why cutting costs on equipment improvements and technological innovations, driving down wages and benefits, and doing more work with fewer workers is the only road open to the employer.

"We cannot have costs that are not at substantial parity with our competitors," declared Northwest's chief negotiator Richard Hirst.

But Northwest workers haven't bought that line. NWA pilots, along with the flight attendant and ground operations workers organized in the Teamsters union and International Association of Machinists respectively, gave the company massive concessions in 1993, including a 12-15 percent pay cut. The pilots are asking for a 15 percent pay raise over three years, a retroactive pay raise back to October 1996 when the previous contract expired, an end to the two-tier wage scale, and protection against layoffs that result from alliances the company makes with other major carriers or through affiliation to other smaller commuter outfits.

Northwest's final offer to the pilots included a 9 percent raise over four years, a reduction of the time period in which the B-scale wage is imposed from five years to three years, and a no-layoff clause good through only one year after the proposed contract ended.

## Flight attendants press their fight

Flight attendants held protest rallies against the airline September 4 in 14 cities, from Boston to Honolulu, to press their own contract fight. In Detroit angry flight attendants gathered in front of the nearly deserted Northwest Airlines terminal chanting, "No more greed, no more lies, tell Northwest it's time to fly." About 30 members of the Air Line Pilots Association moved their picket line adjacent to the flight attendants' protest.

While the bosses tried to blame the pilots' strike for the layoff of the flight attendants and ground operations workers, the flight attendants rejected

this attempt to pit one union against another. Every flight attendant interviewed by *Militant* correspondents had nothing but praise for the fight being waged by the ALPA members. Cindi Moir, a flight attendant who has worked at Northwest since 1990, and before that worked at Eastern Airlines, explained, "At Eastern we had [Frank] Lorenzo, who was out to bust the unions. Here, there is a board of directors and stockholders." In describing workers' reaction to the layoff she said, "The company is trying to divide and conquer, and it is not working."

Carl Badynee, who has flown with Northwest for six and a half years, pointed out that after the layoffs "there are no flight attendants to be managed but they kept the flight attendant managers on the payroll."

Janine Richardson, with 18 years seniority at the airline, said, "We've had enough. We gave in 1993 and we plan to take in 1998.... We're here to be treated as dignified employees." She explained that flight attendants get a retirement of \$35 a month per year of service, meaning a flight attendant with 30 years seniority gets a monthly pension of just over \$1,000 at retirement.

Richardson also described how flight attendant pay is calculated. "We work for free at least one and a half hours before our flights." Their pay starts when the plane takes off. She pointed out that if a plane has to be evacuated for an emergency while loading the flight, attendants have to do it without pay.

Michelle Rueter, a flight attendant for 22 years, called for a moment of silence for the victims of the Swiss Air crash near Halifax two days before. Afterward she pointed out the role of the airline workers in protecting passengers' safety.

The protesting flight attendants' and pilots' spirits were buoyed by the response of people passing by. A high percentage of drivers honked their horns or flashed the thumbs-up sign. A small number of IAM members, mostly ticket agents who are not yet laid off, came out to express solidarity with the Teamsters, even in the face of the company filming the protest. The company has also been filming the pilots' picket lines.

The members of Teamsters Local 2000 organized the rallies to send their bosses "a wake-up call." They set off dozens of alarm clocks simultaneously at the airports to send the message to Northwest bosses that they not only have to deal with the pilots, but will have to negotiate a new contract with the flight attendants. Many made a point that the company could not take them lightly just because 80 percent of the flight attendants are women.

The 27,000 members of the IAM at Northwest have also been in failed government-mediated negotiations for the past two years. Machinists voted July 29 to reject the company's contract offer and have also authorized union officials to call a strike. The IAM has asked the National Mediation Board to be released from these negotiations in a move that would begin a countdown to a strike.

Meanwhile, members of the IAM who are baggage handlers and ramp workers at US Airways voted down a proposed contract September 8, with 81 percent opposed.

John Sarge is member of the United Auto Workers in Detroit. Mary Martin is a laid-off Northwest worker and member of IAM Local 1759 in Washington, D.C. IAM members Arlene Rubenstein in Atlanta; Jeff Jones in Twin Cities, and Mark Friedman in Los Angeles contributed to this article.



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# Flight attendants at AirTran win contract

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA — After a three-year battle for a union contract, 700 flight attendants at AirTran, formerly ValuJet, won a contract September 6. It's the first contract for the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA). It includes an immediate 10 percent pay raise and annual 4 percent increases for three years. The union also won sick and vacation time, where none existed before.

"I'm very glad that we won some union protection," said Jonathan Sauls, a flight attendant with 10 years' experience, including one year at AirTran. "To give you an idea of how rough it was, I was written up by my supervisor when I came to the defense of one of my co-workers who was hit by a passenger."

"I'm also proud of all the people that came before us and made this possible," Sauls continued, referring to the dozens of pro-union activists fired after an overwhelming percentage of flight attendants signed union authorization cards in June 1995. AFA is fighting for the reinstatement of Lisa Robinson, an AFA Negotiating Committee member who was fired in September 1997.

The contest between the company and the union intensified as the 12:01 a.m. September 5 strike deadline approached.

The union issued a "C.H.A.O.S. Fall Travel Alert," announcing it would hold selective strike actions in one city one day and another city the next if a contract was not reached. AFA activists leafleted at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport, where AirTran is the second-largest carrier,

warning, "We are a highly committed, well-organized group of employees. Our jobs and our children's futures are at stake. If we must, we are prepared to Create Havoc Around Our System."

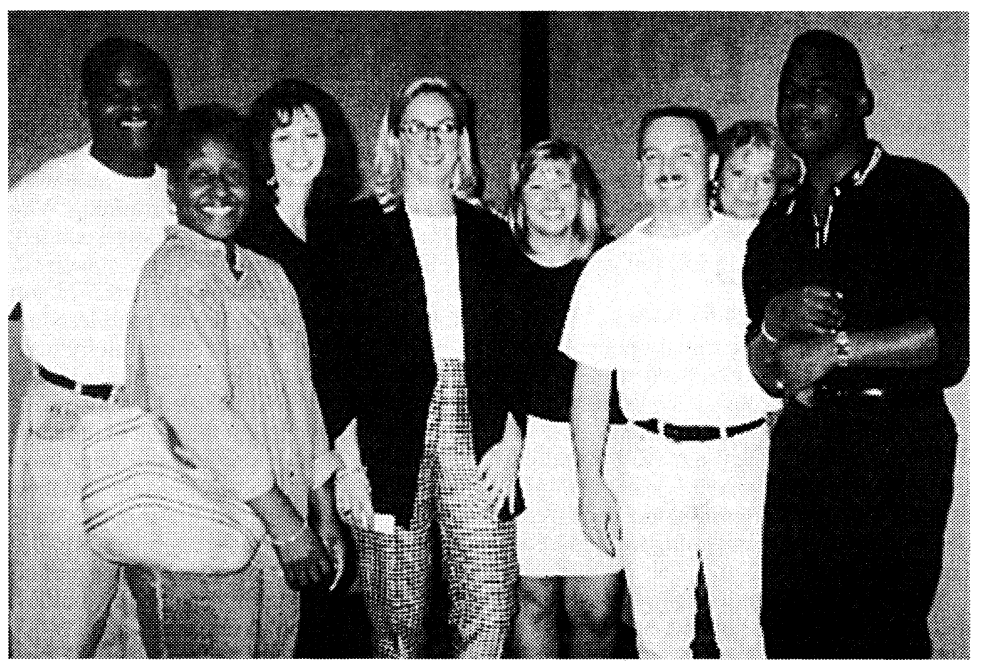
A union victory earlier in August built momentum for the contract fight. A federal labor board ruled that AFA was the bargaining unit agent for all AirTran flight attendants, rejecting the company's claim that the union did not represent the 170 flight attendants who worked at AirTran before its merger with ValuJet.

The company mounted a counteroffensive that was well-covered by the daily *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and other local media. Their plan including firing any flight attendant who participated in strike actions, despite the fact that the union was released from negotiations by the National Mediation Board and officially free to strike. Thomas Kalil, AirTran senior vice president, further stated that replacement workers had already been trained.

AirTran management also removed six seats from each of its fleet of 106-seat DC-9 aircraft in order to fly them with two instead of three flight attendants, hoping to undermine the effectiveness of the union's strike activities.

The company had flunked the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety tests — three times. But just before the strike deadline the FAA announced the company had passed their test.

From the beginning the AFA has argued that safety in the skies is a vital question to



Militant/Janet Post

AirTran flight attendants at Labor Day meeting sponsored by Atlanta AFL-CIO

the union. In response, ValuJet Chairman Robert Priddy stated in September 1995 that if it were up to him he would "replace all flight attendants with Coke machines."

Following the May 11, 1996, crash of ValuJet Flight 592 into the Florida Everglades, which killed 110 passengers, the AFA publicly criticized the company for putting a price tag on passenger safety. When the airline was shut down for three months following the crash, the AFA filed a formal report with the Department of Transportation (DOT) pushing for public hearings on ValuJet's safety record. When the airline was cleared to resume operations, AFA blasted that decision.

The company's attack also included the claim that 300 workers had signed petitions to decertify the union and that a group was

staging a pro-company rally on September 5. AFA mobilized the same day with an informational picket line, which was joined by a rally of Northwest flight attendants who showed up at the airport to support striking Northwest pilots. AFA also held a candlelight vigil later that night.

Three workers showed up for the pro-company "rally."

"It's a well-deserved victory, after a long, hard fight," commented Kevin Smith, 32, a union activist who has worked for the company for almost five years. "We stuck together. I think a lot of airline workers were watching us. And we did it."

Arlene Rubinstein is a member of IAM Local 2665 at Northwest Airlines in Atlanta. Mike Italie contributed to this article.

## Labor board: reinstate Detroit news workers

BY JAY RESSLER

DETROIT — More than 100 union activists and officials turned out at the Teamsters headquarters here September 1 to announce a decision by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ordering the reinstatement of locked-out workers at the *Detroit News*, *Free Press*, and *Detroit Newspaper Agency*.

At times the press conference turned into a rally.

Earlier in the day several dozen locked-

out workers held an impromptu picket line outside the News-Free Press building. Pickets shouted, "Bye-bye scabs!" and carried signs reading "Guilty."

The August 27 NLRB ruling "has dealt a serious blow to the long-running campaign by America's two largest newspaper chains to eliminate union influence," wrote Alan Forsyth in the *Detroit Sunday Journal*, which is published by striking newspaper workers.

The government board unanimously ruled

that the dispute, which began in July 1995, was an "unfair labor practices" strike and that the newspapers had not bargained in good faith. It ordered the papers to "cease and desist" from bargaining in bad faith and rehire hundreds of reporters, drivers, pressmen, and other workers in addition to paying them millions of dollars in back wages and benefits. It also ordered the newspapers to terminate scabs if necessary to bring back strikers.

In a prepared statement union leaders

called on the newspapers to "do what the law requires.... To comply with the NLRB board order and get this 39-month struggle over — Now."

The government labor board ordered the newspapers to comply within 21 days, but this will most likely be delayed for many months while the bosses appeal.

In February 1997, 19 months after the walkout began, strikers agreed to an unconditional offer to return to work, but were taken back only as jobs came open. Union leaders estimate 1,100 or 1,200 workers are still awaiting reinstatement.

Representative John Conyers appeared at the press conference and offered his congratulations.

At one point during the press conference a reporter asked union officials when they expected workers to be returned to work. From the back of the room a worker yelled, "They broke the law, that's the bottom line!" Strikers began chanting "Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!"

The most recent ruling upheld most of two previous decisions by NLRB administrative law judges. Thomas Wilks ruled in June 1997 the papers caused and prolonged the strike through 10 unfair labor practices.

Last November William Kocol ruled the papers were guilty of labor law violations for not reinstating strikers after the unions made unconditional offers to return to work.

For many strike supporters, a key victory for workers was the board's reaffirmation of Wilks's ruling against the *News* for imposing a merit pay-based system, the issue that provoked the strike.

In a related development, on August 10, for the first time since October 1996, bargaining between the newspapers and the unions resumed under the auspices of a federal mediator.

Locked-out strikers had a prominent booth and a big presence at the Detroit Labor Day parade. They distributed big bundles of the *Sunday Journal* to participants.

Groups of strikers regularly participate in strike support activities throughout the Midwest. Signs supporting the newspaper workers are prominent at many picket lines in the region.

Many are planning to participate in solidarity activities for striking Steelworkers at MSI in Marietta, Ohio, shortly after Labor Day.

Jay Ressler is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

## Chicago cops are forced to drop bogus murder charges against Black children

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

CHICAGO — Residents of the predominantly Black community of Englewood are celebrating the dropping of murder charges against two local boys, aged seven and eight. At the same time, many continued to condemn the unjust and racist treatment of the children by the Chicago police department, the media, and the mayor's office. The two children were charged in the brutal killing of an 11-year-old girl after police claimed they confessed to the cops.

Murder charges against the two Black children were dropped by the prosecuting attorneys and the case dismissed by the juvenile court judge September 4, three weeks after the charges were first made.

The cops had been unable to produce any believable evidence linking the murder of Ryan Harris, who was also Black, to the seven- and eight-year-olds. The final blow came when the results of crime lab tests revealed the presence of semen on the victim's underwear.

Community residents drove by the boys' homes honking their horns to celebrate the victory after the court hearing.

Many also gathered at a senior citizens center in Englewood following the court hearing to demand a public apology from Chicago Police Supt. Terry Hillard, Mayor Richard Daley, and the state's attorney's office.

Rev. Gregory Daniels said that the authorities "are too quick to rush to judgment in the African-American community. This wouldn't happen in Oak Lawn or Hyde Park even," he added, referring to predominantly middle-class neighborhoods.

The father of the eight-year-old told the *Chicago Tribune*, "Some authorities got too much power. They got lazy and didn't do what they were supposed to do" in investigating the murder.

The mother of the seven-year-old was also quoted by the *Tribune*. "There is still a child dead," she said. "I am a little bit disgusted. I'm empty. Sad. I'm real sad because the Chicago Police Department is supposed to serve and protect people. And they didn't give these boys a chance."

Calling the juvenile court decision to dismiss the case a "huge embarrassment both for the state attorney's office and for police superintendent Terry Hillard," the *Chicago Tribune* reported that the "Cook County prosecutors, speaking privately, acknowledged that the police investigation into Ryan's July 27 murder was less than thorough."

Public pressure and questions began to mount as day-by-day revelations showed glaring inconsistencies in the state's case against the two children. After being held in a local state psychiatric hospital, the boys were released. They were confined to their houses and had to wear electric leg monitors. The state was forced to remove the monitors on August 20.

Members of the Englewood Community and Family Task Force appeared before a Chicago Police Board meeting. Pamela Dominquez, a task force member, explaining why they were there. "We want this investigation to continue, and not stop with the two boys," she declared.

The boy's attorneys accused the state of withholding evidence in the case. They an-

nounced plans to file contempt of court charges against the prosecution. Among other things, the police refused to release statements from witnesses who said they saw the 11-year-old girl with an older man hours before the murder.

Attorneys also filed an "emergency motion" for the courts to reconsider the initial hearing where charges against the two were upheld. They presented documents that showed a detective working on the case had lied about statements one of the boys supposedly made.

The state attorney's office and the police chief publicly defended the investigation. Police Chief Hillard said at a news conference following the dropping of the charges that police frequently close cases without waiting for the outcomes of scientific tests. He also threatened that he is considering charging the boys as accomplices to the murder.

According to the September 6 *Tribune*, "Hillard insisted that his detectives conducted a proper investigation of the case. In fact he refused to rule out the boys as suspects even after the charges were dropped."

"They should have never been charged," Englewood resident Emma Jefferson said of the two boys. "If anyone should be charged now, it's the police for incompetence. Hillard needs another job. He needs a new office in a cell in Joliet [prison] — him and his officers."

Alyson Kennedy is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 7-507 and is the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Illinois.

# N.Y. police assault the Million Youth March

Continued from front page cal prisoners."

Giuliani and Police Commissioner Howard Safir went on the offensive to justify the actions of city cops, who stormed the stage at 4:01 p.m. in full riot gear.

## Cops storm stage at 4:01 p.m.

"If you want to know why the police came in at 4:01, go read the court order," Giuliani declared at a news conference the next day. "They had their free-speech right. And at 4:01 it was over. And I am very proud of the police for making sure it was over." He added, "The police commissioner and I were determined we were not going to have it for one minute more."

The city administration failed to overturn the court order granting the organizers of the Million Youth March a permit to hold the event in Harlem. But the appellate judge placed limits on the number of hours of the event — from 12 noon until 4 p.m. — and confined the activity to six city blocks.

More than 3,000 police were mobilized at the event, including cops on rooftops in Harlem and helicopters hovering overhead during the entire day's activities.

Four subway stations on the line closest to the event were shut down, making it more difficult for those seeking to join the activity to do so. Thousands of city cops were deployed on the outer boundaries of Harlem, and people were blocked by metal barricades at every street feeding into the rally site.

Those who managed to get into the six-block area found themselves penned in most of the time and were prevented from mixing it up with others. Many were not let into the march area until well after 1:00 p.m. Impromptu demonstrations of hundreds of people sprung up at the main entrance on 125th Street. Angry, but disciplined chants of "Open up the streets!" "Let the people march!" and "Who's streets? Our Streets" got louder until cops were finally pressured to let the event-goers pass. Cops made the many hundreds of people enter one-by-one.

Each of the six blocks was closed by interlocking metal barricades. The police were amassed at each entry and exit point, and along the length of each side of the six blocks. Residents were prevented from getting to their homes or cars parked on those streets for a time.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people tried to

enter through side streets, only to be told by cops that they would have to wait. After the barricades were opened up and people were told to enter, one young woman asked, "Why did they do all that?" Her friend responded, "That's to let you know who has the power here and what they will use it for. If you didn't know before, you just got a lesson."

News clips of the police assault indicate that the cops' actions were part of a staged provocation, which included a police helicopter swooping low at the front of the stage area twice as rally participants were leaving the area at 4:00 p.m. Cops muscled their way through the crowd towards the stage immediately after rally organizer Khallid Muhammad ended his speech. Some participants responded by hurling bricks, bottles, garbage cans, and chairs at the cops.

"The cops were forming up before Khallid took the stage," said James Burgess at a September 8 meeting called to protest the cop provocations.

## 'Police are treating us like beasts'

While a daily campaign of violence-baiting by Giuliani and other Democratic and Republican party politicians helped to cut across participation in the march, the turnout was seen as a victory for democratic rights by working people, especially in the Black community. The bulk of those participating showed considerable restraint in the face of the provocative police presence.

Many participants at the rally expressed indignation at the massive cop operation.

"Police are treating us like beasts," de-

clared Louise Freeman, an 80-year-old resident from the Bronx. "They're treating us like savages. This is a march where people have pride in themselves. The way the police are handling it reminds me of the Jim Crow South. My mother was from North Carolina, and I lived through that."

In the weeks leading up to the action, Giuliani, Democratic and Republican politicians, including several Black elected officials, the capitalist media, and reactionary organizations like the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Defense League seized on the anti-Semitic slurs and anti-white demagoguery of Khallid Muhammad as a pretext to block the rally. Giuliani branded the activity as a "hate march." The Anti-Defamation League ran a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, featuring a photo of Muhammad leading an armed march in Jasper, Texas, protesting the lynching of a Black man. The ad urged parents to keep their children away from the Million Youth March.

In the wake of the cop attack on the stage for the Million Youth March event, the NYPD has stepped up their provocations against the Black community. Organizers of the MYM and other activists called a meeting that 250 people attended September 8 at the House of the Lords Church in Brooklyn to protest a raid by scores of police armed with assault weapons on the home of a march organizer in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The meeting called for a "Black power rally against police brutality" in Harlem September 15.

Opposition to the cop action at the Million Youth March has put the Giuliani ad-

ministration on the defensive. The mayor and police commissioner now claim that the cops only moved against the organizers after they were attacked by demonstrators.

Bob Herbert, a *New York Times* columnist who is Black, wrote a September 7 piece entitled, "An Insult to Harlem," that read, "Mr. Giuliani...abused the power of his office by turning a large section of Harlem into a police encampment. By doing that, he humiliated thousands of law-abiding residents whose only offense was that they are black." Commenting on the use of helicopters to swoop down on rally participants, Herbert continued, "This was Harlem, not Vietnam. There was no need for cops in riot gear to storm a rally that was ending."

A grand jury investigation of the events at the end of the rally by Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, has begun. The District Attorney said that the grand jury would consider charges urged by Giuliani and Safir against rally organizer, Khallid Muhammad for incitement to riot for statements he allegedly made in his speech.

One march participant, Shaheed Muhammad, reportedly turned himself in to the 84th precinct September 8 in Brooklyn after the police issued a warrant on charges for allegedly assaulting a police officer. The cops claim Muhammad threw a brick during their assault on the rally.

*Olga Rodríguez is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Al Duncan, Ruth Nebbia, and Maurice Williams contributed to this article.*

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**Australian Election: Economic Crisis, the Rise of Pauline Hanson, and the Growing Labour Resistance.** Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League candidate for Senate in Australia's election. Sat., Sept. 19, 7:30 p.m. WEA, 59 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

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## Thousands of Black youth rally in Atlanta

### BY JAMES HARRIS

ATLANTA — Several thousand Black youth converged on Atlanta Labor Day to participate in the final rally of the Million Youth Movement (MYM) activities, which took place here September 4-7.

The speakers at the main event September 7 included Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson, NAACP executive director Kweisi Mfume, Joseph Lowery, representing the Coordinating Council of Black Farm Groups, and Rev. Alfred Sharpton.

Contingents of youth participated from around the country with one of the biggest coming from Detroit. Some of the most popular slogans were against police brutality. Activist against Black land loss also participated, building a September 10 demonstration in Washington, D.C. The *Atlanta Constitution* noted that "the Socialist Workers Campaign handed out leaflets in front of a sign that urged people to 'protest the U.S. bombings in Afghanistan and the Sudan.'"

Salam Hussein, 20, said he came to the MYM "because their needs to be a show of force of conscious young people, who know about the problems that are going on in America and around the world." Hussein is a shop steward in the Teamsters at the Frito-Lay factory here, and an engineering student at Georgia Perimeter College. "As a whole, I thought it was good," he said. "But I'm not sure how effective it is in the long run. I need to see some action after the protest."

*James Harris is a member of the United Transportation Union.*

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**Manchester:** Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

### CANADA

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### FRANCE

**Paris:** Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

### ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klappartíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: gphssg@treknet.is

### NEW ZEALAND

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**Christchurch:** 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

### SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362



**Murderous liars** — "The United States believes that senior Iraqi scientists were helping to produce elements of the nerve agent



Harry Ring

VX at the factory in the Sudan that American cruise missiles destroyed last week... [but] the Administration refused to describe its evidence

in any detail." — News item, August 25.

**Don't choke on it** — "...some of this is indirect, and some of it is inferential. It's hard to hang your hat on any one nugget of it." — U.S. official, "explaining" the bombing, August 31.

**They are getting a crash course** — "The Russian people just don't understand that capitalism is cruel. It's a mean, nasty system, predicated on the law of the jungle." — Investment adviser Robert Goodman, interviewed on CNN's "Trading Places."

**Might be addictive?** — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has finally agreed to distribute potassium iodide in states with nuclear power plants. Studies since the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster confirmed that use of the pill lowers incidence of thyroid cancer among those exposed to radiation.

Peter Crane, a lawyer who pressed the nuke agency, said, "They were worried that if you prepared too well for an accident it sends the message that accidents can happen."

**P.S.** — The potassium iodide pill

has been available to nuclear emergency workers since 1985, but not to area residents.

**The secure society** — A group of London civil servants who happened to be part of a broad health study got early word that their department was to be privatized. During four years of waiting for the axe to fall, they were more likely to skip exercise, gain weight and sleep more than nine hours. Divorce and separation rates went up. High cholesterol and heart disease became more common.

**Seems like a fair statement** —

Last year, administrative judges overturned decisions by the Social Security Administration denying benefits to 292,349 disabled applicants. Such reversals took an average of 340 days, some as long as two years.

Observed a claims lawyer: "The whole system is designed not to work."

**Your choice** — Clippings for this column are much appreciated. Mail c/o Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Or fax to 213-380-1268. Thanks.

## The Eastern strike was a victory for workers

**Reporting on the Northwest Airlines pilots strike, the big-business press often refers to the 1989-91 strike at Eastern Airlines as a "defeat for both the company and union." The following excerpt, from *The Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the rank-and-file Machinists and gains for the labor movement*, tells a different story. Ernie Mailhot, a ramp worker and cleaner at Eastern Airlines, was a rank-and-file striker. He was strike staff coordinator for International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 1018 from December 1989 to December 1990. *The Eastern Airlines Strike* is copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press, and reprinted with permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.**

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

After 686 days on strike against Eastern Airlines, rank-and-file members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and our supporters registered the final piece of our victory against the union-busting drive of the employers when the carrier folded at midnight on January 18, 1991....

Eastern strikers from coast to coast, from Puerto Rico to Canada, reacted by calling to congratulate each other and going out to airports to celebrate.

Mark McCormick was one of the Eastern strikers who made his way to New York's La Guardia Airport the night of January 18. "I wouldn't have missed this for the world," he said, as he stood watching management personnel walk out. With a big smile on his face, he suggested to the managers that they "take tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow off."

Over the next few hours, strikers and our supporters showed up — many with handmade signs — at rowdy picket lines. The sign I think expressed our feelings the best was the one at the Miami airport that read, "We said we'd last 'One day longer.'"

The twenty-two-month strike of the IAM had defeated Eastern's attempt to create a profitable nonunion airline and set an example for all bosses who want a "union-free environment" if they can get away with it.

#### What the strikers were up against

To strikers and other working people, the scope of the accomplishments and victories scored in the Eastern strike are measured by what we were up against.

In 1981 U.S. president Ronald Reagan tried to set in motion union busting on a national scale when he broke the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). A pattern soon developed of union-busting drives by the employers in major industries, with Frank Lorenzo's destruction of the striking unions at Continental Airlines in 1983 spearheading the assault.

Takeback contracts, permanent replacement workers, and union busting itself became the order of the day. In the airline industry, nonunion airlines were established and strikes, such as that of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants at TWA in 1986, were crushed.

On March 4, 1989, when we went on strike at Eastern Airlines, we looked back on almost a decade of many more defeats than victories for labor — defeats that more often than not came without a real fight by union members.

We faced Frank Lorenzo, the number one union buster in the United States. We faced government agencies, such as the Federal Aviation Administration, that continually backed Eastern management in the face of massive union documentation of safety violations at the airline....

Despite this, we decided it was time to fight, rather than accept our only other choice: letting Lorenzo destroy our union and set an example for every other boss like him.

When we walked out on March 4, 1989, most of the rank and file of the IAM sensed our strength for the first time. The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and Local 553 of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), which organized the flight attendants, also recognized our strength and our fighting determination. They joined our picket lines. The unity we had achieved between the unions and the pilots' association greatly increased our initial strength, and, in turn, our confidence.

The huge rallies at airports across the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico — many held in cities with only a few strikers — showed us the broad support and identification our fight had evoked among working people. Many, having gone through years of concession contracts and union busting, saw the fight as their own....

The unity of the Machinists, flight attendants, and pilots in a major national strike, over a period of eight and a half months, is something that had not been seen in the airline industry before.

Winning the support of the pilots for that period of time allowed us to begin to put our stamp on the battle and step forward as a rank-and-file leadership. In addition, we became seasoned enough to understand and weather the later treachery of the pilots' officialdom....

The joint work we were able to do with the United Mine Workers, backing its strike against the Pittston coal company through the spring, summer, and fall of 1989, also played a big role in our gaining experience and confidence. From Los Angeles, to Buffalo, to Pittsburgh, to Miami, the striking Machinists and miners learned from each other. Sometimes this took the form of joint tours; other times it meant collaborating to figure out how best to rally support for both our strikes within the unions.

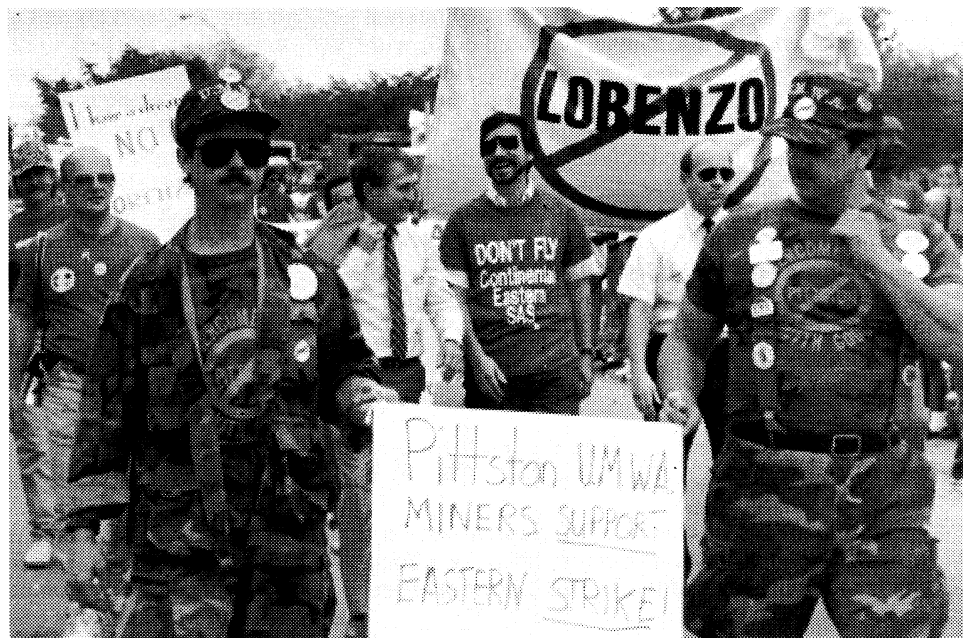
These organizing experiences helped show us that we could affect the battle. The dealings in the courtroom, conflicts among competing investor schemes, and debates in Congress — all these reflected the pressure brought to bear when we exercised union power and reached out to the broader ranks of labor.

Our slogan became that we would last "one day longer" than Frank Lorenzo. This meant that we would never let Eastern run a profitable airline as long as it operated with scab labor. We knew that by achieving that goal, we would help set an example for every other working person in the United States and internationally — our real family, not the "Eastern family." On April 18, 1990, in a victory for all labor, our slogan became a reality. On that day the federal government, through its bankruptcy court, removed Lorenzo from control of Eastern....

After Lorenzo was removed, our slogan remained "One day longer," but it became "One day longer" than Eastern....

#### Fight went far beyond fight for jobs

The fighting Machinists and our supporters accomplished huge things that go far beyond the struggle for the jobs that we had at Eastern. We showed that unlike the Lorenzos



Militant/Halket Allen

**Striking Pittston miners walk in solidarity with Eastern strikers at Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade in Miami, Jan. 15, 1990.**

and the rest of the boss class in this country, who are motivated by greed for profits, workers will step forward and put themselves on the line in the interests of working people everywhere. This also came through in thousands of examples of other unionists pitching in to support our strike — not only here, but in New Zealand, Britain, Bermuda, and other countries....

Thousands of us are now working in other IAM-organized jobs, as packinghouse workers, as aerospace workers, or in other industries. We take the lessons of the strike with us, and one lesson we will never forget is "An injury to one is an injury to all."

It is important to remember that our fight against Eastern and other companies like it

not only improves the relationship of forces for other unionists. It also creates a more encouraging environment for all those who fight against social injustices — from racist attacks to Washington's criminal wars, such as the slaughter recently unleashed against the people of Iraq.

Because of our fight at Eastern, a boss who is considering forcing his workers out on strike so he can break their union and lower their wages and benefits will think a little longer before making such a move.

As important as that is, even more important is the impact we have had on the thinking of working people who are inspired by our fight and will come to follow our example.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

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

September 21, 1973

SEPT. 12 — Proclaiming that their mission was "to fight for the liberation of the fatherland from the Marxist yoke," a four-man military junta ousted [Chilean] President Salvador Allende Sept. 11, seized control of the government, declared a state of siege, and imposed censorship and a curfew. The electoral victory of Allende's Popular Unity coalition in September 1970 was the result of a powerful mass upsurge of the Chilean working class and peasantry.

A general pay increase, averaging about 35 percent, was won. Extensive nationalizations were carried out, and land reform programs were speeded up. Political prisoners were set free, and a special riot police unit was disbanded. It was necessary to follow up these gains in a consistent revolutionary way. This required a mass revolutionary party built on Leninist lines. In the absence of such a party, there was no force capable of organizing and leading the masses of peasants and workers in a successful struggle for power.

Allende and his supporters claimed that his election opened the road to a peaceful transition to socialism. However, this was belied by the fact that procapitalist parties were included in the Popular Unity formation. Allende diverted the masses from taking the road toward a socialist revolution. His real course was class collaboration.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

September 20, 1948

The political balance in France today hangs by a frayed line that is giving way under the increasing strain. This is the common conclusion of spokesmen of all camps. The breaking strands are visible in the downfall of cabinets, one after the other.

Since January of last year, France has had five Premiers. Ramadier lasted less than 10 months. Schuman less than 8 months. Marie barely a month. The second Schuman Cabinet two days. No one ventures to predict more than a brief span for the new Henri Queuille Cabinet which could be formed at all only on sufferance of Queuille's friend, the fascist-minded de Gaulle.

American Big Business hopes de Gaulle will be winner in this unfolding conflict. Through the editorial columns of its press Wall Street has indicated its impatience over the political instability in France and the "desirability" of a "strong" government such as de Gaulle proposes.

Part of the impatience of American imperialism arises from its desire to consolidate Western Europe for operations against the Soviet Union. This is coupled with fear of the outbreak of a socialist revolution in France which would not only force revision of the war plans but bring Wall Street face to face with serious consequences at home as the inspiration of a new proletarian revolution resounded throughout the world.

# Support the pilots' strike

Continued from front page

Northwest has laid off tens of thousands of mechanics, ramp workers, cleaners, customer service agents, flight attendants, and others.

Most Northwest workers aren't buying this divide-and-conquer line, however. Among the pilots' strongest supporters are the other Northwest employees, whose unions have been negotiating with the company for new contracts for nearly two years. Flight attendants have held rallies across the country, and the ground service workers, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), voted July 29 to reject the company's contract offer and authorize their own strike.

In an attempt to undermine the Machinists' fight, the company has said that it would not resume negotiations before a union representation election for the mechanics at Northwest involving the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA). This company-minded outfit with a union-busting mentality does not support the pilots' strike and seeks to pull the mechanics out of the IAM. AMFA's campaign plays right into the bosses' hands and should be vigorously opposed not only by Machinists but by all unionists.

The entire labor movement should also oppose any and all government intervention in the fight, whether through federal "mediators" or through use of the Railway Labor Act to issue a back-to-work order and impose yet another "cooling off" period. President William Clinton used the

law to halt the American Airlines pilots' strike in February 1997, and a federal judge invoked it again last month, declaring a strike by track workers at Conrail "illegal." The purpose of government intervention is to defend the company's profit-making prerogatives at the expense of the workers.

At this point, the Clinton administration has not responded to Northwest's call for the government to order the pilots back to work, hoping the airline bosses can deal a blow to labor that would benefit the employing class as a whole. Northwest management faces fierce competition in the fight for a greater share of the flying market, and, because of its near monopoly of Asian routes since World War II, has been more affected by the economic crisis that is wracking that part of the world.

Like other big businesses, the airline owners push the notion that workers and management are one big family and call on workers to defend "our company" and "our country," against all others. This is a deadly trap, designed to convince workers to accept sacrifice to protect the profits of an already wealthy minority.

The interests of Northwest workers and the company are diametrically opposed.

In face of Northwest's attempts to make labor pay the price for its profit drive, workers at the airline can look to each other for solidarity and to the hundreds of thousands of other workers who are resisting the employers' attacks on wages, working conditions, and living standards.

# Protest attack on Harlem march

The statement below was released September 9 by Al Duncan, Socialist Workers candidate for New York governor and a member of the United Transportation Union.

I call on all working people and other supporters of democratic rights to unconditionally condemn the cop assault, engineered by the city administration of New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, on demonstrators at the end of the Million Youth March in Harlem on September 5.

At the end of a four-hour rally that was peaceful and disciplined — despite repeated provocations by city cops all day — hundreds of police officers in riot gear stormed the platform immediately after the final speaker's talk. They attacked those on the stage and shut off the sound system as two police helicopters buzzed over the thousands gathered on Malcolm X Boulevard. Giuliani, who ordered the police to end the rally one minute after the permit had expired, claims the cops beat people up in "self-defense."

But the city administration was itching for a confrontation all day, with a virtual military occupation of the center of Harlem. From early that morning 3,000 cops set up multiple metal barricades and closed down nearby subway stations to discourage people from attending. Hundreds, if not thousands, who tried to join the action had to wait for hours and were later herded by the police inside the boxed-in area one-by-one. Some were turned away by cops, being told there was no more room to enter the designated area.

This abusive treatment of the overwhelmingly Black participants — many of them workers and young people — and the police attack at the end reflect the deep hatred and contempt by the ruling class for working people who are Black.

The Giuliani administration did not have much success in its effort to capitalize on the anti-Semitic slurs and race-baiting demagoguery of Khalid Muhammad, one of the main

organizers, to paint the event as a "hate march."

Thousands turned out for this rally to express their dignity and desire to combat racism and police brutality. Khalid Muhammad's oratory against Jews and other reactionary demagoguery was not shared by most working people who took part in the march. It was also many of the veteran residents of Harlem who showed discipline and averted others from falling into the trap of provocation that cops set up repeatedly during the day.

The fact that the rally took place, despite the city administration efforts to ban it, was a blow to Giuliani's attacks on democratic rights. For the rulers of New York City the unsuccessful attempt to shut down this march was a continuation of their attempts to close down space for protest by other working people. That's what the city's Republican and Democratic fathers tried to do with the ban on protests by striking taxi drivers and the police assault on a demonstration of construction workers earlier this year. It's also a reflection of the social polarization that is sharpening as working people — often with Black workers in the vanguard as in the Apollo theater stage workers strike and the telephone workers walkout against Bell Atlantic — resist the bosses' offensive on our living standards and hard-won rights.

The discipline and dignity of the overwhelming majority of those who attended the Million Youth March thwarted the attempts by the authorities to create an incident that would give them an excuse to shut down the rally. This is another indication of the vanguard role of the Black nationality in defending democratic rights and in the struggle to rid society of the scourge of racism and class exploitation. The cop assault at the end of the rally was a desperate attempt to reverse this victory for democratic rights.

I will use my campaign to join with others in demanding: Drop all charges against organizers of the Million Youth March! Oppose all restrictions by the city administration on democratic rights!

# SWP: end threats to n. Korea

Below we reprint a message sent to the Korean people by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party September 8, on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Socialist Workers Party sends revolutionary greetings on this 50th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We denounce the extensive war maneuvers by U.S. and south Korean troops conducted last month in south Korea, as well as the most recent threats and slanders by Washington and Tokyo against the Korean people — using the DPRK's launching of a satellite as a pretext to perpetuate their claims that the DPRK is a military threat to the people of the region. This follows Washington's brutal bombings of the sovereign nations of Afghanistan and Sudan, including destroying a medicine factory in Khartoum. These acts of imperial aggression, carried out in the name of "fighting terrorism," show once again that Washington is the real threat to humanity.

The U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies act today from a position of weakness. Their claim that capitalism

is on a forward march to stability, peace, and prosperity rings more hollow than ever. As the growing decay of the market system becomes more evident to all — from the crisis sweeping Asia and increasingly spreading in Latin America to the recent tremors on Wall Street — workers and peasants from Indonesia to Russia are resisting the devastating social conditions resulting from the rulers' attempts to shore up their system at the expense of the toilers.

Fifty years ago, as the imperialist rulers in Washington were declaring their "American Century," the Korean people were already waging their struggle for true independence and self-determination — a heroic fight that dealt one of the first blows to Washington's pretensions and led to the defeat of U.S. imperialism's attempt to overturn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We will continue to join with others in telling the truth about Korea, especially among working people resisting the attacks by the employers on their working and living conditions and democratic rights here in the United States. We stand with the Korean people in the fight to get all the U.S. troops and weaponry out of Korea, tear down the wall dividing the country, and reunify the Korean nation.

# California YS event calls convention

Continued from Page 4

experiences in the fight against Proposition 229, a ballot measure attacking bilingual education in California that passed last year.

Responding to strikes, antiracist action

J.P. Crysdale, a student at City College in San Francisco, reported how he and other YS members responded to striking members of the Service Employees International Union at that campus. Thousands of City College students refused to cross picket lines set up by the workers. "The school administration claimed that the workers were depriving us of educational opportunities," he said, "but the truth is that we got some real education by seeing these workers fight." The YS was able to respond quickly to the strike. Young Socialists staffed Pathfinder book tables on campus, discussed issues in the *Militant* with strikers and students, and offered solidarity on picket lines at every opportunity. Crysdale observed that the YS led the communist movement and the SWP into solidarity with the striking workers. Several young people from City College participated in the conference.

The panel also featured a YS member from Vancouver, who talked about lessons from Vancouver actions protesting racist attacks and the role that the YS played in bringing other young people to them.

Jason Alessio, a student at the University of California at Santa Cruz who worked as a meatpacker over the summer, talked about his experiences in going to picket lines set up by farm workers fighting to organize a union. Alessio was also active in building a demonstration in the Bay Area on July 25 demanding independence for Puerto Rican political prisoners and independence for Puerto Rico. "What attracted me to the YS is that it connects all these different struggles," he said.

The importance of learning about the history of the working class and the communist movement was also a feature of the conference. In her report to the conference, Kern talked about the example set by the Los Angeles chapter of the YS on the day of the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan, August 20. After a scheduled class on *Value, Price and Profit* by Karl Marx, they turned the discussion toward the question of how to respond to Washington's act of imperial aggression and called a protest for the next day.

Two organized discussions held on the second day of the conference focused on *Socialism on Trial* by SWP leader and founder James P. Cannon and the article "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes featured in issue no. 10 of *New International* magazine.

Building units of an organization

A central question in the weekend's discussion was how to build chapters of the organization that can effectively participate in politics and carry out the national campaigns of the Young Socialists. Participants at the conference read the Young Socialists Organizer, a document adopted at the March 1997 YS convention that serves as a guide to organize local units.

"We need to be a cohesive and disciplined organization in order to be effective in politics" said Kern in her summary report to the conference. "We need to meet every week to assess the work we've done and discuss in a collective way what we'll do the following week" she explained.

Amanda Hillard, a YS member in Los Angeles, commented on the importance of functioning collectively as the only way "to build an organization that develops all its members as leaders."

Kern also explained the importance of YS members learning Spanish. "More and more, we need to be a bilingual organization. We should be able to communicate with fighters in their own language," she said, noting that the entire conference was conducted with simultaneous translation into Spanish.

Youth who were not members of the Young Socialists also participated in the discussion. Lauro Clavijo, a high school student from Los Angeles, described the harassment that students at his school face, going through a metal detector every time they enter the building. "We need to work more with high school students," he said.

Conference participants ended the weekend with several hours of discussion on whether calling a national convention of the Young Socialists would help to generalize some of the advances that were expressed in the conference discussion. They concluded that it would be the most important initiative they could take.

"Building the Young Socialists convention will be at the center of our movement's activity for the coming months. We will build the Young Socialists as we build the convention," said Samantha Kern in her summary.

"This will be the anniversary convention of our movement," she noted.

The year 1998 marks several anniversaries: the 80th anniversary of the founding of the communist movement in the United States, the 70th anniversary of the *Militant* newspaper and Pathfinder Press, and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Socialist Workers Party on the eve of World War II.



# Striking Steelworkers at Titan reach out for solidarity

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

sion and debate with farmers there. Some farmers said that they were against unions, but others listened to what the strikers had to say. At a union picnic August 29,

vinced two strikebreakers to quit. Some 200 replacement workers are crossing Local 164's picket lines. Titan claims to have production up to 30 percent of plant capacity. Taylor is demanding that after a settlement, strikers return to work in seniority behind the strikebreakers now working inside the plant. None of the unionists see this as a serious proposal.

In a victory for Local 164, Iowa state officials announced September 2 that the strikers were eligible for full unemployment benefits.

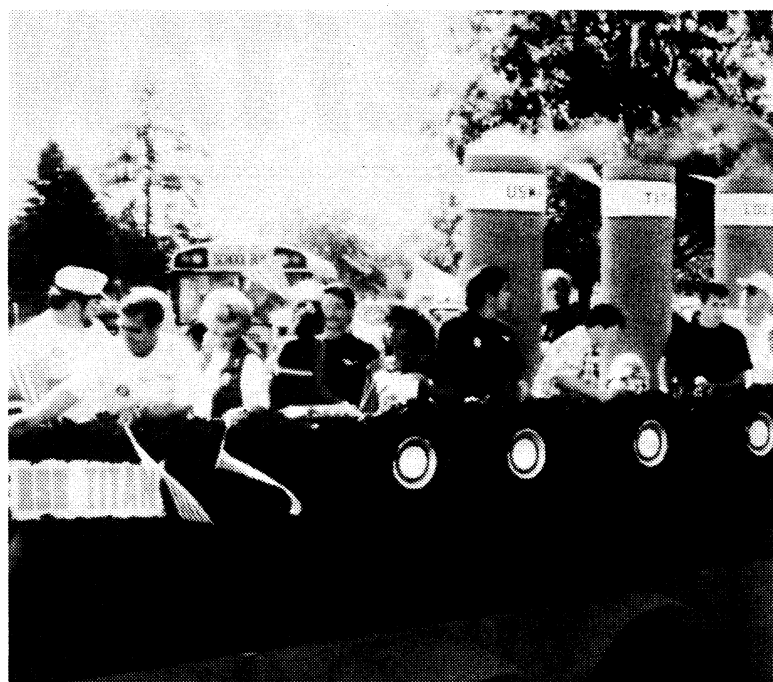
The unionists in Des Moines are watching events in Natchez, Mississippi, closely. There, a federal judge made Maurice Taylor's purchase of Fidelity Tire official on August 25. The former owners of the plant filed for bankruptcy in May 1997, and the sale to Taylor was tied up in court as USWA Local 303 fought the contract concessions he demanded.

"If the USWA and Titan Tire of Natchez (Taylor's new company) do not have a satisfactory agreement, the 500 members of Local 303 may be forced to begin an Unfair Labor Practice strike," said Leo Bradley, president of Local 303 August 27. Local 164 officials traveled to Natchez September 2 to discuss the two locals' fight against Titan.

## Vancouver hotel strike wins part-time benefits

VANCOUVER — "This agreement is a victory," explained Mike Miller, who works as a doorman at the Hotel Vancouver. Miller, with 27 years on the job, was one of 466 members of the Canadian Auto Workers who struck the hotel for four days. He said it was the first time in 111 years that the hotel was shut down. "There was a strike in 1976, but they brought in scabs. This time we shut it down tight," added Miller, who was participating in a meeting of more than 250 people to discuss and vote on an offer proposed by Canadian Pacific, owner of Hotel Vancouver. The union represents the cleaners, clerks, doormen, bell hops kitchen workers, and maintenance staff at the hotel.

Local 4275 chairperson Kevin



Militant/Ray Parsons

## Striking Titan workers lead Des Moines Labor Day parade

Quinn said the agreement contains vision care, prescription drugs, hearing aids previously unavailable, and an improvement in dental care. For part-timers, dental care and extended health will be extended to those who put in 80 hours a month. Those working 60-80 hours a month can get coverage by paying half of the premium. For workers who rely on gratuities, the wage increase will be 18 cents a year for two years; other workers will get a 41-cent raise each year. Maternity leave is extended to one year from 6 months.

The strikers showed the company that "we could come together and fight. That's what won it for us," Miller commented. The bosses "never thought we would strike, but we did and showed them that we were determined," he added.

Kitchen worker Surjut Sidhu explained that she voted for the agreement because "it gives us benefits we never had before." The vote to ratify the agreement was 98 percent in favor.

## Quebec hotel workers strike over 'final offer'

MONTEBELLO, Québec — Some 240 employees of the Château Montebello, a luxury hotel located an hour and a half northwest of Montreal, have been on strike since July 1. The office, kitchen, and bar workers, as well as those who clean the rooms are mem-

bers of Canadian Auto Workers Local 4281. On August 16 they took a second vote and rejected the employer's "final" offer by 86 percent. Their determination is still very strong and they hold spirited 24-hour pickets daily.

The strikers want the same 4.5 percent wage increase that hotel workers at Château Frontenac, Québec City, received. Furthermore, they are opposed to the company's demand for split shifts, which would stretch a supposedly eight-hour work day over 11 or 12 hours. Finally, the owners are trying to force them to take their two weekly days off according to the needs of the company, in some cases not having regular days off or not having two consecutive days. The strikers rejected that.

Pickets told the *Militant* their last strike was 30 years ago, and not one worker has tried to cross the picket line. Many cars passing by honk in support of the strikers. Encouraged by the visit of around 40 workers from the General Motors plant at Boisbriand, the strikers are prepared to continue their fight.

Ray Parsons, a member of USWA Local 310, and Joe Swanson, a member of UAW Local 1672, in Des Moines; Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of the IAM Lodge 764 in Vancouver; and Josée Séguin, a member of the Alliance of Montreal Teachers, and Carole Caron contributed to this column.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

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

DES MOINES — The September 7 Labor Day parade here drew thousands of workers and their families from around central Iowa and was marked by the determination, confidence, and high morale of hundreds of members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164. Since May 1 the local has been on strike against Titan Tire in a fight against forced overtime and two-tier wages and for retirement and health-care benefits.

Local 164 led the parade with a large float made out as a ocean going ship named the "U.S.S. Titan" and festooned with USWA insignia. A huge sign demanded, "Hey Morry, don't turn Titan into the Titanic — settle now!" The sign refers to Maurice Taylor, Jr., the owner of Titan Tire.

Other large contingents in the march included members of the Communications Workers of America whose strike against US West recently ended, USWA Local 310 from Bridgestone/Firestone, and others.

In recent weeks, the Steelworkers have stepped up efforts to explain their strike to others and have gotten increased solidarity from unionists around the area.

In early August, Local 164 members staffed a booth at Farmfest '98, an agricultural trade show in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. The activists reported having serious discus-

striker Cindy Robb said, "We went out determined to stay the course. Only six out of 650 that walked out have crossed the picket line. No one will give up what they have fought and worked for...we should get more from (Titan), not less."

Members of USWA Local 3141 at Griffin Pipe Products in Council Bluffs, Iowa, drove out to the picnic to bring solidarity greetings, a carload of food and clothing for strikers' families, and a check from their local for \$800. Earlier in August two dozen members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1149 at the Swift packinghouse in Marshalltown, Iowa, pooled their money to buy a 50-pound box of fresh pork for Local 164's food bank. Later the executive board of the local voted to donate \$100 to the strike.

On August 10, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance wrote to express solidarity with USWA Local 164. The group is a national organization of Asian American workers in over 20 different unions. About a third of Local 164 strikers are from Southeast Asia.

Members of United Auto Workers Local 1672 at Emco Specialties, a factory just a few blocks from Titan Tire, organized a week of solidarity with Local 164 August 24-28. School clothes, canned food, and cash were collected inside the plant. Two Titan strikers now working at Emco helped lead the discussion about supporting the strike.

More than 60 strikers have taken jobs at the Bridgestone/Firestone agricultural tire plant across town over the last two months. For Denny Hatch, the new job is a way to continue his participation in the fight against Taylor. During a break at work he proudly recounted a recent incident on the picket line where, through calm discussion, he con-

## LETTERS

### Strip-mining destruction

Recent *Militant* articles have pointed to the important role of mine workers in the working-class resistance that is beginning to unfold. As they face the sharpening profit drive of the coal barons, mine workers are experiencing yet another flashpoint in the assault on working people in West Virginia — mountaintop removal.

Companies like Arch Mineral and A.T. Massey have staked their claim to the very shape of the land that workers live in. They shear off the tops of mountains and dump the rocky overburden into nearby streams and valleys. That's mountaintop removal, and its purpose is to expose to the profit-seeking coal barons the same rich seams of coal otherwise mined by more expensive underground methods.

Opposition within the state is definitely simmering, including a recent protest of 400 in Boone County July 26. According to coverage in the Charleston Gazette, Secretary of State Ken Hechler spoke at the rally comparing the fight against mountaintop removal to the Black Lung struggle in the late '60s. (Hechler won notoriety as one of the first Democratic Party politicians to back the rank-and-file movement that changed what the world thought of coal miners when they won the first significant Black

Lung legislation in 1969.)

In an earlier interview, Kayford Mountain resident Larry Gibson described the scope of this method of strip mining: "You used to look up at the mountain. Now you look down on it." Carlos Gore's backyard in Logan County is pelted by softball-size rocks from blasting at Arch Coal's nearby strip mine. And Vicky Moore described blasting dust so thick she can't see her neighbor's homes or drive without headlights on a sunny day.

As residential roads are used for haulage, dusty hazardous conditions proliferate throughout the state, including Northern West Virginia, where I was able to join in a protest around this issue.

This past legislative session coal companies expanded their right to fill in streams and creeks. Through the 1960s strip mining accounted for only around 10 percent of West Virginia's coal production. Now, about one-third of all West Virginia coal is the product of strip mining.

After they've removed the coal, the energy barons have little trouble bypassing laws that call for them to reclaim the environment. They close union underground mines; throw hundreds of union members out of work; take off the top of the mountain and strip the coal at bargain rates; and leave the community on a poverty-stricken, gouged-out,

poisoned piece of turf in danger of disastrous flooding.

But the opposition that is simmering throughout southern West Virginia on this issue shows the potential for something else as well — the expansion of working-class resistance and new links among fighters.

Dave Salner  
Morgantown, West Virginia

### U.S. lost the Cold War

A decade ago when the "Soviet bloc" of bureaucratized worker states began collapsing, there was great euphoria among the ruling capitalist classes and their entourage of pundits and cheerleaders in the U.S. and Western Europe. Over and over, they told us the "Cold War" had been "won" by "western democracies" and capitalism!

Back then the *Militant* stood alone in correctly saying that this collapse was a historic gain not for the imperialists but rather for the workers and farmers around the world. The recent events in Russia, the core of the old Soviet Union, show beyond a doubt that it is the capitalists who suffered the great defeat.

It could not be otherwise. Western propagandists of a decade ago told us that, with the collapse of "communism" in the Soviet

sphere, the old Bloc countries and Russia could now be rebuilt as "democratic, market-driven" capitalist societies. Soon we would have "modern" countries, just like the U.S., Britain or Germany.

The real objective and hope of the American and European capitalists is not the creation of great imperial capitalist countries comparable to and competitive with their own. Rather it was and is the restoration of capitalism in Russia and Eastern Europe on the basis of nothing other than the most abject "modern" form of advanced colonialism: with the key industrial, financial and commercial sectors owned and controlled by American and other imperialists; with only marginal sectors, the "crumbs" if you will, "owned" with heavy debt by the totally dependent, weak indigenous capitalists; and with governments subordinate to the imperialists that are strong enough (forget about the window-dressing of "democracy") to control the powerful working class!

For their part, the Stalinist bureaucrats that rule as privileged, parasitic castes over the Eastern European and Soviet worker states had great illusions themselves. Knowing that their old systems were collapsing they had great hopes of metamorphosing into modern, imperial capitalists; even the more re-

alist among them hoped to at least become partners with the real imperialists after the restoration of capitalism in their countries. A decade into this dream now, many of them no longer harbor such illusions and desperately long for the past.

Unfortunately for all these thieves, their day will never come to pass. Stalinists and imperialists alike totally misjudged the world and domestic stage as the crisis unfolded beginning in 1989. Neither had any idea of power and resiliency of the workers and farmers over whom they intended to rule and exploit. Like all narrow-thinking rulers before them, they dismissed the workers as beaten, tamed, and ready for capitalist restoration. Unfortunately for all these rulers and exploiters the workers are not only undefeated but also showing clear signs that their fighting spirit is being reborn. Very big battles lie ahead.

Walt Snyder  
Clifton Park, New York

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.

## Coalition government splits in New Zealand as economic crisis deepens

BY MICHAEL TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — As the impact of the economic downturn in Asia began to hit home, New Zealand's coalition government came apart in August.

The collapse of the coalition began August 12, when rightist politician and New Zealand First (NZF) leader Winston Peters led a walkout of NZF members from an emergency Cabinet meeting. Two days later National Party leader and Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley sacked Peters from his posts as deputy prime minister and treasurer, while urging other NZF members of parliament (MPs) to remain on the government benches.

By August 18 Shipley had rallied the support of eight of the 16 NZF MPs, enabling her to form a minority, a National Party-led government with the backing of the right-wing party ACT. The defectors include the four other NZF members of Cabinet, who remain ministers in Shipley's new government. The most prominent of them, the Minister of Maori Affairs and former deputy leader of NZF, Tau Henare, has said he plans to form a new party.

Henare was sacked as deputy leader by the New Zealand First caucus in July after coming into conflict with Peters. Responding to that rift and to divisions in her own National party, Shipley had announced unexpectedly that she was considering calling a snap election.

The August 12 emergency Cabinet meeting had been called to finalize a proposal for the sale of the government's 66 percent share in the Wellington airport. Peters had been demanding a deal that guaranteed ownership remaining in New Zealand hands. "There was no sense in staying," he demagogically said, following the walkout. "We will not sell the public assets of this country into foreign ownership, nor will we sell our principles and beliefs purely for the positions of public office."

Following his sacking, Peters declared on national television, "This is not the end. It is a new beginning."

### Financial crisis worsens

The sacking of Peters was welcomed in business circles. With business confidence at its lowest levels since 1991 — a clear majority of businessmen say they expect the economy to worsen over the next six months — criticism of Peters' role as Treasurer had been mounting.

"Survey after survey reveals Mr Peters to be the cause, not the solution, to the low level of business confidence in New Zealand," declared the editors of the *National Business Review*, August 14.

"Put simply, his anti-foreign ownership and anti-privatization stance is out of step," noted economic commentator Fran O'Sullivan in the business section of the *New Zealand Herald* that same day.

The previous day, the *Herald* had reported that "revised economic and fiscal forecasts now being prepared by the Treasury make gloomy reading and there is doubt in National circles about whether Mr Peters is prepared to front the hard decisions the new figures may require."

At the end of June the Treasury reported that the economy had been in recession for the first half of 1998. Expectations of a slight recovery were downgraded in August, with zero or negative growth projected to continue into 1999.

Capitalist production in New Zealand, geared largely around the export of agricultural commodities, is highly vulnerable to falls in prices and world market demand.

Layoffs in the second quarter saw 26,000 full-time jobs lost, the biggest drop in one quarter since 1985. Official unemployment hit a four-year high of 7.7 percent, with up to 20,000 more jobs forecast to be cut over the following nine months.

The value of the New Zealand dollar has



Some 3,000 workers protest attempt to cut holiday benefits in Christchurch, December 1997. Such protests forced the previous coalition government to back off this and other austerity proposals. New treasurer vows to push through social cuts.

dropped by more than 30 percent against the U.S. currency in a little more than a year, hitting a 12-year low of US\$0.48 at the end of August. Share prices have followed the dollar. The sharemarket index has fallen from a high of 2501 in July 1997 to 1760 on September 1 of this year, a level only slightly above the low reached in the 1987 stock market crash, when the index dropped by 57 percent from a high of 3969.

The U.S. ratings agency Moody's Investors Service, which downgraded the credit rating for New Zealand in January, is expected to announce a further downgrade.

Trying to sound reassuring, Shipley declared, "We will address measures raised by the Asian crisis," speaking before parliament August 27 on behalf of her new government.

"Both the government and its officials are moving out of denial mode about the extent of the Asian crisis," wrote Fran O'Sullivan in the August 24 *New Zealand Herald*. She challenged the new treasurer, William Birch, to take "bold fiscal measures."

Birch says he will push through cutbacks in government spending. ACT leader Richard Prebble has called for the government to slash NZ\$1 billion from the social wage and to introduce other pro-business measures. Government MPs have talked of in-

tiating a series of new privatizations of state-owned assets and of reintroducing legislation to whittle away at workers' holiday entitlements. A move by the coalition government to do this earlier in the year foundered in the face of union opposition.

An editorial in the August 21 *National Business Review* called on the Shipley government to "reinvent itself as a government of dynamic reform."

Minister of Defense Max Bradford is campaigning for the purchase of a third new naval frigate as part of moves to strengthen the military in response to "political instability such as we have seen in Indonesia." A brief visit to New Zealand August 1 by U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright has raised hopes in ruling circles for the resumption of normal military ties with Washington, severed in 1985 after the New Zealand government banned visits by nuclear-armed or powered warships.

### Workers, Maori hit hardest by crisis

A study released in July illustrated the effect on working people of the capitalist crisis and government policy. While 80 percent of households receive a smaller share of total income than 16 years ago, the top 10 percent receive more, and the top five percent substantially more. Over the past

decade the gap has increased between the average incomes of Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, and the rest of the population.

One recent reflection of this growing class polarization is the outbreak of tuberculosis, diphtheria, and meningitis among children and young people in working-class communities, diseases linked to poverty that were largely eradicated.

A protest organized by the Anglican Church, the traditional church of government and the ruling class in New Zealand, set off from both ends of the country September 1, to converge on parliament in Wellington October 1. The march is demanding jobs, increased social welfare benefits, a reliable public health system, and affordable housing and education.

Over several years in opposition, 1993-96, Winston Peters railed against the "free market" policies of the National Party government, targeting foreigners, immigrants, and prominent business figures as the source of the problems facing "ordinary New Zealanders."

New Zealand First won 13 percent of the vote in October 1996 — giving it 17 seats in the 120-seat parliament — in elections held for the first time under a system of proportional representation.

Peters' entry into coalition with the National Party alienated many of his supporters and the standing of Peters and his party plummeted in opinion polls. NZF MPs were at the center of a number of petty scandals that became a focus of national politics. Particular targets of media scrutiny have been the NZF MPs elected in the five Maori electorates. (In New Zealand, voters who are Maori can enroll to vote in either a general electorate or in a Maori electorate. Around half are enrolled to vote in the five Maori electorates.)

Looking to rebuild an electoral base over recent months, Peters had sought to counter the growing weight of the Maori electorate MPs in NZF, as well as to distance himself from the National Party within the coalition government. The rightist politician increasingly sought to portray himself as the "people's treasurer" defending "the nation's" interests within the government.

Michael Tucker is a member of the Service and Food Workers Union.

## Cuban official speaks in New Zealand

BY JANET ROTH AND AGNES SULLIVAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Maria Luisa Fernández, Cuba's Consul-General in Australia, made a public speaking tour of New Zealand for the first time at the end of August.

Despite cold weather and heavy rain, an attentive audience of 25 heard her speak at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch August 26. That same evening, 31 people attended a public meeting for Fernández. Public meetings were also held in Wellington and Auckland.

In her talks Fernández focused on the steps taken in Cuba to deal with the economic crisis precipitated by the collapse of its main trading partner, the Soviet Union — from the establishment of farmers cooperatives to allowing the use of the U.S. dollar. She emphasized the continuing impact of the embargo imposed by Washington against Cuba, estimating that the embargo had cost the Cuban economy \$60 billion.

She pointed to the continuing priority placed on meeting the social needs of Cuba's working people despite these economic difficulties.

Fernández highlighted the major events that had taken place in Cuba last year, including the commemoration of the 30th an-

niversary of the death of Che Guevara, the World Festival of Youth and Students, government elections, and the visit of the Pope.

She explained that opponents of the Cuban revolution thought the Pope's visit would have the impact it supposedly did in Poland — "a touch of his wand and we would change."

Instead, "our government had to explain to people why they should go to his masses, otherwise the same numbers wouldn't have attended.... Nothing changed ideologically."

The Pope, she added, raised many of the same themes he does in every country. People listened politely, then after he left "young people forgot his strictures against abortion and sexual relations outside of marriage."

She said Cubans felt it important that the Pope had opposed the U.S. embargo and encouraged countries to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Starting a talk at the Auckland Institute of Technology (AIT), Fernández stressed, "Cuba is a socialist state with free health care, free education, and freedom of religion."

At her two meetings in Auckland, questions ranged from why the U.S. government has tightened the embargo, how food is dis-

tributed, unemployment, child abuse, organization of education, and globalization, to relations with China.

Answering a question about young Cubans' attitudes to the revolution, Fernández commented, "For my granddaughter, the revolution is ancient history." She explained that special attention is given to the ongoing education of younger people, and in particular, "we let them know what's going on in the world, not just in Cuba."

Fernández condemned the U.S. rulers' bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan, which had occurred just prior to her tour.

At the Christchurch public meeting, Fernández was welcomed by Koa Saxby of the Coalition for Public Health, Christina Guerrero from the Latin American community, Susan Stewart of the Hotel and Hospital Workers Union, and civil libertarian and economist Wolfgang Rosenberg. In Auckland, a message was read from Alliance party Member of Parliament Matthew Robson.

The AIT student newspaper *Debaitran* ran a full-page article about Fernández's visit and a local Christchurch TV station broadcast an interview with her.

Janet Roth is a member of the Service and Food Workers Union.