

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Socialist Workers:  
'U.S. first' is trap for farmers**

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## Workers rally to back striking Illinois miners

BY DANNY BOOHER AND  
SHELTON McCRAINEY

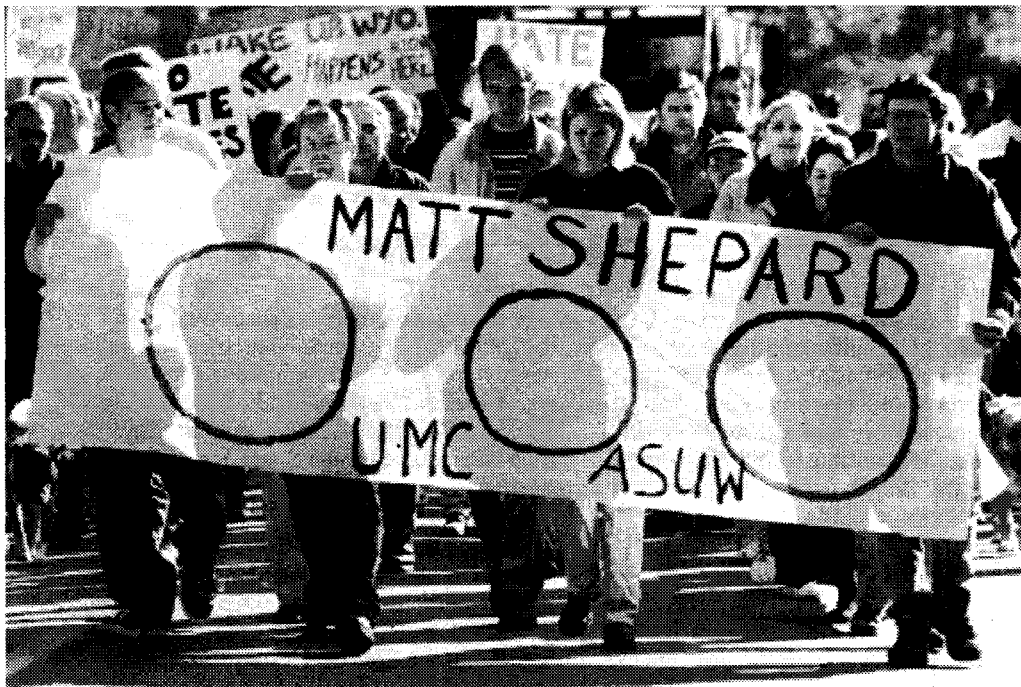
VIRDEN, Illinois — Dressed in full camouflage and walking in formation, nearly 350 striking members of the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) marched into the downtown square here October 11 for a support rally and commemoration of the 1898 "Battle for Virden." As they entered the square chanting "We are Union!" and "Freeman, Freeman, can't you see, the UMW will not leave!" the strikers were joined by a crowd of 600 supporters. The event in Virden was the first of two rallies that day to support the striking mine workers.

The 350 miners struck the Freeman United Coal Company's three Illinois mines on September 11, after the company refused to guarantee health benefits for retirees.

Freeman United, a subsidiary of General Dynamics, dropped out of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association and their negotiations with the UMWA in June 1997, demanding a separate, "more competitive" contract. The old one expired Au-

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## Killing of gay student sparks protests



Hundreds of people march at the University of Wyoming in Laramie October 10 to protest brutal beating several days earlier of Matthew Shepard, who was gay. Shepard, a 21-year-old student, died October 12. Two men have been charged with first-degree murder. They are accused of kidnapping and robbing Shepard, striking him in the head with a pistol causing massive head injuries, and leaving him tied to a fence in near-freezing weather. See editorial on page 14, "Defend civil rights for gays!"

## Black farmers win a round against U.S. government discrimination

BY STU SINGER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Three hundred Black farmers and their supporters from 23 states packed the largest courtroom in the Federal Courthouse here October 13 for the latest hearing in their \$3 billion lawsuit against decades of racist discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The farmers had just won an important ruling. Citing a pattern of discrimination by the Agriculture Department, Federal District Court judge Paul Friedman ruled October 9 in favor of a motion by lawyers for the 600 Black farmers already involved in the suit that they represent a class. Since the suit began, the government has sought to avoid this.

Michael Sitcov, lead attorney for the government, spent most of his effort during the three-and-a-half-hour hearing October 13 continuing to argue that the Black farmers' cases should be tried individually. The government has also dragged its feet in a court-ordered effort to settle the cases through mediation. Sitcov argued that the Black farmers should only be allowed to sue under the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act. Under that law, even if the farmers won the suit their cases would be sent back to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for administrative review.

Judge Friedman responded, "I gave you a chance to mediate this case and you only

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## Striker: 'I'd lose everything before crossing the line' at Kaiser Aluminum

BY CHRIS RAYSON

SPOKANE, Washington — "We poured our guts out in the mills, and they [Kaiser Aluminum Co.] care nothing about us. My wife and I would lose everything we have before we'd cross the line." These comments by Ken Steeley, 32, who has worked 10 years at Kaiser's Trentwood rolling mill, typify the determination of the 3,000 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) on strike against Kaiser.

The strike is centered here, where 2,000

members of USWA Local 329 at the Mead smelter and Local 338 at the Trentwood rolling mill are on the picket lines. Workers at Kaiser Aluminum plants in Tacoma, Washington; Newark, Ohio; and Gramercy, Louisiana, are also on strike.

Union strike literature points out "Kaiser has spent more the \$8 million preparing for its strike — hiring strikebreakers and paramilitary 'security guards,' building fences, erecting trailers, and paying lawyers and consultants."

The walk out began September 30 when workers rejected the company's contract offer, which is below the standard in the aluminum industry. The company is demanding the permanent elimination of 400 jobs between the five plants, as well as the contracting out of 150 jobs. Over the course of Kaiser's proposed five-year agreement, wages would increase a miserly 2.3 percent per year. Proposed pension increases would also keep Kaiser retirees below those at other

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## Accord puts off NATO air strikes, deepens U.S. intervention in Yugoslavia

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The U.S. government special envoy to the Balkans Richard Holbrooke and Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic announced an agreement October 13 in Belgrade, putting off the immediate prospect of NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia.

The night before, Washington and its imperialist allies in NATO had issued an "activation" order authorizing the air raids. The bombing was to take place within four days if the Milosevic regime did not withdraw its special armed forces from Kosova, a region in the southern part of Yugoslavia where 90 percent of the population of 2.1 million are Albanian.

Implementation of the accord will deepen U.S. intervention in Yugoslavia. It will place on firmer ground Washington's position as the major "European power," which has been established on the blood and bones of the Yugoslav people. Despite demagogic rationalizations, the U.S. rulers' aim is not to stop "ethnic cleansing," impose "democracy," or protect the national rights of the

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Striker pickets Port of Tacoma October 11 to halt unloading of ship with ore for Kaiser Aluminum.

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**Irish prisoners in U.S. win reversal of extradition — page 3**

## Protest actions across Russia call for Yeltsin's ouster

Protest actions took place across Russia October 7, demanding that the government pay out billions of dollars in back wages and pensions and calling for President Boris Yeltsin's ouster. Factory workers, teachers, students, construction workers, and others participated in the demonstrations. Conditions for most working people in Russia are deteriorating rapidly as capitalism's currency crisis drags the ruble down with it. Union officials said that the protesters totaled 10 million nationwide; the government claimed the figure was 615,000.

While the protests were called by the unions and Communist Party, and were overwhelmingly working-class in composition, rightist forces participated as well. In the eastern region of Siberia, former general and presidential contender Governor Alexander Lebed joined the march, backing the call for Yeltsin's ouster. Handfuls of fascist-minded youth carrying swastika-like flags and dressed in black with red arm bands were also reportedly interspersed in the street actions that day. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the ultranationalist Liberal Democratic party said his supporters would boycott the protests because they were organized by communists, "phony" trade unions, and "former servants of the [Soviet] Empire."

## Taliban advance in Afghanistan, head towards war with Iran

The Iranian government has deployed 200,000 troops along the border with Afghanistan and placed them on alert, anticipating clashes with the Taliban, which has consolidated control over 90 percent of Afghanistan. The Taliban, a reactionary outfit that grew out of the U.S.-backed civil war in the 1980s, has reportedly defeated all major opposition forces except those of Ahmad Shah Massoud, who are stationed in the Panjshir Valley near the Iranian border. Taliban forces are now preparing what they hope to be a final offensive against Massoud, a former defense minister who

## Guaraní in Paraguay: 'Give us back our land!'



More than 3,000 Guaraní natives march from Asunción, Paraguay, to the palace of President Raúl Cubas October 12 — the day Christopher Columbus is recorded as landing in the Americas in 1492 — to demand that lands seized from them over the last 500 years be returned.

also fought against the former pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan.

On October 8, Taliban militiamen opened fire on Iranian forces at a Saleh-Abad post with mortars and machine guns. Iranian forces returned fire and a three hour skirmish ensued. According to an Iranian brigadier general, militia forces in Afghanistan suffered heavy casualties.

## Basque prisoners hunger strike

Thirteen Basque political prisoners in the La Sante prison in Paris began a hunger strike October 5 to protest the possible expulsion to Spain of another Basque prisoner who will complete his sentence October 11, according to reports from Gureak, a support committee for Basque prisoners. The prisoners are accused of being members of Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA), which is fighting for independence of the Basque Country from Spain and France.

Inaki López de Bergara, the man facing expulsion, has been on a hunger strike since September 2 and will now begin to refuse

liquids. The 13 prisoners wrote a letter to French justice minister Elisabeth Guigou and to "antiterrorist" judge Laurence Le Vert denouncing their deportation order. The letter was made public by Gureak. In the letter they argue that López de Bergara will be tortured if he is handed over to the Spanish cops.

## Italian prime minister resigns

Italian prime minister Romano Prodi resigned October 9 after losing a confidence vote in parliament. Three days earlier the Reconstructed Communists, a remnant of the former pro-Moscow Communist Party, broke ranks with Prodi's Olive Tree coalition over his new austerity budget plan. Prodi's budget calls for yet another round of cuts in social spending in the name of meeting the criteria for entering the European Monetary Union. The Reconstructed Communist party itself was divided over this. Party president Armando Cossutta resigned October 5 to protest breaking with the governing coalition.

## S. Africa gov't ends anti-gay law

South Africa's highest court abolished apartheid-era anti-sodomy laws October 9 that made same-sex intercourse illegal. It also ruled that any man charged or convicted on these grounds since 1994 could demand restitution and that their criminal records be cleared. Civil rights of gays have been legally protected since the provisional constitution was instituted in 1994, shortly following the victory of democratic forces there over the racist South African apartheid regime.

Under apartheid, gay sex was punishable by up to seven years in prison. According to a human rights report issued in 1997, the South African military of that era used "aver-

sion therapy" on alleged gays, giving soldiers electric shocks while they viewed images of naked men. South Africa is the first country to ban antigay discrimination in its constitution.

## Bolivia: no to utilities hikes

Thousands of people took to the streets of La Paz, Bolivia, October 1-2 to protest government moves to raise water and energy rates. Demonstrators blocked roads all over the city, and some workers struck for the day, leaving the city largely paralyzed. Peasants, who had marched from regions throughout Bolivia, arrived to join the protests. The Bolivian government claims to have previously struck a deal with the Bolivian Labor Confederation on the hike in utilities prices. But the Federation of Joint Neighborhoods, which called the actions, rejects the deal and has threatened to seize the privately run water and electricity plants. Authorities there called a state of emergency. Top cop, Reynaldo Mariaca declared, "I, along with all my men, are in a state of emergency to be able to...at least protect all the properties we can protect."

## Peruvians storm gov't palace

Chanting, "Down with the dictatorship!" "The fear has ended!" and "No to reelection!" workers and youth stormed the presidential palace in Lima, Peru, September 30 to protest rising unemployment and undemocratic policies of the government there. More than 5,000 people broke through a police cordon at the palace gate, while others spray-painted "Dictator!" on the stone walls of the palace courtyard, referring to Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori. A few dozen people made it into the building, where they allegedly turned over and busted up furniture. Cops fired shots and launched tear gas into the crowds, dispersing the protesters. The action was called by the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers, the country's largest labor federation.

## Accused plead not guilty in Kenya, Somalia bombings

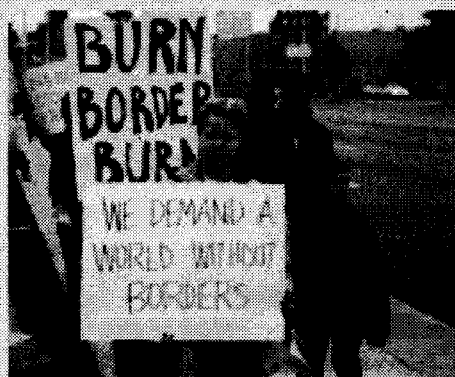
Three men U.S. officials have accused of conspiring to bomb the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya pleaded not guilty October 8. They are being held and tried in the U.S. courts. Mohammed Saddiq Odeh, and Mohammed Rashed Daoud al Owahli were arrested outside the United States and removed to New York where they face charges in the bombings. Wadih el Hage, a Texas resident who Washington claims was once a secretary for Saudi business man Osama bin Laden, is accused of collaborating with Odeh and Owahli. A fourth man has been accused of involvement in the alleged plot, but U.S. authorities have been unable to seize him.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

# THE MILITANT

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# UN condemns U.S. embargo on Cuba

## Washington tries to tighten squeeze through accord with European Union

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

UNITED NATIONS — Condemning Washington's embargo against Cuba for the seventh consecutive year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution October 14 titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

The vote was 157 in favor, 2 against, and 12 abstentions — the largest majority yet. Last year a similar resolution passed 143 to 3 with 17 abstentions.

"Each of these decisions has been historic," said Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina, who introduced the document at the UN General Assembly. "The first resolution was adopted at a time when a triumphal intoxication over the demise of the USSR and Eastern Europe was sentencing the Cuban revolution to death and the bets for the imminent fall of the government in Havana were as frequent as the bags being packed and trips booked for a feast of vultures that would supposedly devour the remains of Cuban socialism...."

"Cuba has not only endured. Cuba and its people have managed to survive the so-called 'end of history' and the harassment of the mightiest power ever."

Only the Israeli regime voted against the resolution this time along with U.S. government representatives. The government of Uzbekistan, which last year joined Tel Aviv and Washington in voting no, while it was seeking financial aid from U.S. imperialism, abstained.

All of Washington's imperialist allies in Europe, who are also competitors, as well as those in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Japan voted for the resolution the Cuban government presented. The only abstentions from Latin America came from El Salvador and Nicaragua; and from Africa from Morocco and Senegal. Representatives of five former Soviet republics also abstained, as well as the south Korean government.

In his speech to the United Nations, Robaina detailed many of the effects of Washington's economic war against the Cuban people. He cited a 1997 report by the American Association for World Health — a U.S. organization of well-known medical doctors and experts. "The U.S. embargo has caused a significant rise in suffering — and even deaths — in Cuba," that report said. "Few other embargoes in recent history... have included an outright ban on the sale of food. Few other embargoes have so restricted medical commerce as to deny the availability of life-saving medicines to ordinary citizens."

Announcements earlier this year that Washington would ease travel restrictions and shipments of food and medicines to Cuba were "just a publicity stunt," Robaina said. "Three months ago, three chartered flight operators were authorized to fly to Cuba, but two of them have seen their licenses removed just recently."

At the conclusion of his speech, the Cuban foreign minister asked delegates at the UN assembly to approve the resolution he introduced "on behalf of the 11 million Cubans who do not plead, but rather demand,



Militant/Bill Estrada

Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina presented resolution "on behalf of the 11 million Cubans who do not plead, but rather demand, an end to this dirty war." Above, Havana rally in defense of revolution August 1995.

on their feet, an end to this dirty war, and who do not accept any disgraceful assistance, for they know they can rise and walk on their own."

Earlier in his remarks, the Cuban leader elaborated on the so-called U.S. assistance. "Over the last few days, U.S. government spokespeople have been engaged in a campaign of accusations against us as we have refused to receive emergency food assistance that, albeit channeled through the World Food Program, would be identified, monitored and conditioned by the United States," Robaina said.

"To accept crumbs from our executioner while the blockade becomes increasingly tight and merciless would not be proper for a people with dignity. José Martí taught us that poverty can go away, but not dishonor." Martí is Cuba's national hero.

Robaina took particular aim at the misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also referred to as the Helms-Burton law or Libertad Act, which president William Clinton signed in March 1996. The legislation substantially escalated Washington's economic war on the Cuban people. The Clinton administration's aggressive use of the law has had an adverse impact on the Caribbean nation's economy, slowing down foreign investment and credits to Cuba.

Robaina pointed to a statement by the

head of the Cuba bureau of the U.S. State Department who said, "Since the passage of the [Helms-Burton] law, 19 firms from more than six countries have changed their investment plans in Cuba or have pulled out their investments from that country... The Cuban government has encountered major difficulties in obtaining financing and attracting potential investors, and interest rates have increased up to 22 percent."

The actual damage has been much higher than described by the U.S. official, the Cuban foreign minister added.

### U.S.-EU conflict over Helms-Burton

The passage of the Helms-Burton law also registered an intensifying offensive by the U.S. rulers against their imperialist allies, with whom they also compete for domination of the world's markets, especially in Europe and Canada.

Title III of the law allows Cuban-American and other U.S. businessmen whose property was expropriated by workers and peasants after the 1959 revolution in Cuba to sue in U.S. courts anyone investing in those properties. European Union (EU) officials charged that this and other provisions show an "extraterritorial reach" of the U.S. legislation and are an infringement by Washington on the rights of these capitalist powers to trade with whomever they choose.

The EU filed a complaint in 1997 with

the World Trade Organization (WTO) charging that the Helms-Burton law violates international trade rules. Washington vehemently objected and refused to attend the hearings of a WTO panel on this matter. At the same time, no company investing in Cuba has been sued yet. The Clinton administration has repeatedly waived Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, using the threat to implement it as a bludgeon against Washington's competitors.

The European Union dropped its legal challenge to the U.S. legislation after the "Understanding with Respect to Disciplines for the Strengthening of Investment Protection" reached between EU and U.S. officials May 18.

The accord would exempt foreign companies that invested on targeted properties in Cuba before May 18, 1998, from being sued under the Helms-Burton legislation. But any expansion or renewal or leases on those past investments would be fair game. And the EU would have to inform U.S. authorities of any new investments made after the May 18 date that would trigger penalties under the Helms-Burton law. In exchange, Washington would waive Title IV of the law, which bars executives of companies with investments in expropriated properties in Cuba from obtaining travel visas to the U.S. Using this provision, Washington has already denied visas to over a dozen top officials of foreign companies, including executives of the Canadian enterprise Sheritt International Corp., which has investments in nickel mines in Cuba.

### Albright's letter to Helms

The "Understanding" requires approval by U.S. Congress before it can be implemented. The Clinton administration has been pushing for such a vote. In an August 3 letter to Senate foreign relations committee chairman Jesse Helms, one of the main sponsors of the Helms-Burton law, U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright praised the Understanding as extending the reach on the so-called Cuban Liberty Act.

"Through the U.S.-EU Understanding, the European Union has now joined us in telling investors to keep 'hands off' property that is illegally expropriated," Albright said in her letter to Helms. "The EU has acknowledged that this policy should apply to properties illegally expropriated by the Cuban government. This means that for the first time in Castro's long reign, the EU has officially recognized the illegality of his expropriation of U.S. property. Their ac-

Continued on Page 12

## Court reverses extradition of Irish prisoners

BY NORTON SANDLER

SAN FRANCISCO—In a 2-to-1 decision, a federal appeals court here on October 9 reversed the extradition order against three Irish nationalist prisoners being held in a California prison. The court sent the case back to the Federal District court, saying Terry Kirby, Kevin Barry Artt, and Pol Brennan were eligible for a new extradition

trial.

The three men were arrested by the FBI in California between 1992 and 1994. They were among 38 Irish Republican prisoners who escaped from the "H-blocks" of Long Kesh prison in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1983.

Along with Jimmy Smyth, who was extradited to Northern Ireland in 1996, they became known as the H-Block 4. U.S. officials pressed for the extradition of the H-Block 4 under terms of a 1986 treaty with the government of the United Kingdom.

The four were originally tried in Diplock courts—that is non-jury trials. Their cases have received prominent attention in both the United States and Ireland. Smyth is expected to be released from prison in Northern Ireland soon along with other Republican prisoners under the terms of the recent peace accords.

Kirby was convicted of killing a gas station attendant during an alleged 1978 Irish Republican Army attack. Artt was convicted of killing a police officer in 1983, and Brennan was convicted of possessing an illegal firearm and explosive device in 1977.

In overturning the deportation order against Kirby and Artt, the three-judge federal appeals panel ruled that U.S. District Court Judge Charles Legge, who presided at their extradition trial, did not give proper consideration to the defendants' arguments that British authorities used coerced testimony to convict them in their original trials in Northern Ireland.

"The existence of bias is not always

readily apparent from an individualized inquiry, particularly where, as in Northern Ireland, procedural safeguards have been eliminated," the appeals ruling stated. "After all, a trial judge or detective is unlikely to memorialize the fact that his or her decisions were motivated by political or religious bias."

The court said the defendants must be given a chance to demonstrate whether prejudicial conduct by police, prosecutors, or judges biased their original trials.

In Brennan's case, the appellate court ruled that the crime he was convicted of — possession firearms — is not an extraditable offense under the terms of the 1986 treaty.

Attorneys for Kirby, Artt, and Brennan are expected to press for bail for the three.

John Fogarty, regional vice president of the Irish-American Unity Conference, which has spearheaded the defense of the three, told *Militant*, "We view this an important decision because it permits us to bring to the world the case of the Irish people and the Diplock Courts."

"The judges properly took note of the deficiency of the convictions in these cases, the lack of safeguards in the British judicial system in Northern Ireland," he said.

"The four cases examined by the courts in San Francisco were disgraceful," Fogarty added. "This should cause alarm about the cases of the tens of thousands of others who also pass through the same system."

Norton Sandler is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1781.

## Clinton to face impeachment inquiry

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution October 8 to "investigate fully and completely whether sufficient grounds exist" to impeach President William Clinton. The inquiry was authorized by a vote of 258 to 176. The investigator for the House Judiciary Committee outlined 15 possible impeachment counts that stem from the sex scandal involving former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. One of the charges asserted that Clinton "may have given false testimony under oath before the Federal grand jury" concerning the affair.

The independent counsel Kenneth Starr had previously delivered a 445-page report to Congress September 10, accusing Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice and urged that impeachment proceedings begin against him. That report, which consists mostly of lewd accounts of Clinton's alleged sexual activities, was immediately published in book form and on the Internet. A total of

70,000 pages of such "evidence" have been generated by Starr's "investigation." On September 21, the three major broadcast networks and four cable stations aired Clinton's four-hour testimony before the grand jury.

This lurid spectacle has fed into the "culture war" of the right wing. Patrick Buchanan seized on it to denounce the "Woodstock values" of the "elite." In a similar vein, columnist Joseph Sobran described the scandal as the result of a "Culture of Candor" in a September 22 commentary, coming to the defense of Starr as "an old-fashioned Christian gentleman."

Liberal figures remain divided over the proceedings. Congress made the right decision in "authorizing an open-ended inquiry," stated the editors of the *Washington Post* in an October 9 editorial. The same day the *New York Times* editors stated their position is to "advocate a censure conditioned on Mr. Clinton's admission of lying under oath."

# Reaching out to fellow fighters will win support for NI Fund

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

"We held a meeting in Raleigh to discuss what's happening in world politics today, and among the half dozen people who attended there was a lot of excitement about the latest issue of *New International*," reports Brian Williams of Washington, D.C., who was part of a sales team that spent a week in North Carolina meeting with textile workers, farm workers, and other politically active workers (see article on page 5).

Among these readers of *New International*, "we got more than \$600 in pledges and raised about \$200 in donations." Some of them even pitched in to help cover the costs of the team itself, whose members included socialist workers from Washington D.C., Atlanta, and Newark.

This effort to reach out to fellow working-class fighters and others in areas throughout the United States is an example of how to tap the interest in the Marxist magazine *New International* and raise money for the New International Fund, which will make it possible to keep this issue, which is titled "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," in print along with the other 10.

We can say that the third week of the fund was the beginning of a real campaign. Supporters throughout the United States and

several other countries have begun to organize systematically to raise money — collecting and sending in more than \$9,000 since last week. But this also means the drive is currently two full weeks behind schedule.

In Des Moines, New International Fund director Maggie Trowe reports that more than \$400 was collected at an October 9 fund-raising event. At the meeting, chaired by Young Socialists member Maryanne Russo, Socialist Workers Party leader Doug Jenness spoke on the theme of the contents of *New International* no. 11.

Among those present, three unionists who work at the Swift meatpacking plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, made contributions. Two are long-term readers and one is a relatively new reader who first began to read the Marxist magazine as part of a study group of workers last spring when Washington launched war moves against Iraq. At that time they studied *Nueva Internacional* no. 1, titled "The Opening Guns of World War III."

One partisan of the socialist publications, Mack Shelley, who teaches statistics at Iowa State University in Ames, sent a message of support. "The international sentiments that are so essential for a correct understanding of the contemporary global situation are expressed most clearly for me weekly

through the pages of the *Militant* and in more depth through the *New International*. The latest edition of the *New International* (number 11) continues that well-established line of informative and insightful analysis," Shelley said. "It's always wonderful" he continued, "to read something that is much more enlightening than the propaganda that often passes for 'objectivity' in the bourgeois mass media."

The fund-raising results of the meeting helped put Des Moines supporters at the top of the chart this week.

In New York City, supporters of the New International Fund have made an extensive series of phone calls to contact prospective contributors. One call especially bore fruit this week. A fund supporter followed up a phone call with a visit to a couple's apartment. They were so appreciative that they not only purchased issue 11 of *New International*, but they donated \$500 to the fund and bought a two-year subscription to the *Militant*.

Along with contributions, please send in brief news reports on the progress of the New International Fund, particularly about reaching out to workers and farmers on the job and elsewhere.

## \$115,000 New International Fund Drive

CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
<b>United States</b>			
Des Moines	2,500	1,012	40%
Detroit	4,500	1,725	38%
Philadelphia	4,000	1,290	32%
Atlanta	2,800	611	22%
Seattle	8,500	1,785	21%
Washington, D.C.	4,000	775	19%
Miami	2,500	375	15%
Twin Cities, MN	7,000	1,040	15%
Pittsburgh	4,000	550	14%
Cleveland	4,000	507	13%
New York	12,000	1,580	13%
San Francisco	11,000	1,400	13%
Chicago	7,500	735	10%
Newark	8,500	630	7%
Boston	4,700	250	5%
Birmingham	3,000	125	4%
Houston	6,000	0	0%
Los Angeles	9,000	0	0%
Other	0	30	0%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>105,500</b>	<b>14,420</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>			
London	1,700	210	12%
Manchester	680	0	0%
<b>UK Total</b>	<b>2,380</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>			
Christchurch	550	32	6%
Auckland	1,500	62	4%
Wellington	0	0	0%
<b>N.Z. Total</b>	<b>2,050</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Australia</b>			
	650	0	0%
<b>Canada</b>			
Montreal	665	0	0%
Toronto	1,670	0	0%
Vancouver	665	0	0%
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Iceland</b>			
	1,400	0	0%
<b>Sweden</b>			
	1,250	0	0%
<b>INT'L TOTAL:</b>	<b>116,230</b>	<b>14,724</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>SHOULD BE:</b>	<b>115,000</b>	<b>43,125</b>	<b>38%</b>

## 750 rally to back MSI strikers in fight to win a contract in Ohio

BY KEVIN DWIRE

MARIETTA, Ohio — Chants of "What do we want? Contract! When do we want it? Now!" echoed down the streets here October 10 as 750 union members and others marched and rallied in support of members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) on strike against Magnetic Specialties, Incorporated.

The steelworkers striking for their first contract following a successful organizing drive at MSI. A banner hung across the front of the rally stage summed up the history of the fight: "1,288 Days Since Organizing Drive Began; 588 Day Unfair Labor Practice Strike; How Much Longer, Murphy?"

Gary Murphy, the owner of MSI, has dragged out the negotiations and is running production in the plant with scab workers protected by private security guards. MSI workers went on strike in March 1997.

Speaking at the rally before the march from the Washington County Fairgrounds to the picket line, USWA staffer Gary Cochran pointed to conditions in the plant that spurred the MSI workers to begin organizing. He said that one worker passed out in the plant because of diabetes. When Mike Holland, now a leader of the strike who is a trained paramedic, tried to assist him, Holland was ordered to go back to work. Cochran said one woman worker was fired at the end of her 12-week maternity leave,

and another worker was disciplined for missing work when his house burned down.

Other speakers included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, speaking via a telephone hook-up from Chicago; USWA secretary treasurer Leo Gerrard; Ohio AFL-CIO president Bill Berger; West Virginia AFL-CIO president Jim Bowen; and United Mine Workers of America District 6 president Larry Ward.

Most of the speakers encouraged those in attendance to vote for Democratic party candidates in the November elections and to support the protectionist "Stand up for steel" campaign being pushed by the steel bosses and the USWA officialdom.

Mingling at the cookout following the rally and march, many of the unionists spoke about the need for union solidarity.

During the course of the strike six other USWA organizing drives have taken place in the Marietta area with the help of the MSI strikers. Dinah Barger and Jean Francis were at the rally with a group of nurses from the Home Nursing Service and Hospice at Marietta Memorial Hospital. The home service nurses have been involved in a USWA organizing drive since January. "MSI shows what strength we have when we get together and stick together," Barger said.

The nurses are waiting for a National Labor Relations Board ruling on whether the home nurses, 65 percent of whom have signed union cards, can have a representa-

tion election. If that is successful, they plan to organize the rest of the hospital.

Eight members of Laborers' International Union Local 1353 on strike against Monarch Rubber in Spencer, West Virginia, came to Marietta to build a rally they will be holding November 8. The Monarch workers went out on strike one month after the MSI strikers. "I love it, it's good to see so many people," said Randy Whytsell, president of the USWA Local at Monarch. "It's good the unions are wising up and coming together."

Whytsell said an indictment was handed down on September 23 against a scab worker in connection with a bomb blast near the strike picket shack in March. Whytsell said the bomb consisted of a five-gallon bucket filled with acetylene and gasoline.

Johnny Lynch a retired member of USWA local 5668 in Ravenswood, West Virginia, said the rally was "a good show of solidarity of unions from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. We got the point across."

Lynch said he came "because like Ravenswood, no union can win by itself. If all unions don't jump in and help, you'll go down by yourself." Members of USWA Local 5668 fought a successful 20-month battle against a lockout by Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. in 1991-92. "We found out at Ravenswood how important it is to have

other unions join the fight."

Lynch is the strike coordinator for USWA Local 5668, and works with the Monarch strikers in nearby Spencer. "When someone goes on strike I go talk to them on behalf of the local. If they need anything, I go back to the local, whether it's money or anything." He said the Ravenswood Steelworkers are going to hold a Christmas party for the Monarch strikers' families.

Denise Jones, an activist with the Alejandro Ramirez Defense Coalition in Cleveland, went to the rally to get out information on the case of Ramirez, a Mexican worker who was framed on a murder charge in Painesville, Ohio, and is now serving an 18-years-to-life sentence. The major evidence against him was a confession he signed while in custody, which he had retracted by the time of the trial. Ramirez had signed a waiver of his rights during an interrogation conducted in English, which he does not speak or read.

"I thought the rally was fantastic," said Jones. "I loved the solidarity ... it felt like everyone supported each other." She said the response to the Ramirez case was good. Some were familiar with the case, and others got information for the first time. She said the MSI strikers "have been out there and seen injustice right in the face, and were real receptive."

MSI striker Mike Holland told the *Militant* that the strikers built the rally by sending out flyers, manning a phone bank for two days, and going to local union halls in the area. "At RJF, which is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers, if the union puts a leaflet on the bulletin board, the management takes it down. So we handed them out to the members."

Holland said that they wanted to have the rally "to show that the support is still there." Negotiations are taking place between the union and the company, but neither side is allowed to reveal details to the media.

Union locals from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia were represented at the rally. They contributed over \$21,000 to the strikers, donated by the locals, collected at plant gates. Some took up extra collections on the buses coming to the rally.

Kevin Dwire is a member of United Auto Workers Local 1196 in Cleveland.

## Volunteers step up Pathfinder reprint production

BY TOM TOMASKO

OAKLAND, California — Supporters of the communist movement are stepping up the pace of the volunteer project to convert all of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets into digital files. This effort will make it possible to keep these titles in print at a lower cost and with a smaller number of socialist workers in Pathfinder's printshop, using modern computer-to-plate equipment.

One decision that helps set the pace is the plan adopted by the Pathfinder Reprint Steering Committee to finish scanning the text of all Pathfinder books by Jan. 1, 2000. This plan was also unanimously adopted at a meeting in Detroit on September 26-27 of members of the steering committee, other volunteers who have taken major responsibility for the project, and representatives of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.

Pathfinder publishes books and pamphlets that contain more than 150 years of the experiences of the workers movement

internationally, which are essential for workers, farmers, and militant youth today who are resisting the attacks of the employers and their governments. A team of 22 volunteers have signed up to scan and "massage" the text of the 350 titles Pathfinder publishes or is responsible for keeping in print.

Scanning is the first step before other volunteers proofread and format the books. For all but the most recent titles that are being produced electronically along these lines, the result of this will be books produced in a more readable, attractive style. All graphics, photos, and book covers are being reproduced digitally by volunteers as well.

The proposal to put all the book and pamphlet text into computer files by the year 2000, ready for further processing, was emailed October 10 to those volunteers who scan the text of the books and then make a manuscript of it for other volunteers to proofread.

"By aiming for and achieving this goal," the letter says, "we can increase productivity and boost the confidence and morale of volunteers and signal that we are much closer to effectively maintaining the arsenal of weapons our class needs in working order.... This goal is realizable if in the year 1999 we can gain pledges totaling 120 hours a week from 22 volunteers who are presently participating in the scanning/massaging.... If we achieve this goal it will mean that we will finish 5150 pages a month or 25 average size books a month."

Anyone wishing to volunteer to scan books and prepare the proofreading manuscript, or to participate in other aspects of the Pathfinder Reprint Project, should contact Ruth Cheney at rcheney3@compuserve.com. Having a scanner is not necessary for everyone involved in this aspect of the work because some books are already digital, but not yet in a form for further reprint production.



## Why fighting workers and farmers need the 'Militant'

"The *Militant* brings to my community a wider perspective on national and world issues, allowing new discussions and new understanding of global struggles and how our struggles in rural North Carolina are connected to broader struggles. The paper is passed around to members of my organization and many times articles are clipped and distributed to members."

Gary Grant  
President,  
Black Farmers and  
Agriculturist Association



Gary Grant speaking at protest against U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 23, 1997

# Regional teams and political activity lead to sales of 'Militant'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"We are involved in political activities that will give us a shot at getting back on schedule," said Willie Reid, an auto worker in Detroit, referring to the *Militant* subscription drive. "We are building a special *Militant* Labor Forum on Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails," she added.

Speakers at the forum include Noemí Cortés, a political activist and daughter of Puerto Rican political prisoner Edwin Cortés; Jorge Jiménez, a leader of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Organization at the University of Michigan; and Rosa Garmendía, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Michigan.

"We ran into Jiménez and Cortés on the campus while selling the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*," she said. "We are building the forum on campuses in the area while getting out the *Militant*."

"We are also sending a team of supporters to a mass informational picket line October 17 by workers at the Meijer superstore in Toledo, Ohio, who are fighting for better wages and benefits. She said they have met several fighters through getting out the *Militant*."

Lea Sherman in Houston said activists there are traveling to the picket lines of striking members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) at Titan Tire in Mississippi and Kaiser Aluminum in Louisiana. They will also set up a sales table at a campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and stop in New Orleans.

Activities like these are essential to broaden the reach of the subscription campaign, which is substantially behind schedule. *Militant* supporters need to sell an average of 202 *Militant* subscriptions each week in the second half of the drive to make the international goal. Socialist workers and members of the Young Socialists can boost the international campaign by planning actions like the coal team to West Virginia and the team to North Carolina that visited strikers at General Tire and a gigantic meatpacking plant where a UFCW organizing drive has taken place. (See below.)

Supporters in Des Moines are heading out to southwest Kansas October 17 to kick off a team that will reach packinghouse workers in that region. A YS member from Minneapolis, a student from Grinnell College in Iowa, and a meatpacker from Des Moines are already planning to make the trip. Maggie Trowe, another packinghouse worker and the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Iowa, will take a week off to campaign there, visiting USWA strikers at Titan Tire, other packing plants, and going door-to-door in working-class communities. Anyone interested in joining these teams can call (515) 277-2121 or contact *Militant* supporters nearest you listed on page 12 for information on other regional teams.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

RALEIGH, North Carolina — *Militant* supporters based out of Washington, D.C., and Atlanta received an excellent response from textile workers, meatpackers, farmworkers, and striking steelworkers during a five-day visit to North Carolina October 7-12.

We had serious discussions with textile workers employed by Fieldcrest-Cannon in Kannapolis, North Carolina, where workers have made several attempts to organize into the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and its predecessors. Some 5,000 workers are employed at the Fieldcrest-Cannon plants



Selling *Perspectiva Mundial* outside Smithfield packing plant in North Carolina

here. The team sold 15 *Militants*, two copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* (PM), a PM sub, and *New International* no. 11 to textile workers here, several of them veterans of earlier union organizing battles in the mills.

We also went to a picket line organized by members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) on strike against Continental General Tire, Inc., in Charlotte, North Carolina. Some 1,500 union members walked out on September 20. One of the main issues is a demand for a wage increase. According to workers on the picket line, they have had no raise in nine years and ended up accepting a concession contract after a 68-day strike in 1989. Strikers who were familiar with the USWA strike against Titan Tire in Des Moines, Iowa and Natchez, Mississippi, and eager to get more information bought six copies of the *Militant*.

Another team of *Militant* supporters visited the huge hog slaughter facility run by Smithfield Packing Co., in Tarheel, North Carolina. This is one of the largest and most modern slaughterhouses in the world. About 5,000 workers are employed here, many of them in their 20s. Sixty-five percent are African-Americans and nearly 30 percent are from Mexico. The plant is nonunion but workers have made two tries to win representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). The first lost by 100 votes. The second in August 1997 lost by 600 out of some 3,000 who voted. There were, however, many irregularities in the vote that the UFCW is challenging in court. The meatpackers at this plant were interested in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* as socialist and prounion publications. During the afternoon we sold 11 copies of the *Militant* and 10 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* to workers at the plant gate. Many voiced their support for having a union organized at this huge plant.

At a meeting organized on October 10 in Durham, North Carolina, by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) of 100 people, participants there purchased three *Militant* subscriptions; six PM subscriptions; a copy of *New International* no. 8 on the theme "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism"; six copies of PM; and seven copies of the *Militant*. This one-day conference was called by FLOC to discuss the campaign to force the Mount Olive Pickle Co. to sign a union contract with the farmworkers who pick cucumbers in the fields in North Carolina.

Plans were drafted for launching a boycott of Mt. Olive products in March of 1999. Some 25 farmworkers participated in this event together with student activists, representatives from several churches in the area, and the State Federation of Labor. Participants at the meeting were interested in the *Militant*'s and PM's coverage on Cuba and the fight for Puerto Rican independence.

## SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE September 12 – November 8 MILITANT/PERSPECTIVA MUNDIAL/NEW INT'L

	Militant			PM			NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	
<b>United Kingdom</b>								
Manchester	24	11	46%	2	4	15	0	
London	40	17	43%	10	7	60	43	
<b>UK total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>43</b>	
<b>United States</b>								
<b>Atlanta</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	
Philadelphia	35	17	49%	8	2	30	4	
Newark, NJ	120	56	47%	40	20	100	77	
Pittsburgh	40	18	45%	5	6	45	15	
Chicago	65	29	45%	25	15	58	49	
Seattle	70	31	44%	20	3	70	16	
Detroit	45	19	42%	10	6	40	18	
Los Angeles	90	38	42%	45	14	70	39	
Washington, D.C.	45	19	42%	15	10	45	34	
New York	140	57	41%	60	29	120	80	
Des Moines	45	17	38%	25	14	35	7	
Miami	40	14	35%	20	7	40	24	
Twin Cities, MN	65	17	26%	10	1	45	14	
Cleveland	35	9	26%	10	4	30	17	
Houston	35	9	26%	10	0	43	15	
San Francisco	95	24	25%	38	13	45	53	
Birmingham, AL	50	12	24%	6	1	40	20	
Boston	35	6	17%	20	4	35	22	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>527</b>	
<b>Australia</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>New Zealand</b>								
Christchurch	18	7	39%	1	0	15	5	
Auckland	28	7	25%	1	1	25	17	
<b>N.Z. total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>22</b>	
<b>Canada</b>								
Toronto	40	15	38%	5	2	50	35	
Vancouver	40	8	20%	5	0	40	24	
Montreal	25	3	12%	10	4	40	13	
<b>Canada total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>72</b>	
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>4</b>		
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>France</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>709</b>	
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>200</b>			

### IN THE UNIONS

Country/Union	Militant			PM			NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	
<b>Australia</b>								
AMWU	3	1	33%			4	0	
TCFU								
<b>Australia total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33%</b>			<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>United States</b>								
<b>UAW</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	
IAM	65	23	35%	15	5	25	5	
UFCW	10	3	30%	13	6	11	4	
UTU	45	11	24%	3	1	40	5	
OCAW	24	4	17%	4	0	12	1	
UNITE	5	0	0%	7	0	5	0	
USWA	31	0	0%			13	2	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>30</b>	
<b>Canada</b>								
CAW	4	1	25%			3	0	
IAM	8	1	13%	2	1	9	0	
USWA	5	1	20%		1	6	1	
<b>Canada total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>New Zealand</b>								
EU	4	1	25%			2	0	
MWU	1	0	0%			1	0	
SFWU	2	0	0%					
<b>N.Z. total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14%</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>United Kingdom</b>								
AEEU	4	0				5	0	
RMT	5	0				5	1	
TGWU	5	0				3	0	
<b>UK total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>				<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMW — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

# Magazine reflects rich cultural debate, says Cuban editor speaking in Boston

BY TED LEONARD  
AND ELENA TATE

BOSTON — "*La Gaceta de Cuba* strives to be a reflection of the cultural debates in the country," explained Norberto Codina, the editor of the Cuban magazine and a prize winning poet. *La Gaceta* is a magazine of art and culture published by the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. Codina has been invited to speak at campuses in half a dozen U.S. cities in the month of October. In Boston he addressed an audience of 100 people, most of them students, on October 6 at Tufts University and another 50 people at Emerson College the following night. He also spoke at the University of Massachusetts.

In his presentation at Tufts University, Codina explained the development of Cuban culture since the 1959 revolution by tracing the various stages of *La Gaceta* over the same period.

The first years of *La Gaceta*, which began publishing in 1962, were its "romantic stage," he said, reflecting the early years of the revolution. In 1959, the struggle led by the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and brought a workers and farmers government to power, which over the following years began charting a course toward socialism.

The 1970s saw a "change in the contents" of *La Gaceta*, Codina said. "There was a restraining of cultural debate. Culture was approached in a schematic way, like socialist realism." During that period, many of the economic planning and management policies of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union were copied in Cuba, with negative social and political consequences. In the '70s, *La Gaceta* became known for being "heavy and dense," Codina said.

In the 1980s, as a new generation began to reject this course, the magazine turned into its opposite. "It was the magazine of writers and artists," he said, "but you only saw actors and actresses who were in vogue on the cover. It became known for being 'light.'"

"Towards the end of the 1980s the editors decided to reclaim the magazine's original goals and sought the participation of youth to do so." In 1990, however, when economic trade with the Soviet Union disappeared practically overnight, Cuba faced a severe economic crisis, which became known as the Special Period. *La Gaceta* stopped publication for two years, due to the lack of paper and other resources.

## Inventing solutions to economic crisis

At Emerson College, in response to a question about the effects of the Special Pe-

riod on culture in Cuba, Codina said that economic limitations on the visual arts had been very severe. "The greatest impact has been on film, which is a luxury industry, as far as Third World countries are concerned. Cuban painters had to invent solutions to cope with the shortages — they would manufacture their own brushes and create their own paints."

Today, through contributions and subscription sales, *La Gaceta* is nearly self-sufficient. And, as Codina put it, the magazine "attempts to put oxygen into the Cuban cultural climate."

"What is your aim in the distribution of your magazine in the United States?" Codina was asked. "Our objectives are several," he replied. "We want to disseminate the cultural production inside the country.... Our intentions are to build bridges — between the United States and Cuba and with the Cuban community in the U.S. and Cuba."

A student at Emerson College asked, "What aspects of the revolution do you love, and are proud of, and how has it helped artists?"

"I'm most proud of the movement to establish schools of art in Cuba. They make it possible for artists to be only 25 years old and be a full-time professional," Codina said. "As for the revolution in general, I am most proud that Cuba has been able to maintain

its independence of the United States," he added. The audience responded with applause.

In response to a question about the content of the cultural debate in the pages of the magazine, Codina described the controversy around a number of plays in the 1997 National Theater Festival. Several plays were "sharply criticized by Cuban publications, which devised theories of what was correct or not correct in political presentations." *La Gaceta* solicited varying points of view and printed the debate. That issue "sold out immediately."

A second example occurred last year. At the time the remains of Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution who was murdered in Bolivia in 1967 by the Bolivian army in collaboration with Washington, were returned to Cuba along with those of several of his Cuban, Bolivian, and Peruvian comrades. A young filmmaker released a movie that metaphorically dealt with the necessity and manipulation of myths. It included images of Jesus Christ, John Lennon, John F. Kennedy, and Che Guevara. The film was harshly criticized in Cuba for its treatment of Guevara. The picture was also criticized in *La Gaceta*, but for its artistic merit, not content. Codina declared that Cuban society needs a "culture of criticism and debate."

## New Gaceta on Blacks in Cuban culture

Codina said that a new issue of the bi-monthly magazine was about to come out. It covers many aspects of popular culture, especially "the participation and valuable contribution of Blacks in Cuban culture."

He explained that the revolution improved the conditions of life for Blacks in Cuba. "All the laws favor Blacks. A Cuban may acknowledge that he is *machista*, but he would never acknowledge in public that he was a racist. But, racist prejudices still exist." An example he pointed to is the small number of Blacks in Cuban TV shows.

The event at Tufts University, which was part of Hispanic Heritage Month, was sponsored by the Hispanic Center, the Romance Languages Department, and the Latin American Studies Program. Three people attending the meeting decided to subscribe to *La Gaceta de Cuba*.

The Honors Program at Emerson College and Amigos, a Latino student group, sponsored the program at that campus. Napoleon Henderson-Jones, an artist who operates an Afro-American art museum that Codina visited, also participated in the meeting.

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Elena Tate is a member of the Young Socialists.

## Detroit forum: 'Stop the deportations!'

BY GARY BOYERS  
AND ROSA GARMENDÍA

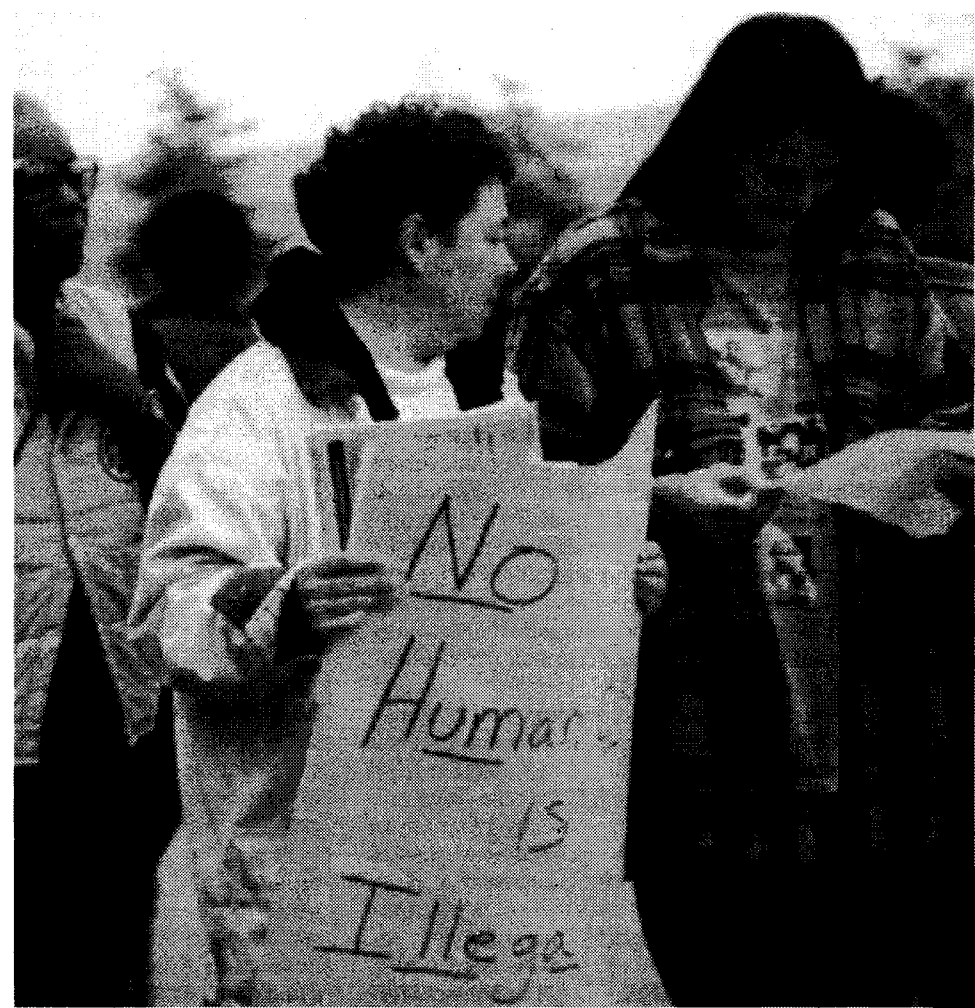
DETROIT — In response to stepped up deportations here, a speak out demanding an end to deportations and the defense of immigrant workers took place at the Militant Labor Forum October 2.

As of September 26, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents had seized nearly 20 percent more immigrants this year than in all of 1998. Before November 1995, a Chicago immigration judge would spend one week a month in Detroit. Now there are three full-time judges in Detroit hearing immigration cases. In September, INS agents raided two Detroit-area auto parts plant, arresting 18 people. Another 47 workers were arrested by immigration cops at an auto plant and a commercial nursery in western Michigan. The most recent raid was at a Detroit meat processing plant where 70 people were arrested.

One of the speakers on the panel, Father Greg May of Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in southwest Detroit, said, "This past week, a man was seized from our church auditorium at an ESL [English as a second language] class and was deported. Two other people were seized at the bakery opposite our church that same day. They were released when they showed their green cards" indicating permanent resident status. He explained the increased harassment has caused citizens and permanent residents to fear immigration officials. "We've initiated a campaign to protest harassment of legal residents and to inform undocumented workers of their rights to silence and legal counsel," May said.

A community activist and organizer for the Service Employees International Union, Helena Herrera, expressed the view that "we can't allow our community to be attacked or divided, whether they are illegal or not. My grandfather was recruited by Henry Ford to come to Detroit to work at the Rouge [auto] plant. During the Depression, my grandfather and thousands of others were repatriated to Mexico. Deported with them were their children, who like my father, were often U.S. citizens. Many never returned to the United States."

Matt Monroe, a paralegal working at a center for political refugees seeking asylum in the United States and Canada, described a Mexican worker who came there after being stabbed, not sure if he should go to the police or the hospital because of his lack of legal status. Another man came into Monroe's office looking for help finding his son, who had been picked up in a raid. By the time Monroe was able to reach an INS officer, about 12 hours after the raid, he was told the son was on a plane en route to



Militant/Jay Ressler

Above Holly Harkness (center), SWP candidate for Congress in the 15th District, joins October 9 demonstration in Detroit against INS cop raids.

Mexico.

Also speaking at the forum was Holly Harkness, who worked at the Thorn Apple Valley meatpacking plant in Detroit before it closed in July of this year. Harkness is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in the 15th District. She described the September 23 INS raid at Thorn Apple Valley's processing plant, which remains open. INS cops came onto the plant floor and seized 70 workers, 36 of whom were deported. United Food and Commercial Workers Local 26, which represents workers there, issued no protest or complaint, even though the raid occurred as negotiations for a new contract were underway.

Harkness spoke of other immigration raids in the area. Cattleman's, another UFCW-organized packing plant, was raided twice in the past year. All the Latino workers were called into the company's personnel office for interrogation by INS officials.

She said there are "attacks on immigrants in every major capitalist country in the

world" and that the "U.S. policy is not designed to cut off undocumented workers or to seal the border. The bosses need these workers to super exploit in the worst jobs.... These raids create divisions in our class, turning workers against each other."


"Many immigrants bring class-struggle experiences from other countries here with them," Harkness added, strengthening the working class as a whole.

The speak out attracted 22 people, more than a third of whom were Latino. Among them was a worker from the processing plant targeted by the INS September 23. He described being detained by the cops before he proved he was a legal resident.

He also told of a woman co-worker who was handcuffed and thrown on the floor by the *migra* agents. She, too, was later released after showing her papers. Harkness and Herrera encouraged participants to build and attend a protest at the local INS office, which will be part of the Latinos United in Labor conference November 7.

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# Titan Tire strikers deepen outreach

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa — Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) on strike against Titan Tire have stepped up efforts to win support for their fight.

The strike expanded to a second plant owned by Titan boss Maurice Taylor Jr. when 500 members of USWA Local 303L in Natchez, Mississippi, walked out September 15, joining the battle of USWA Local 164 in Des Moines. The 670 unionists here have been on the picket lines since May 1. The main issues are forced overtime, cancelled pension and health-care benefits for retirees, and two-tier wages.

The Natchez plant was recently acquired by Titan through the bankruptcy courts. The strike there began when Titan demanded contract concessions from Local 303L.

On September 23, Local 164 striker Linda Burgess spoke at the monthly meeting of USWA Local 7263 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The previous month, members of Local 7263, who work at North Star Steel, voted to invite a representative from the Titan strike to the next regular meeting, and to organize a collection for the strikers.

Burgess has worked at Titan for 18 years. She told the Minnesota steelworkers about the conditions that led workers at the tire plant to strike, including working 26 days straight with no time off. She reported, to the approval of all present, how the new strike in Natchez is throwing a monkey wrench into one of Titan's key tactics — pressuring Local 164 with threats of moving production out of Des Moines.

Earlier in the day Burgess participated in a plant gate collection with members of Local 7263. With little advance notice, local members contributed close to \$500 to the Titan strikers. The local also made a contribution from its funds.

Local 164 members have been hand billing at farm trade shows around the Midwest where Titan displays its products. Marty Middleswart, a tire mold machinist with 33 years in the Des Moines plant, was part of the team that went to the Farm Progress Show held in Windfall, Indiana, September 29–October 1.

"We explained that the strike is not a money issue — it's a moral issue, about how Taylor treats his employees," Middleswart said. "Before the strike we were working 26 days on and two days off, and some of us up to 84 hours a week. We got a good response from farmers who took our flyers."

Middleswart noted that Titan was working overtime to make a good impression at the show, donating tires for a benefit auction for the Future Farmers of America, an organization involving the children of farmers. "But we were really getting under Taylor's skin."

One display, for Steiger tractors, was staffed by union workers from that company's plant in Fargo, North Dakota. They promised the Local 164 strikers that they would take flyers back to their United Auto Workers local and spread the word.

Middleswart has also participated in the USWA organizing drive at Titan Wheel in Quincy, Illinois. He's looking forward to going to more farm shows. "Any time I can be a thorn in Taylor's side, I'll be there. I always have my car full of gas, ready to go."

Strikers from Local 303L will be hand billing at the Farmer-Stockman Show in Lubbock, Texas, October 13–15, and at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition in Moultrie, Georgia, October 20–22.

Three Local 164 strikers participated in the October 11 action in Virden, Illinois, marking the 1898 "Battle for Virden," when coal miners fought police to defend their newly formed union at the Chicago-Virden Coal Company. United Mine Workers of America members on strike at Freeman United mines in Virden and elsewhere participated in the commemoration.

In an October 5 press release, Titan threatened to hire an additional 200 strikebreakers in Des Moines, and claimed that more than 1,100 applications were received for strikebreakers in Natchez. At the same time, the company admitted that "the strike will im-



Militant/Joe Swanson

**Picket line at Titan Tire plant, Des Moines, Iowa. Strikers are reaching out to other workers for solidarity across the Midwest and elsewhere.**

part Titan's earnings."

A trial began October 13 in Des Moines concerning unfair labor practices charges issued against Titan by the National Labor Relations Board September 15. The complaint details Titan's violation of labor law, including threats to replace strikers; cutting off medical benefits to union members who were ill, disabled, or pregnant at the start of the strike; and refusing to negotiate.

Meanwhile, contract negotiations are

under way in Uruguay between Titan and the main union federation. The company acquired the FUNSA tire plant there in June 1998.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 in Des Moines and is the Socialist Workers candidate for Secretary of Agriculture. John Hawkins, a member of USWA Local 7263 in St. Paul, contributed to this article.

## Nebraska protest hits INS deportation plan

BY MAGGIE TROWE  
AND ELVIDIO MEJIA

OMAHA, Nebraska — A group of Latino activists and others organized a press conference here September 17 to protest a new program by immigration police designed to deport undocumented workers from meatpacking plants in Nebraska. The program, called "Operation Prime Beef," was announced by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Nebraska the previous week.

"Operation Prime Beef" establishes a new standard of making a human being be unwanted, unappreciated, undesired, unwelcomed, and unloved," stated Father Stanley Kasun, associate pastor of St. Agnes and Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church in Omaha, at the press conference.

Through the new program the INS plans to subpoena employment records for more than 100 packing plants in Nebraska, and then turn over to the company names of workers whom they deem "illegal." Then the INS will visit the plants to interview, arrest, and deport the workers. INS officials aim to have the plan in full operation by the end of this year or in early 1999.

Another speaker at the protest press conference, Ben Salazar, is publisher of *Nuestro Mundo*, a Latino community newspaper. Salazar, whose paper has denounced the program, said it has racial overtones, targeting mostly Latino workers.

Others at the press conference included Lourdes Gouveia, associate professor of sociology and director of the Chicano/Latino Studies Program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Sarah Crawford, a member of the Nebraska Mexican American Commission. Michael Went, assistant deputy director of the INS in Nebraska, came to defend the government policy.

The INS fact sheet on "Operation Prime Beef" reads, "Instead of primarily arresting groups of undocumented aliens, as the INS has historically done, the agency is aiming to remove the magnet that initially draws them to the Midwest: employment." The statement calls the program a "partnership with top managers in the meat packing/processing industry."

This procedure is already in place in some Iowa plants, such as the Swift plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, where the INS regularly is allowed to inspect employee files.

Rito Rayas, who worked at the BeefAmerican plant in Norfolk, Nebraska, until it was shut down in July, explained in an October 11 interview that the INS arrested 110 workers at the MPS ham-processing plant last October, and 13 this year at the plant where he currently works.

Román García, 36, who works in a hide processing plant, said "Our bosses use the supervisors and the INS police to terrorize us." García said that his supervisor came to workers on their break to complain that they had missed some pieces when the line was going very fast. "The supervisor told us, 'You are here to work, not to sleep on the line. If you don't want to work, you know where the door is, and I have dozens of applications on my desk of people waiting to take your job.' And we know if we complain, the INS will be waiting for us outside."

Kasun said several groups, including Nebraska Farm Workers Association, *Nuestro Mundo*, and the Latino Forum, are considering challenging Operation Prime Beef in a civil suit.

## Demonstrators in Miami demand gov't grant legal status to Haitians

BY BRIGITTE SÉGUIN

MIAMI—In early October, U.S. congressional leaders rejected including as part of a spending bill a provision that could grant residency status to up to 40,000 Haitians in the United States.

These include Haitians who applied for asylum before 1995. The measure had been approved by a House committee on September 28.

Last year Congress passed a bill that is supposed to grant residency to some 150,000 Nicaraguans and other benefits to Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Eastern European immigrants.

After Haitians were excluded from that bill,

several major demonstrations were organized in Miami in protest. The largest drew more than 5,000 people, mostly Haitians, and others involved up to 3,000. At least one demonstration demanding equal treatment for Haitian immigrants was also held in Washington, D.C.

In a letter to the editors of the *Miami Herald* on October 9 Marlène Bastien from the group Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miami (Haitian Women of Miami) explained, "If the bill does not pass, hundreds of Haitian families that for years have lived, worked, paid taxes, bought property, and developed businesses here will face deportation to Haiti, a country struggling to maintain its fragile economy. Things in Haiti are even worse now after Hurricane Georges, which created havoc and widespread devastation."

Several days before the latest government move against Haitians living in the U.S. about 350 people, overwhelmingly Haitians, demonstrated in Little Haiti.

They chanted "What do we want? — Equal treatment," and "When do we want it? — Now!" and in Creole "*Nou campe dwat, nou pa fè bak, fòk nou jwen green card*" (We stand strong, we won't go back,

we must get our green cards). The crowd closed 54th Street for two blocks as they carried candles and marched up and down the street.

The demonstration was announced on several Haitian radio programs. Many people heard about it that same day and some drove from other cities to attend the protest.

"We have been working hard for 12 months," said Jean-Robert Lafortune, leader of the Haitian Immigration Task Force Grassroots Coalition. "But we need to continue. It's time to take the battle into our hands and not wait for other people."

The Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Florida, Ernest Mailhot said that "the only reason Congress is discussing the bill is because of demonstrations like this one. Both the Democrats and Republicans are responsible for the denial of residency to Haitian immigrants," he said.

"We not only call for residency status for the 40,000 Haitians who may be covered by this bill but for full rights and equality for all immigrants" stated Mailhot. The Socialist Workers campaign calls for the immediate end of all deportations.

### 200 rally for immigrant rights in Washington, D.C.

BY TOM HEADLEY

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some 200 people marched and rallied in Unity Park in defense of immigrant rights and against INS raids and harassment here October 10. "*Alto a las redadas!*" (Stop the raids!), "*Latino, escucha, unete a la lucha!*" (Latino, listen, join the struggle!), and "*Aquí estamos y no nos vamos y si nos echan, regresamos!*" (We're here, we're not leaving, and if they throw us out, we'll come back) were among the slogans chanted by the demonstrators. The demonstrators, most of them but not all Latino, were addressed by speakers, musicians, and poets at the rally site in both Spanish and English.

This was part of a national week of protests against INS raids, with actions taking place in nearly 30 cities, said Sasha Khokha, spokesperson for the National INS Raids Task Force of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. Khokha said the Network also plans to present a report to Congress on October 14, which will document INS abuses, including how INS raids have been used to undermine labor organizing efforts.

#### Calendar deadline

The 'Militant' welcomes announcements for upcoming events of interest to our readers. Please send notice at least ten days before the event. Items received by noon each Wednesday will appear in the issue printed the following day.

# Youth in California demand 'education not incarceration'

BY ALARIC DIRMMEYER

SAN LEANDRO, California — Chanting, "Education not incarceration," 2,500 San Francisco Bay Area high school students marched through this city October 1. The students — who came from San Francisco, Oakland, Daly City, Pittsburg, and Concord — had walked out of school earlier that morning to voice their demands for more funding for education, for the immediate creation of ethnic studies courses, in defense of bilingual education, and against the growing scapegoating and imprisonment of young people, especially working-class youth and those of oppressed nationalities.

The students converged on San Leandro to protest and highlight a recently constructed Alameda County police substation here. Many of the demonstrators noted that in the last 10 years the California state government has built 19 prisons or youth detention centers but only one university.

Another demand of the protest was to stop the passage of Senate Bill 10, currently on

the floor of the state senate. This bill would extend the practice of trying minors as adults and housing youth in adult prisons, allow students to be suspended from school for up to six months for use of tobacco, and establish a precedent of juvenile arrest records being open for review by college officials.

The vast majority of the marchers were Black, Chicano, or Latin American, and quite young. A number of the protesters had never taken part in such an action before. Many carried handwritten signs with statements like, "We want our history in the schools," "Ghetto Revolution," "Danger: Educated Chicanas," and "Raza Studies Now," as well as slogans protesting police repression.

The rally was organized by Olin, an organization of students and other youth that has members in most Bay Area high schools. "Olin" is Mayan for movement. The group includes many veterans of the struggles in recent years for affirmative action, immigrant rights, and against police brutality.



Some 2,500 Bay Area high school students rally in San Leandro, California, October 1 to defend affirmative action and education funding, and to protest youth incarceration.

Ivan García, a junior at Skyline High School who helped organize the march, explained its purpose. "We were speaking out on how bad the situation is, how so many youth end up in prisons, the overcrowding of our schools, [and] the racism towards la Raza by administration," he said.

Olin called a previous rally in April with similar demands of more money for education and defending bilingual education. That event, which took place at the site of a new

police station in Concord, drew 2,000 people. García said Olin's plan following the latest rally is to keep exerting pressure against school boards. "We'll be going to their meetings demanding ethnic studies. Right now we don't learn anything about our roots or culture. If they don't move, then more walkouts."

Alaric Dirmeyer is a member of the San Francisco Young Socialists.

## — YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

# YS campaigns for socialism, joins abortion rights fight

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, P.O. Box 20568, Los Angeles, CA 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. Email: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY SARAH KATZ

CHICAGO — At the Mexican Day Parade in Chicago, supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign met a group of students from Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, who were interested in hearing from socialist candidates. They set up a meeting for me to come speak to their group, the Left Student Network. Eleven students attended the September 28 event.

I opened the discussion with brief remarks about how communists see the world today,

starting with the accelerating resistance of workers and young people to the crisis of capitalism.

One student raised that he thinks the main problem in the world today is the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He pointed to the apparent financial control that it has over developing nations. We discussed how the IMF is one of the tools of capitalism, not a power in and of itself. It is used by the biggest banks of the imperialist countries to keep the so-called "emerging nations" in continued debt and suck ever greater wealth out of these countries into the coffers of world finance capital.

Another student asked if my co-workers know about my campaign and what their reaction is. I described how the campaign brochure had been passed around the lunch table one day. Most of those co-workers are from Yugoslavia and are excited to see a socialist running for office.

We also talked about the hypocrisy of the U.S. government, claiming to be fighting "terrorism" by bombing Sudan and Afghanistan. One student pointed out that the so-called terrorist training bases in Afghanistan were built by the U.S. government when they supported militias in Afghanistan against Moscow and the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

After further discussion I asked the group if they were interested in participating in activities together with the Socialist Workers campaign. I pointed to the upcoming Militant Labor Forums happening at the Chicago Pathfinder Bookstore, the current strike by coal miners in southern Illinois and the September 11 rally they were building, as well as the tour this month of Norberto Codina, editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, a Cuban magazine of arts and culture.

When the meeting ended several students stayed to continue the discussion and look at the literature table of Pathfinder books we brought with us. One of the organizers of the event is interested in having us back at the campus to set up a literature table and have a class on a Pathfinder book.

Back in Chicago, through the *Militant* subscription drive, we've met a number of young people who are interested in Che Guevara. They have recently read one of the books written by Jon Lee Anderson or Jorge Castañeda on Che Guevara, and are curious about their descriptions of Che's political life and character. This prompted the topic of the Militant Labor Forum for October 9, "Che Guevara: Myth vs. Reality." Betsey Stone, one of the panelists, took up a number of the myths and slanders both books have helped to perpetuate, including the allegation that Fidel Castro sent Che to die in Bolivia. In conjunction with this, the YS has organized classes on the Pathfinder pamphlet *Socialism and Man in Cuba* and will continue with the article "Socialism: a viable option" by Cuban communist José Ramón Balaguer in *New International* no 11.

Sarah Katz is a YS member in Chicago and Socialist Workers candidate for Lieutenant Governor in Illinois.

BY ELENA TATE

BOSTON — Some 40 supporters of women's right to choose abortion gathered here October 4 to protest the so-called "Respect Life March," a benefit march for area anti-choice groups, including Operation Rescue Boston.

The protest action was a kickoff for a month of activities, sponsored by the Abor-

tion Access Project, demanding access to an abortion for all women who want one.

Those protesting the misnamed Respect Life March honored the people who have died as a result of anti-choice policies and violence. Signs and chants highlighted the real price paid in women's lives that attacks on abortion rights cost. Protesters held signs which read: "Over 200,000 women died from illegal abortion before *Roe v. Wade*." *Roe v. Wade* is the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States in 1973. The ruling was a result of the women's liberation movement in the early 1970s.

"Spring Adams was murdered by parental consent laws," and "Rosie Jiménez was murdered by the Hyde Amendment, October 3, 1977" were other signs held by protesters. Though abortion had been made legal in 1973, Jiménez died at the hands of a back-alley abortionist because the 1976 Hyde Amendment cut off federal Medicaid funding for safe abortions.

One of the most popular chants among the protesters, young women in their majority, was: "Right to life, your name's a lie. You don't care if women die!"

The anti-choice walk drew several thousand marchers from throughout Massachusetts who gathered in the public commons before marching through the city in contingents with banners, many from high school and university student clubs and churches.

One of the pro-choice protesters, Rebecca Gerstein, said that she was there because a woman's right to choose abortion is a cause that she believes in. Of the march she said, "It's horrifying to see that many people. I wish we had more. I think what will defend women's rights in the long term is more people."

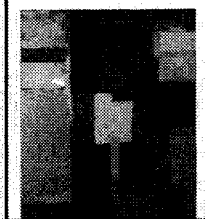
María Guerrero told the *Militant* as she was purchasing a copy of the paper that she was there because she "was sick of just sitting around and saying I was pro-choice, and not doing anything."

Upcoming events in Boston to mark October as "abortion access action month" include a mobilized pro-choice presence in front of the Planned Parenthood Clinic when Operation Rescue is demonstrating there; a film premiere about the ongoing struggle for safe, legal abortion in Pensacola, Florida, after the 1995 slayings of abortion providers there; a nursing students for choice conference; and a rally co-sponsored by the Association of Haitian Women to demand health-care access (including abortion) for all women.

Elena Tate is a Young Socialists member in Boston.

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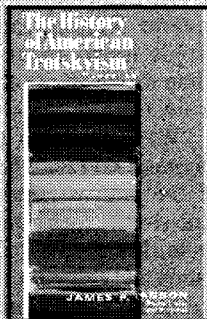
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# The Young Socialists Manifesto

## Documents in 'New International' kick off discussion for YS convention

Below we reprint the "Young Socialists Manifesto," which is published in the newly released issue no. 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International*. This document was written in April 1998 by members of the Young Socialists chapter in Los Angeles. It is a set of working notes, the product of several chapter discussions, drafted as the members clarified for themselves the character and activity of their organization and the necessity of its political relationship to the Socialist Workers Party, the communist vanguard party in the United States.

The "manifesto," as it was soon named, became the center of discussion at a West Coast regional conference hosted by the California Young Socialists chapters in San Francisco September 5-6.

It appears in *New International*, and here, together with the "Aims of the Young Socialists," the opening section of a document entitled the "Young Socialist Organizer," adopted by the second national convention of the Young Socialists in Atlanta, Georgia, March 28-30, 1997.

The California regional conference called the third national convention of the Young Socialists, to be held in Los Angeles, December 4-6, 1998, and placed both documents before the Young Socialists to initiate pre-convention discussion in every chapter.



### YOUNG SOCIALISTS MANIFESTO

#### A. What does it mean to be a part of a functioning chapter of the Young Socialists in Los Angeles?

1. Political context provided by Jack Barnes in *New International* no. 10, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."

a. In recent past, harder for young fighters "to see how they could link up with a social force, with the working class and labor movement, that had the power to bring about change . . . harder yet for them to connect up with a broader tradition of struggle" in the working class (p. 222). But today there exists an open field where the YS can function as a revolutionary youth organization.

b. "... more young people today . . . are becoming interested in politics and are willing to fight. They hate the consequences of capitalism . . . the racism, the police brutality, the attacks on women's rights, the destruction of the environment, the unemployment, the wars and threats of war. . . . Wherever there is resistance to oppression and exploitation, they want to join the battle" (p. 225).

c. "... seek to politically convince every young rebel we can, before he or she becomes committed to crank ideas, is pulled toward the radical right, or simply comes to terms over time with capitalism and sinks back into workaday life in bourgeois society" (p. 235).

d. "... I am raising something different: that we cannot think about the world clearly today without the beginnings of motion toward a youth organization. Why is this so? Because in addition to the working-class experience, composition, and continuity without which any communist organization will go off the rails politically, there are also points in history at which so much is changing so rapidly that even the best fighters will be disoriented unless they can break from habits of thought developed in the past and see the world through the eyes of a generation just awakening to political life" (p. 236).

e. YS attempting to understand our place within this context as a real, functioning chapter that is increasing its level of political activity and recruitment.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

The Young Socialists Manifesto calls for taking advantage of opportunities to participate with others in political activity, from resistance on the job to defense of affirmative action. Above, YS members take part in an August 21 emergency demonstration in Los Angeles that they helped organize to protest Washington's bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan.

#### B. Increasing political activity of the Los Angeles chapter of Young Socialists

1. Political involvement with youth and students

a. Community, plant-gate, and campus sales teams: California State University, Los Angeles (CSLA), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), United Airlines, door-to-door subscription drive campaign for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*

b. Hands Off Iraq political work: Occidental College, UCLA, and picket lines

c. YS Class Series: weekly classes at bookstore and Occidental

d. Welcome Back from Kosova, Havana, and Cairo Conference: bringing interested youth to the conference to discuss talks by party and YS leaders, and involvement and responsibility, including financial, by YS members

e. Socialist Workers campaign: upcoming campaigning for SWP candidates, one of whom is a YS member from LA

f. Jobs and the proletarianization of the Young Socialists

#### C. Building a stronger YS chapter: Recruitment and contacts

a. How to win youth to a working-class perspective: "Take advantage of any political opening. . . . Join demonstrations and other protests that take place; take part in whatever resistance there is on the job; go onto campus to meet whoever we can; get socialist literature around as broadly as possible. . . . To present the socialist alternative. . . . [And] basing what we do on an objective, thought-out understanding of politics

b. and a disciplined and sustainable, a proletarian, approach to organization. [Otherwise] we will end up frittering away our accomplishments and disorganizing our work" (p. 228).

1. by taking a more conscious approach at being a part of building a variety of youth-led actions

2. YS classes/education: Pathfinder arsenals, *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial*

3. Steady, patient political work to win new members

4. Maintaining focus within broader youth and student coalitions

c. Clarity in defining the Young Socialists

1. YS is not a "turn" organization

2. Fast-track vs. quality political recruitment

d. How does the YS function in rela-

tion to the party?

1. Committee work with SWP

2. Different and auxiliary organization

3. Working on *Militant* articles with comrades

e. Campaign for Socialist Workers Party candidates

"For the young Marx and Engels, joining this organization of revolutionary-minded workers was a necessary step in recognizing themselves as actors in history who, in order to be effective in politics, needed to be part of the vanguard movement of a class" (p. 231).



### AIMS OF THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS

The central aim of the Young Socialists is to participate in the fight to establish a workers and farmers government that will abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide fight for socialism. The YS strives to win young fighters to our political perspective, that of revolutionary socialism. We educate ourselves and other fighters with the history and lessons of the working class and apply these to the skirmishes and small-scale struggles that break out today in preparation for the major class battles ahead of us. Our political program and activity stem from 150 years of the modern class struggle and the principles developed by the revolutionary workers move-

ment.

We also recognize that a youth organization cannot lead workers and their allies in the overthrow of the capitalist class and the conquest of a workers and farmers government. A mass revolutionary party of the Leninist type is needed. Our work is aimed to help facilitate the building of such a party. To that end, we collaborate and have fraternal relations with the Socialist Workers Party, the nucleus of such a party in the United States.

The Young Socialists is organizationally independent and politically subordinate to the Socialist Workers Party. We look to the Socialist Workers Party and its experience and continuity in the class struggle, which can be traced back to Marx and Engels, for political leadership. The Socialist Workers Party, along with the Young Socialists, make up the nucleus of the proletarian vanguard in this country. The SWP and YS have a structured, formal, organizational relationship, conducted through our respective National Committees and their elected executive bodies — the SWP Political Committee and the YS National Executive Committee. On a local level, Young Socialists chapters and branches of the SWP coordinate our work through the elected leadership bodies of the chapters and branches — the executive committees of those organizations.

The way we organize ourselves flows from our political aims. In order to effectively carry out our goals, the YS must be a cohesive and disciplined organization. We have adapted democratic centralism, used by the vanguard party, to the needs of the YS as the method for carrying out our aims.

Democracy is a method of reaching decisions, which requires organized discussion, debate, and a vote. The positions adopted by majority vote are the positions all YS members carry out in a centralized way. Majority rule is fundamental to the concept of democratic centralism. The minority may maintain its disagreements and raise them at the appropriate time within the organization, but is bound by the majority decision and the YS engages in political activity united and with a common purpose. This maintains both internal democracy and the ability of the organization to act with unity. This is based on fundamental agreement with the political program and principles of the YS, laying the foundation for discipline.

Membership is based on political agreement with the principles of the YS and active participation in the work of the organization. Responsibilities of membership include attending weekly chapter meetings, payment of monthly dues, and carrying out the work of the chapter on a weekly basis.

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

Jack Barnes

Also

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### Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

Jack Barnes

"There will be new Hitlers, new Mussolinis. That is inevitable. What is not inevitable is that they will triumph. The working-class vanguard will organize our class to fight back against the devastating toll we are made to pay for the capitalist crisis. The future of humanity will be decided in the contest between these contending class forces." Jack Barnes, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."

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# Striking miners rally in southern Illinois

Continued from front page

gust 1 of this year. The UMWA miners agreed to work for weeks, until it became clear that Freeman was not going to budge on its take-back demands. The strike includes UMWA Local 1969 at the Crown 2 mine in Virden, Local 12 at the Crown 3 mine in Farmersville, and Local 2488 at the Industry strip mine near Macomb.

## 1898 Battle for Virden

The rally in Virden was one of a number of events that weekend to support the strike and to commemorate the centennial of the Battle for Virden. One hundred years ago, miners in Virden fought back against the Chicago-Virden Coal Company's attempt to break their newly formed union. The company built a stockade around the mine, hired armed guards, and brought in Black coal miners from Alabama as strike breakers in an attempt to use racial divisions to defeat the miners union. As the company attempted to herd the train full of miners into the fortress on Oct. 12, 1898, company goons opened fire on the strikers and their supporters, including miners from the surrounding area who came to defend the union. The miners returned fire. In the battle that ensued, 12 people were killed, most of them union supporters.

The events commemorating this anniversary were sponsored by a number of unions and other organizations, including the Mother Jones Foundation, Illinois Labor History Society, UMWA District 12, Operating Engineers Local 148, and the Madison County Federation of Labor.

The featured speaker for all of the events was UMWA international president Cecil Roberts. These included a dinner October 10 at the University of Illinois-Springfield honoring Mother Jones, a well known fighter for the rights of miners and all workers in the late 1800s and early 1900s. More than 200 people came to the event, which raised more than \$1,000 for the Freeman strikers.

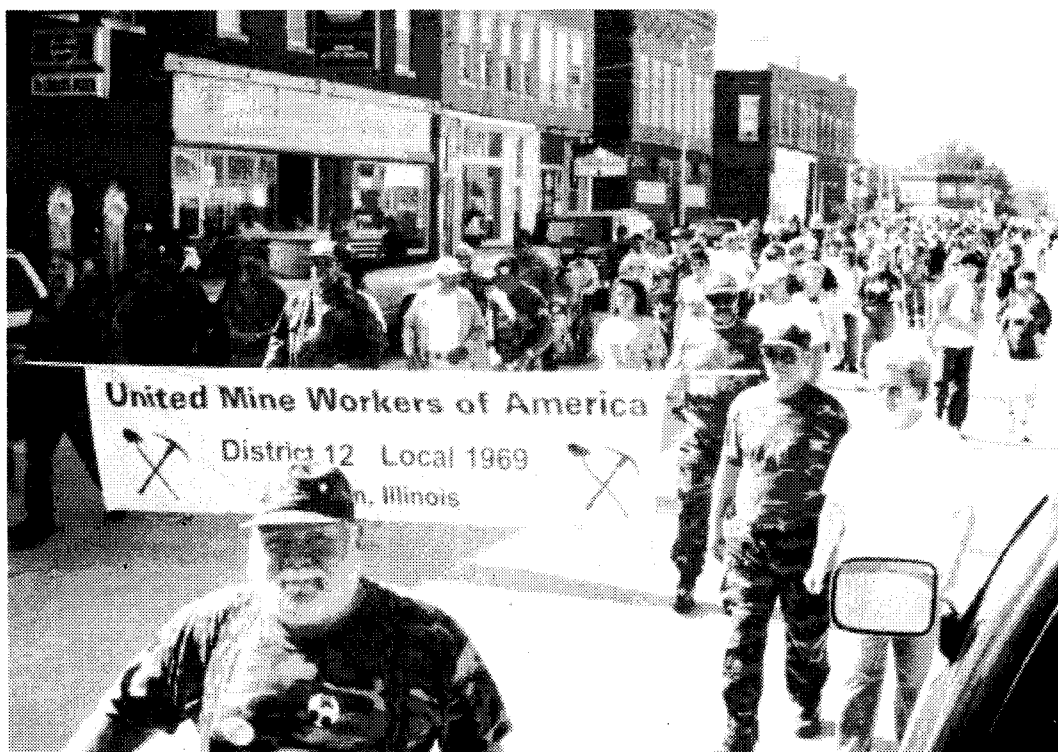
The next morning a ceremony was held at the "Miners Cemetery" in Mt. Olive, Illinois, where miners killed in the massacre, other union miners, and Mother Jones are buried. Family members of some of the miners buried there spoke along with organizers of the event. The mayor of Mt. Olive, a town of 2,800, told those gathered, "The town of Mt. Olive supports the miners on strike. We'll do anything for you."

Others in attendance were encouraged to say a few words. One of these was Bill Wheat, a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 974 from East Peoria, Illinois. Wheat is a member of the Tactical Response Team (Blue Shirts). He came in a car caravan with 15 other members of his local, which organizes workers at Caterpillar Corp. The Tactical Response Team was formed as part of the UAW's six-year battle against Caterpillar. Wheat explained, "What's happening to miners here is similar to what happened to us. I've walked many picket lines, including with miners.... Even though we have a contract, nothing has been settled at Caterpillar. We have a lot of people being injured inside."

Other unionists at the ceremony included members of the Teamsters, Service Employees International Union, United Steelworkers of America (USWA), Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), and several striking Freeman miners. After the event, participants caravanned 15 miles to Virden for the rally. Along the way, UMWA support signs could be seen in house lawns and on store windows.

Among the unionists who turned out for the support rally were workers involved in fights against the companies they work for. Five Teamsters from Anheuser-Busch in St. Louis came to back the striking miners and to win support for their contract fight. Dean Cook, an OCAW member locked out by Crown Central Petroleum near Houston, traveled to southern Illinois to show his local union's support for the miners and to explain the stakes in their struggle. The locked out Crown workers produced a button for the event that read, "DEFENDING WORKERS RIGHTS — The Locked Out Petroleum Workers in Solidarity with the Striking Miners." Also present were three members of the USWA Local 164 from Des Moines Iowa, who are on strike against Titan Tire.

Participants at the rally were taken on a walking tour of the site of the 1898 battle



Members of UMWA on strike at Freeman Coal march with supporters through the business district in Virden, Illinois, October 11 to win more solidarity and commemorate the 1898 Battle for Virden.

and treated to historic reenactments of the events. All were then invited to Farmersville for a rally and a hog roast later that day in the town park across the street from the UMWA strike headquarters. The solidarity event was sponsored by the three striking locals.

Roberts was the featured speaker at the rally. The strike at Freeman "is a fight for every single member of the UMWA, and if we have to we will make it the fight of every UMWA local," the union president said. "We call on all unionists, regardless of what union you are a member of, to join us in this fight and support this strike."

Denny Skeldon, president of UMWA Local 1613 at Exxon's Monterey Mine in southern Illinois, presented a check for \$5,000 dollars to the strikers' Miners Relief Fund on behalf of his local.

## 'Support for our strike has been great'

In the crowd were other miners from UMWA District 12 from southern Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky. Paul Perrine, 42, is a striking member of Local 1969 who has worked at Freeman for 21 years. He told the *Militant*, "The support for our strike has been great. It has done a lot to bring us all together and make us stronger." Perrine continued, "We've given our life and our lives

to the mines. Some of us have given 23 or more years to Freeman, and they just pitch us out. We want some dignity and respect. And I'll tell you this, we are not going to give up on this fight." Practically all of the miners these reporters talked with expressed the same sentiments.

David Yard, a member of Local 1969 who is part of the union's outreach committee, described some of the solidarity strikers have won. "We received two truckloads of food from sister UMWA locals in Indiana last week. I just got back today from addressing the union meeting of UAW Local 751 at Caterpillar in Decatur, and they are going to do a food drive and organize plant gate collections to support our strike. Early next month we've been asked to come back and address Local 751's retirees meeting."

Yard continued, "We've gotten contributions from individuals, businesses in town, and other unions. We received a \$1,000 dollar contribution from Teamsters Local 710 from Chicago, which organizes the UPS workers up there. We've gotten contributions as far away as Des Moines, Iowa. Tuesday we will be addressing Steelworkers Local 16 at Granite City Steel in Granite City, Illinois. Last week members from our Local 2488 over in Industry addressed a meeting in East Peoria of the Blue Shirts from UAW Local 974 at

Caterpillar. They took a collection at that meeting and raised \$200 and they promised to help us with our strike. That's why a lot of them came down here today."

Kenny Whetstone, a member of UAW Local 974 and the Tactical Response Team, told the *Militant*, "During our strike against Caterpillar the miners came to several of our rallies. This was an opportunity for us to come down and support them. We think it's important for all unions to support each others' fights."

At the Farmersville event, workers sat around tables enjoying the barbecue and music, discussing the day's activities, and getting to know more about each other. Barbara McCoy is a striking member of UMWA Local 1969. She's 52 years old and works at Freeman's Crown 2 mine, one of two women coal miners there. McCoy's uncle and grandfather were miners. "That's why I became a coal miner. I was in the right place at the right time," she said, noting that it wasn't easy for her as a woman when she first went into the mines. In the current strike, she said, some of her co-workers suggested she might feel more comfortable staffing the strike headquarters instead of the picket lines, in case there was any trouble. McCoy said she replied, "I am a coal miner, not the coal miners daughter." She went on, "I do the work, I make the money. My place is along side my fellow miners." McCoy said she is on active picket duty and helps out with other responsibilities for their strike.

The strike against Freeman United has entered its fifth week with no end in sight. In early October negotiations between the company and the union broke down with company representatives leaving the table.

The company has hired a security force called the Asset Security Team, a subsidiary of the notorious Vance International, to police the mining property. They shine spotlights on the pickets at night, and take photos and videos of the strikers and others who stop at the picket lines.

The strikers know they are in a tough fight. They have set up a support auxiliary and a food pantry and plan to keep reaching out for support from the community and other unions.

For information on the strike, to request a speaker from the striking miners, or to offer support, contact the UMWA Strike Headquarters, P.O. Box 107, Farmersville, Illinois 62533, or call (217) 227-3233.

Shelton McCrainey is a member of USWA Local 7999.

## 'It's not just low pay,' but how boss treats people, say strikers at Detroit sewing plant

BY CHARLES HANLON

DETROIT — "The insult that made us want to strike for the first time ever was when the owner initially offered us 39 cents over three years, after getting only 50 cents the previous three years," said Rebecca Burton, who has worked as a sewer for 22 years at John Johnson Textile Fabricators. "We make less than \$9 and it's not right. The supervisors get the bonuses and we don't get anything, and we do all the work. My husband works at Ford, but most of the people here are single mothers and we have to feed our kids. We have to stick together."

By a vote of 65 to 5, the members of UAW Local 417 voted September 25 to go on strike. The workers are demanding a \$1.70 pay increase over three years. Negotiations have stalled, with the owner offering only \$1 increase. Workers here cut and sew tarpaulins for semitrailers and canvas tops for Chrysler Jeeps. The strikers, most of whom are Black and Chicana women, get \$150 a week strike pay.

"It's not just the low pay, it's how he treats people," said Sandra Keller, a sewer with 16 years at the plant. She introduced Fred Cox, who was seriously injured on the job from lifting heavy rolls of cloth onto the cutting table manually when there was no jack available. "I have had three hernia operations and have no feeling below my hip on my left side, and I'm now on permanent work restrictions because of what I had to do," he said.

"After the injury they demoted me from a



Strikers picket John Johnson Textile Fabricators in Detroit October 12. The UAW members walked out at cutting and sewing plant demanding better pay and working conditions.

supervisor in the cutting room, cut my pay, cut my hours, and tried to dog me out. But I said I won't quit. How can I get a job anyplace else like this," said Cox, pointing to his limp leg. Cox added, "The owner spent a lot of money to refurbish the whole office and hired five new secretaries, but they say they have no money for our pay. All this is why we're on strike."

The workers said that locked out news-

paper workers have already walked the line with them and truckers have stopped at their picket line. Several strikers said they're trying to figure what can be done about struck work from being done at another plant run by the same owner called Canvas Products that is around the corner. The strikers welcome anyone to join their picket line at 1481 14th Street near downtown Detroit from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.



# Women discuss fight against discrimination at post office, refinery

BY LEA SHERMAN

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — About 35 women from across the state participated in the 1998 Texas state conference of the National Organization for Women (NOW) October 2-4.

A major theme of the meeting was the fight against discrimination in the workplace. The conference began with a picket line protesting sexual harassment and discrimination by the United States Post Office.

The demands of the picket, held in front of the San Antonio post office, included that postal officials cease sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation against women workers and settle numerous complaints pending before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Among the protesters were postal employees Vickie Louthen and Tillie Gonzales, the president and vice president of San Antonio NOW, respectively.

At the conference, Louthen and Gonzales were part of a workshop panel called "Working Together to Fight Employment Discrimination."

The panel of postal workers, both hourly and salaried, related the abuses and harassment they face on the job and their fight for equality, respect, and dignity.

The keynote speaker at the gathering was Sabrina Arellano, an attorney who has

worked with women fighting sexual discrimination at the post office. Arellano lauded NOW's work to "put political pressure on the [court] system for positive change" in relation to this fight.

Also participating in the convention were three members of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 4-227: Phyllis Miller, B.J. Case, and Karen Sloan. The unionists, who are also NOW members, have been locked-out at Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas, for more than two years. Miller and Sloan are also plaintiffs in an anti-discrimination lawsuit filed in June 1997 by eight union and salaried Crown employees.

Invited to speak after the keynote speech, Sloan, who worked at Crown for 19 years before the lockout, explained their fight. The class action suit points to a pattern and practice of race and gender discrimination, including charges that supervisors created and distributed racist and sexist handbills, maintained a discriminatory promotion policy, and encouraged a workplace hostile to Blacks and women. "There are so many things we've had to endure. We're fighting this corporate monster. We will not stop until we win," she said.

In February 1996, Crown locked out 252 union workers who resisted the company's proposals to eliminate 40 percent of the jobs, contract out work, and gut union seniority.



Militant/Lea Sherman

Participants in Texas state NOW conference discussed fights against sexist discrimination and harassment. Above from left are locked-out Crown refinery workers Phyllis Miller, B.J. Case, and Karen Sloan, with San Antonio NOW president Vickie Louthen and vice president Tillie Gonzales, who are both part of a racial discrimination and sexual harassment suit against U.S. Postal Service.

The refinery hired replacement workers, but the union members have never stopped fighting to get their jobs back, including holding daily pickets at the plantgate, rallies, participating in union solidarity events, and reaching out for support to organizations like the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and NOW. The OCAW members set up a table at the Texas NOW conference with literature and T-shirts on the Crown fight.

Participants at the meeting adopted two resolutions on the Crown struggle. One supported the fight to end the racist and sexist

discrimination at Crown, and the other urged the company to negotiate in good faith with the locked-out union workers.

Other workshops included "Survival as a Young Feminist," "Countdown to the 1998 Elections," and "Women's Rights are Human Rights."

At the end of the conference proceedings, participants joined a picket line in defense of women's right to choose abortion.

Lea Sherman is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 15 and the Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in the 29th C.D. in Texas.

## Steelworkers are determined in fight against Kaiser

Continued from front page  
major aluminum companies.

The USWA is charging Kaiser with numerous unfair labor practices that made reaching an agreement through negotiations impossible. This includes Kaiser making its contract offer contingent on the union not striking. In 1983 the USWA agreed to release Kaiser from its coordinated agreement with the "Big 3" aluminum companies — Alcoa, Reynolds, and Kaiser. Kaiser received wage and benefit concessions worth hundreds of millions of dollars, as well as what the USWA describes as "what amounted to a long-term, interest-free loan by accepting shares of the company's preferred stock instead of a portion of our wages."

As Kaiser regained profitability — earning \$168 million in 1997 — it broke its promise to restore workers to industry standards. Instead, the bosses demanded more concessions.

A nine-day strike in 1995 did nothing to resolve workers' demands for parity with aluminum workers at other companies. Dan Russell, a crane operator at Mead and President of USWA Local 329, explained that Kaiser started preparing for a showdown with the union from the day the last strike ended in 1995. The first day back, Russell said, the company made a speech saying, "We own you for eight hours." That's "quite an attitude after a strike," Russell noted.

Kaiser recently hired International Management Assistance Corp. (IMAC) to hire, train, house, and feed a scab workforce for its plants in Spokane and Tacoma. IMAC brags that it provides companies with "Total Strike Services."

Wes Beck, president of USWA Local 338 at Trentwood, estimates that "200 or 300 scabs" have been brought in by Kaiser. Living facilities were trucked in and set up on company property.

School buses with the windows covered periodically go through the gates at both Mead and Trentwood. In addition to the driver, an IMAC security guard rides in front with a video camera. Many strikers are skeptical that all these buses contain scabs, saying the company hopes the bus movement will demoralize the strikers.

Two days after the strike began, four workers filed a suit against Kaiser Aluminum, IMAC, and Construction Workforce Inc. (CWI) for assault, outrage and unlawful imprisonment. CWI is a subsidiary of IMAC, created to do business in Washington state. According to the October 3

Spokesman-Review Daniel Doughty, Jennifer Blanchard, Mary Knudsen and Todd Halvorsen, all from Cowlitz County in southwestern Washington, said they responded to a newspaper ad from CWI promising \$1,400 to \$4,000 a week in wages but were not told until they reached Spokane that they would be crossing a picket line.

Oliver Staley of *The Spokesman-Review* reports, "...the workers claim they were told by CWI employees to stay in their rooms until morning or they would have to leave immediately and pay for their transportation home."

During the night the workers claim they were again threatened when they reported their room phones were blocked. The two women, Staley reports, "said they were grabbed and shaken when they left the room to call their children."

Chris Rayson is a member of the United Transportation Union.

## Steelworkers delay ore delivery to Kaiser factory

BY LIEFF GUTTHIUDASCHMITT  
AND RICHARD DOLPH

TACOMA, Washington — Some 150 striking Steelworkers, their families, and supporters from the International Association of Machinists (IAM), United Transportation Union, and other unions rallied at Terminal 7 of the Port of Tacoma at 5:00 p.m. October 11. They were protesting the unloading of alumina ore from a ship. This ore is the basic raw material necessary for the production of smelted aluminum at Kaiser Aluminum's struck plants in Tacoma and Spokane.

This is the first ore ship to arrive since September 30, when the strike by members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) began. Pickets circled around the crane chanting, "Don't unload the ship!" and "Don't cross our line!" With the noisy protest under way, the crane operator felt he could not unload the ship safely and called for an arbitrator to rule on the matter. The protest continued as hours went by waiting for the arbitrator to arrive.

Two managers of the Port spoke to union officials at 9:00 p.m. after the arbitration meeting. Union forces regrouped and de-

BY TONY PRINCE

NEWARK, Ohio — Bill Vandiver, a maintenance worker and member of USWA Local 341 on the picket line at the Kaiser Aluminum plant here, described the main issues in the strike as, "union seniority and security. We also want a clause in the contract maintaining the union if the company is sold."

Gary Sykes, the president of Local 341, which has about 230 members, gave some background on the issues of the strike. In the early to mid-1980s, USWA members gave concessions that resulted in job losses and lower pay and benefits. Only now, in 1998, have wages risen to the 1985 level. When inflation is taken into account, the workers make much less than in 1985. The 1992 contract combined more jobs and work practices. In the face of further company demands for concessions, the union struck

briefly in 1995 and now again in 1998.

The ranks of the union are solidly behind the strike. Butch Davis, a casting operator with almost 25 years at Kaiser, said, "Before we went out we had only three people who took a salaried job. No one that we know of has crossed the line."

It was obvious that the company was pushing for a fight. Casting operator Jeff Casey said, "Before the strike began, at 5:20 p.m. last Wednesday [September 30], the company brought in two busloads of scabs from Cleveland and Detroit onto the property. Our strike didn't begin until 7:00 p.m."

"Management brought us into a meeting room last Wednesday showing us old safety films all night," added maintenance worker Greg Ritchie. "They didn't want us out there on the floor."

Kaiser has brought in the notorious strike-breaking firm of Vance Security to escort the scabs and keep the operation running. Several Vance thugs dressed in combat gear stood about 30 yards away from the strikers' picket shack.

Davis reflected the confidence of the workers on the picket line. "Labor's been down for a long time," he said, "but someday we're going to get big."

Tony Prince is a member of USWA Local 188.

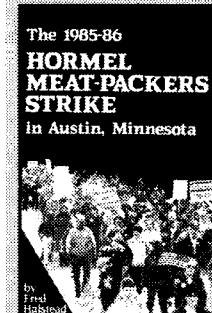
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Fred Halstead

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Lieff Gutthiudaschmitt is a member of IAM Lodge 79. Richard Dolph is a striking member of USWA Local 7945.

# Washington deepens Yugoslavia intervention

Continued from front page

Albanians in Kosova. It is to establish U.S. supremacy in Europe and create the conditions that one day will facilitate the restoration of capitalist social relations throughout the Yugoslav workers state.

The accord calls for 2,000 international "observers" and NATO noncombat reconnaissance flights to monitor withdrawal of troops and police from Kosova that Belgrade promised it will carry out. The monitors are to be deployed under the auspices of the Organization of Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE). The leading candidate to head up the mission is former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador William Walker, who was until recently in charge of the U.S.-led forces in the Krajina region of Croatia. U.S. State Department spokesperson James Rubin said NATO has contingency plans to send troops to get the monitors out of Kosova if needed. "They will have backing them up a force that we are trying to put together to extract them in extremis," Rubin stated October 14.

Milosevic has supposedly promised negotiations that would lead to some kind of autonomy for the province. The agreement proposes postponing settlement of Kosova's status for three years. The Milosevic regime revoked Kosova's autonomous status in 1989 and has since ruled the region with sheer force — banning the Albanian language from schools, firing tens of thousands of Albanians who refused to sign loyalty oaths from hospitals, government administration, and industry, and insulting and brutalizing Albanians on a daily basis. Belgrade vehemently opposes independence for Kosova, the main demand of the majority of Albanians there. Washington is also against independence.

The near launching of NATO air strikes heightened tensions between Washington and Moscow. The two governments are on a collision course over expansion of NATO to Eastern and Central Europe, reposition-

ing U.S. forces close to the Russian borders, and attempts by Washington to build a zone of domination and influence along Russia's southern flank, especially in the oil-rich former Soviet republics of the Caucasus region. Russian prime minister Yevgeny Primakov said NATO bombings would be a "tragic mistake" that would threaten cooperation between the two governments. Then Moscow recalled its representatives from NATO headquarters and a Russian general threatened to ship arms to Serbia. Primakov urged a negotiated solution.

The leadership of the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) announced a cease-fire in the wake of the accord as long as its forces and unarmed civilians are not attacked by Belgrade's troops. The UCK has been fighting a guerrilla war for independence and has won popular support among a growing number of Albanians in Kosova.

Adem Demaci, political representative of the UCK in Pristina, Kosova's capital, said in an October 14 statement that the accord will legitimize the abolition of sovereignty for Kosova and attempts to turn a temporary cessation of hostilities into a permanent reality.

The Holbrooke-Milosevic accord was reached after a three-month offensive by Belgrade's troops in Kosova that forced about 300,000 Albanians, many of them peasants, to flee their villages and seek refuge in the mountains. As many as 2,000 Albanians have been killed or disappeared since the Milosevic regime launched its military assault at the end of February. Under the accord, the Milosevic regime is supposed to allow civilians to return to their homes. Scores of villages have been burned to the ground, however, or destroyed by shelling.

Leaders of the Democratic League of Kosova, the dominant political party among Albanians there that most openly identifies with Washington, praised the accord but also called for deployment of NATO troops

rather than unarmed "monitors."

Smaller layers of Albanians continue to oppose this course. "The agreement is worthless as far as our struggle for self-determination is concerned," said a student leader in an October 15 telephone interview from Pristina, who asked that his name not be used. "It may result in postponing the war

for a month or two. But it does nothing to deal with the root of the crisis, which is political: denial of national rights to the Albanian people. It's another game that allows Milosevic to remain strong and gives an opening to the United States to intervene for its own interests. We gain nothing. We need to rely on our own forces."

## U.S. embargo against Cuba

Continued from Page 3

knowledge is part and parcel of the Understanding. This is an extraordinary vindication of the principles of the Libertad Act."

Albright assured Helms that "if the EU does not meet its commitments, the Libertad Act will remain a powerful tool for advancing our policy goals. You have my commitment that if the Understanding is not honored, I will not hesitate to revoke a Title IV waiver."

Capitalists in Europe competing with U.S. businesses and their spokespeople have tried to dismiss Albright's interpretation of the latest accord, indicating the trade conflict will drag on. Hermenegildo Altozano, for example, whose law firm in Madrid represents Spanish businesses with investments in Cuba, said the EU cannot impose the terms of the Understanding on EU member countries since that would infringe on their sovereignty.

The September 6 issue of the Cuban weekly *Granma Internacional* published Albright's letter to Helms in its entirety with the following comment: "The Understanding reached May 18 between the United States and the European Union — qualified by the government of Cuba as confusing, contradictory, and threatening to many countries — constitutes yet another step in the United States' attempts to internationalize the principles of the Helms-Burton Act."

In his October 14 speech at the United Nations, Robaina addressed the same point, stating: "The U.S. has certainly designed a

blockade that, as a vile medieval cudgel, has managed, with a slow and pyrrhic success, to bring about innumerable shortages for 11 million human beings, and has greatly prevented our country's normal development."

Washington, however, Robaina added, "has been absolutely unsuccessful in its objective of toppling the Cuban revolution and inciting our people to rise up against its leaders, and the political and economic system we have freely chosen."

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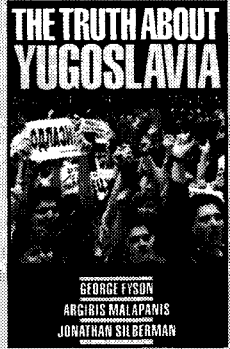
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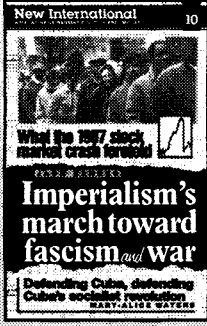
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## — MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

### ALABAMA

#### Birmingham

**Stand Up For Steel Campaign: A Deadly Trap for Workers.** Speaker: Susan LaMont, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, and member of the United Steelworkers of America. Fri., Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 323-3079.

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

**Racist Police Brutality and Overflowing Prisons: Examples of Big-Business Attacks on Working People.** Panel discussion with activists in the struggle against police brutality and injustice in prisons. Fri., Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

## — CALENDAR —

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Cuba: Diary of a Revolution. Lecture and Slides by Cuban Photographer Alberto Korda.** Fri., Oct. 30, 7 p.m. Campion Hall at Seattle University, 914 E. Jefferson. Korda's photographs will be on display Nov. 1-29 at the Photographic Center Northwest, 900 12th Ave. Artists Reception: Nov. 1, 4-6 p.m. Sponsors: Photographic Center Northwest, Seattle Art Museum Photograph Council, Seattle Cuba Friendship Committee, Seattle University Art Department and Foreign Language Department. For more information, call: (206) 720-7222.



**Life's contradictions** — "Despite the prosperous [?] economy, the proportion of Americans without health insurance climbed to 16.1 percent last year, with Latinos hav-



Harry  
Ring

ing the highest uninsured rates..." — *Los Angeles Times*.

**In-depth reporting** — That *Times* report added, perspicaciously, "The major obstacle to the

purchase of health insurance is cost."

**Crime overhead rising?** — To duck criminal charges, Nationwide Credit Inc., a "bust-your-kneecaps" collection agency, will pay a \$1 million civil penalty.

The outfit made threatening phone calls falsely implying people would be jailed. They illegally sought information from employers, neighbors and children. In 1992 the company paid \$100,000 to bury similar charges.

**Fashioning a high society?** — In Altai, an impoverished district of Siberia, 8,000 of Russia's teachers, who haven't been paid since Feb-

ruary, reportedly agreed to accept 15 bottles of vodka a month which they can barter or sell. Or, of course, use it as an antidote to their own pain.

**A wonderful deal lost** — Previous to accepting the vodka offer, the unpaid Russian teachers rejected a government offer of funeral supplies and toilet paper.

**The insecure society** — We recently reported earlier that speculator Warren Buffett was the richest man in the world, according to *Forbes* magazine. But in the past three months he dropped \$10 billion in the market and is now down to his last \$28 billion, apparently

leaving Bill Gates the top money dog.

**Temps can participate?** — Microsoft is conducting its annual employee charity auction. Top item on the block is a guided tour of Bill Gates' \$53 million pad. So far the bidding is at the \$25,000 mark. The estate manager will be the tour guide. But for the finale, Gates "will personally guide you through his favorite rooms."

**Yet folks beef about the service** — U.S. Customs agents have been assigned to two of the smaller Los Angeles area airports to speed through passengers arriving on corporate jets. An initiator of the

project explains: "These guys pay a lot of taxes .... They employ a lot of people...the Customs service is just another nicety, another treat that feels good."

**Can you believe it?** — Recorded crimes by English cops jumped 23 percent last year. The *Times* of London said these included "two London officers who supplied Ecstasy tablets to a ... sergeant who indecently assaulted a woman; a Nottingham officer who stole from a corpse; a London officer who blackmailed prostitutes...Another 165 were convicted of traffic offenses last year, and many for drink-driving while off duty."

## Why Washington hated the Grenada revolution

October 25 marks the 15th anniversary of Washington's invasion of Grenada, one week after the murder of the country's prime minister, Maurice Bishop in a counterrevolutionary coup. From 1979 until his death, Bishop headed a revolutionary workers and farmers government that stood as a shining example to toilers throughout the Caribbean and beyond. Below are excerpts from the article "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop" by Steve Clark. This article, which explains the defeat of the Grenadian revolution and Bishop's political legacy, appears in issue no. 6 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. It is

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

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BY STEVE CLARK

In mid-October 1983 a faction led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard in Grenada's army, government, and New Jewel Movement (NJM) overthrew the workers' and farmers' government brought to power by the March 13, 1979, revolution.

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, backed by other NJM leaders and the overwhelming majority of the island's workers and farmers, resisted this counterrevolution and attempted to reverse it. On October 19 the Grenadian people launched an uprising to restore their government to power. They shut down workplaces, poured into the streets of the capital, St. George's, and freed Bishop, who had been placed under house arrest by the Coard faction. Estimates of the crowd range from 15,000 to 30,000 — equivalent for that island of 110,000 people to an outpouring of 35 to 65 million in the United States.

Troops loyal to Coard's faction turned their guns on the mass demonstration, killing many participants and wounding others. They assassinated Maurice Bishop and five other revolutionary leaders — Fitzroy Bain, Norris Bain, Jacqueline Creft, Vincent Noel, and Unison Whiteman. The working people of Grenada were stunned and demoralized.

One week later, on October 25, United States armed forces stormed the island and occupied it. The Coard faction had handed free Grenada to imperialism on a silver platter. The country once again was shackled

with a government subservient to Washington. Discredited worldwide by these crimes and their disastrous consequences, Bernard Coard and his followers have tried ever since to cover their tracks by conducting a second assassination of Maurice Bishop. Their political targets include all those revolutionaries — in the Caribbean, North America, and elsewhere — who champion and seek to learn from Bishop's political legacy.

The first assassination succeeded in eliminating Maurice Bishop himself. But Bishop's accomplishments and example as a revolutionary internationalist leader proved more enduring than Coard had reckoned. As the truth came out about what actually happened in October 1983 — through the efforts of surviving Grenadian revolutionaries, Cuban president Fidel Castro, and others — the original explanations presented by Coard and his followers were increasingly repudiated by communists, anti-imperialist fighters, and progressive-minded people throughout the world....

The revolution brought to power for the first time in Grenada a government not subservient to U.S. and British imperialism and the local landlords and capitalists. The new workers' and farmers' government began to carry out a revolutionary democratic program. From the outset it also began promoting the organization of working people in town and country to advance their class interests against the power and prerogatives of the large landowners and capitalists.

Given the tiny industrial base, small urban working class, and the concrete character of the economic backwardness of Grenada, however, the transition to a planned economy based on state property in industry, banking, and big trade was necessarily a process that could unfold only over a number of years. Most important, it could advance only in tandem with the expanding organization, mobilization, and political consciousness of the workers and exploited farmers, whose class alliance formed the social base of the revolutionary government, state, and vanguard working-class party.

Grenada's productive forces, both in agriculture and industry, had to grow and be modernized....

Meanwhile, Grenada's economy remained capitalist. The working people through their government and the New Jewel Movement needed to make use of the technical and managerial skills of middle class and professional layers who were willing to cooperate in expanding production and cooperate with capitalists willing to continue investing in pro-



Government Information Service

Grenadian unionists march on International Workers Day on May 1, 1983.

ductive enterprises. The revolutionary government guaranteed the ownership rights of capitalists so long as they did not sabotage the economy or participate in illegal acts....

The tempo of a revolutionary transformation of property relations in Grenada could not be predetermined. That would depend on the concrete evolution of the class struggle and the economy in Grenada and internationally. During this transition period, the workers' and farmers' government, together with the unions and other mass organizations, decisively altered the relationship of class forces to the advantage of working people in their struggles

for better living and working conditions. This included the adoption and enforcement of labor laws guaranteeing union rights and regulating the wages and job conditions of rural and urban workers.

Moreover, the new People's Revolutionary Army and People's Militia gave the workers and farmers a way to defend their political power against counterrevolution instigated by U.S. imperialism and by local landowners and businessmen. Without this armed power, the transition to a new, nonexploiting society would be a utopia. Some 3,500 Grenadians received army or militia training between March 1979 and October 1983.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



October 26, 1973

MODESTO, Calif. — The United Farm Workers Union's battle for survival has brought the union up against one of the giants of the American wine industry — Gallo wines.

Workers in the Gallo vineyards here have been out on strike since last April, trying to retain their right to be represented by the UFW. Most of Gallo's steady workers live in several labor camps operated by the company. One compound contains individual houses where the conditions range from passable to poor. The others consist of connected row houses. There the conditions are scandalous.

When the strike came, 120 of the 150 regular workers walked out. The Mexican workers responded nearly 100 percent, and more than 75 percent of the Portuguese workers joined the strike as well.



October 25, 1948

The debate between Farrell Dobbs, Presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party and Norman Thomas, Presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, held in New

York, Oct. 17, was an important event in the 1948 election. It was the only debate in which two candidates for the highest office in the country discussed their programs from the same public platform. The audience was estimated at 1,000.

Dobbs asked Thomas why he had broken his promise to oppose war, solemnly given in the resolution passed by Thomas and his friends at the 1936 Socialist Party convention. He [Thomas] tried to make out a difference between imperialist war and another, trying to justify his support of World War II in contrast to his opposition to World War I. He came to the conclusion that revolution was not likely in "any conceivable time." All we had was a "tremendous choice of evils." And so he decided that the best thing he could do was to give "critical support" to the imperialist war.

Farrell Dobbs ended the debate by expressing his confidence in the revolutionary capacities of the American working class:

"Norman Thomas doesn't believe that the workers have the power to make a revolution and that's why he falters and halts and leans back on the American State Department. He's got no faith in the working class. We HAVE. And that's where we differ fundamentally with the Socialist Party. We have unbounded faith in the mighty American working class and we stake our lives on that future that will be made by the struggle to make a proletarian revolution, overthrow the capitalist system and build a socialist America and go on from there to build a socialist world."

### for further reading

#### Maurice Bishop Speaks

*The Grenada Revolution and Its Overthrow, 1979-83*

Speeches and interviews by the central leader of the workers and farmers government in the Caribbean island of Grenada. With an introduction by Steve Clark. \$20.95

#### The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop

Steve Clark

"Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard personified two irreconcilable political courses for the Grenada revolution," Clark writes, one rooted in the revolutionary continuity of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the other in the Stalinist counterrevolution. In *New Internationalist* no. 6. \$10.00

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# Defend civil rights for gays!

The most effective way for workers, farmers, and other democratic-minded people to respond to the savage killing of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard by antigay thugs is to join in public protests against this crime and demand full civil rights for gays and lesbians.

This lynching and the controversy surrounding it take place amid a growing "culture war" by rightist and incipient fascist forces. As the instability of the world capitalist system increases, bringing growing insecurity to the daily lives of millions, social tensions and political polarization continue to mount. Ultrarightist demagogues such as Patrick Buchanan have stepped up their scapegoating of homosexuals, immigrants, and women, while railing against the "degeneracy" of the "elite," to gain a hearing for their reactionary aims. They play especially on the fears and resentments among the panicky middle classes. For example, groups opposing gay rights organized a protest of 1,500 people at the opening night of the new play *Corpus Christi* in New York October 13, demanding it be shut down as "blasphemous" for supposedly portraying Jesus Christ as gay.

Actions to curtail democratic rights by capitalist politicians, liberal and conservative alike, add fuel to these rightists. The same week Shepard was killed, the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a Cincinnati city law aimed at denying homosexuals protection under antidiscrimination laws. This government attack gives a green light to employers and others to discriminate against gays and lesbians.

Democratic Party politicians from Attorney General Janet Reno to House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt have stepped up calls for new "hate crimes" laws in the wake of Shepard's killing. This has been a demand of many of the protests against the lynching as well. Forty states currently have laws that increase penalties against those convicted of crimes related to a person's race, sex, or, in many cases, sexual orientation. Reno is urging Congress to adopt broader legislation making such "hate crimes" a

federal offense.

Working people should oppose these laws, which hand the wealthy rulers another instrument to curtail democratic rights. Every move to give greater powers to the cops and courts can and will be used against the working class and its organizations.

No additional legislation is needed to make assault, battery, and murder illegal. Reactionary groups like the Ku Klux Klan were able to carry out lynchings with impunity for decades not because there were no "hate" laws, but because police and government officials throughout the South, often with the complicity of FBI cops and other federal officials, supported and often participated in such racist violence. It was the mass Black civil rights movement, which overthrew the Jim Crow system, that forced both federal and local authorities to begin to provide some semblance of equal protection under the law.

Reno and other Clinton administration officials today shed crocodile tears over Matthew Shepard, while they demand more restrictions on democratic rights in his memory. These are the same people who designed and defend the White House's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which has reinforced discrimination against gays in the military and actually increased the number of people kicked out because of their sexual orientation.

Instead of backing the calls for "hate crime" laws, working people and other supporters of democratic rights should demand that existing laws be enforced to protect the civil rights of gays and lesbians, as well as oppose efforts like the Cincinnati law that encourage discrimination and scapegoating.

Growing numbers of youth and working people will be repelled by the system that breeds acts like the murder of Matthew Shepard and, increasingly, spawns fascist-minded thugs. They will be open to joining the fight, led by a revolutionary working-class movement, for a socialist world based on human dignity and solidarity.

# 'U.S. first' is a trap for farmers

The following statement was issued September 28 by Tom Alter and Tom Fiske, the Socialist Workers Party candidates for governor of Iowa and Minnesota.

Workers and working farmers should oppose state officials along the Canada-U.S. border halting trucks transporting into the United States wheat and livestock produced by farmers in Canada. We also oppose all moves by the U.S. government to weaken or destroy the Canada Wheat Board.

In response to the continuing plunge in farm prices, officials from five states began in mid-September to pull over and delay or send back to Canada truckers transporting grain and livestock from Canada. They used food safety, truck weight, and highway safety laws as a pretext for stopping the trucks. They claimed farmers in Canada had unfair trade advantages because of the low value of the Canadian dollar compared to the U.S. dollar and because of the centralized marketing of wheat and barley through the Canadian Wheat Board.

The economic crisis hitting working farmers highlights one of the biggest contradictions of capitalism, overproduction. Yet, instead of helping to alleviate massive hunger in the world this glut leads to tens of thousands of food producers being forced out of farming due to low prices. Farm prices are generally at their lowest level in a decade and in some cases longer.

U.S. rulers and agribusiness giants are using this crisis on the land to fuel reactionary, chauvinist "U.S. first" no-

tions to increase their position against capitalist rivals in Canada. The USDA has announced that one of its goals in the next round of GATT talks that begin late next year is to force Ottawa to cut the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Wheat Board was established in the 1930s as the result of protests won by farmers in Canada to help provide a buffer for working farmers against grain traders, processors, and railroad owners. This body is not the enemy of U.S. wheat farmers, but of U.S. agribusiness. Workers in the U.S. should fight along with farmers by aiming our fire at the U.S. government, not farmers in Canada. We demand:

- An immediate moratorium to all farm foreclosures.
- The U.S. government guarantee farmers enough income from their produce to meet expenses and make a decent living.
- Elimination of income and real estate taxes to exploited farmers.
- Cheap credit based on need.
- We urge unionists, farmers, and consumers to form watchdog committees to police monopoly food processors and merchants who buy cheap from farmers and jack up prices in the supermarket in order to reap big profits.

Fighting together around these demands will give workers and working farmers the confidence to run society for our own needs, separate from those of the ruling rich, by fighting for a workers and farmers government here, in Canada, and around the world based on human need not profit.

# Join in Black farmers' fight

The recent victory by Black farmers in their lawsuit against the government for decades of discrimination is a victory for all working people. On October 9 a federal district judge ruled that Black farmers constitute a class subjected to a pattern of racist discrimination by the Department of Agriculture. Hundreds of Black farmers and their supporters poured into the judge's courtroom a few days later and helped beat back the government's efforts to reverse that ruling.

The decision opens the way for thousands of Black farmers including those who have lost their farms to join the struggle. It substantially increases the potential to win broader support for this fight for justice. It strikes a powerful blow on behalf of all working farm families.

The movement of Black farmers is an important sign of the coming resurgence of the fight for Black freedom, which included the struggle against police brutality and in de-

fense of affirmative action.

The fight by the Black farmers is part of the struggles of working people against the ravages of the crisis-ridden capitalist system. Striking Steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum and Titan Tire, coal miners who have walked out in Illinois, farm workers demanding a contract and union recognition in California, and oil workers resisting union-busting frame-ups in Texas are some of the comrades-in-arms of the Black farmers.

Now is the time to step up efforts to get Black farmers to speak at union meetings, on campuses, and in working-class communities across the country. Modest but important steps along these lines can help lay the basis for forging a workers and farmers alliance that's a prerequisite for effective resistance to the bosses' profit drive and for success in the coming struggle to take power out of the hands of the wealthy ruling minority.

# Black farmers plan next steps in fight against discrimination

Continued from front page

settled eight cases.... Sending this case back to the Agriculture Department of all places wouldn't be rational."

The government's foot-dragging was denounced by one of the farmers' attorneys, J. L. Chestnut from Selma, Alabama. Chestnut accused the federal government of carrying out a strategy of delay. Thousands more Black farmers have been driven off the land since the suit was filed. Chestnut reported that in that period "many plaintiffs have had to declare bankruptcy, 60 percent have had to downsize their operations, and one farmer committed suicide. Delay is a death knell to us." His remarks drew loud applause in the courtroom.

David Howard, a farmer from Tchula, Mississippi, commented, "Just like Mr. Chestnut said, they want to stall us until we break."

**'Proud we're sticking together'**

At a brief rally and news conference on the steps of the courthouse after the hearing, one of the leaders of the fight, Gary Grant from Tillery, North Carolina, said, "We're here today and they can't get rid of us. This comes out of centuries of racist oppression and the refusal to see Blacks as equal human beings."

Tim Pigford, a North Carolina farmer who was one of the original plaintiffs, told the rally, "I'm proud we're sticking together." The government attorney singled Pigford out during the hearing, urging the judge to drop his case from the suit because Pigford had previously gone to other courts to protest the loss of his land.

The October 9 ruling opens the way for thousands of Black farmers who filed discrimination complaints against the USDA between January 1983 and Feb. 21, 1997 to be brought into the suit. Pointing to the national implications of the victory the farmers' lead attorney, Alexander Pires, explained, "This decision makes this the largest civil rights suit ever."

At a meeting of about 150 in a nearby hotel after the hearing, the farmers discussed the next stage in this fight. This will include an advertising campaign on television, in newspapers, on radio, and in the Black media to invite other Black farmers and former farmers to join the suit.

The ruling recognizing the plaintiffs as a class followed an October 1 report by the Agriculture Department's inspector general that described the USDA's civil rights office as "in disarray" and "making little attempt to correct the mistakes of the past." As of September 11 the report found 616 backlogged discrimination complaints, many ignored for years.

**Decades of blatant discrimination**

The Black farmers' suit against the government results from decades of blatant discrimination by the Agriculture Department, especially in denying loans. Numerous public hearings and studies, including by the Agriculture Department itself, have documented these practices, which have resulted in driving tens of thousands of Black farmers off the land.

This stage of the fight by Black farmers began with a demonstration outside the White House in December 1996. At every stage the initiative to continue and deepen the fight has come from the farmers themselves. Farm leader Eddie Slaughter from Buena Vista, Georgia, explained as he was walking out of the courtroom, "We did this, getting this far."

According to the USDA figures, farms owned or run by Blacks declined from 925,000 in 1920, 14 percent of all farms, to 18,000 in 1992, 1 percent of all farms.

Most farm loans from USDA are approved through county committees of the Farm Service Administration. Farmers in the county elect these committees, but there are virtually no Black farmers on any of them. One Black farmer after another described these committees as vehicles for favoritism, cronyism and discrimination.

For example, Percy Gooch, Jr. from Princeton, Indiana, described how his family recently lost their land and house at a government auction. Their land was divided up and sold at ridiculously low prices to white landowners anxious to get control of coal and oil deposits.

Lester Bonner, a farmer from Dinwiddie County, Virginia, said he was denied a loan again this year. "The lending board is all white," he pointed out. Sherman Witcher, from Franklin County, Virginia, recently lost his farm as a result of numerous loan denials.

The October 13 federal court hearing was to argue out motions by the government designed to end the suit and avoid or delay the trial, scheduled for Feb. 1, 1999. The judge heard arguments but made no new rulings.

*Stu Singer is a member of the United Transportation Union in Washington, D.C. Sam Manuel contributed to this article.*



# U.S. gov't, bosses try to blame Canadian growers for crisis facing working farmers

BY DOUG JENNESS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—The U.S. government, monopoly grain merchants, and food processors are increasing their efforts to whip up anti-Canadian chauvinism among working farmers in the Upper Midwest. Taking advantage of the worsening economic difficulties facing farmers, they are attempting to get grain and livestock growers to think their problems are caused by the "dumping" of imports produced in Canada on the U.S. market.

For nearly a month state officials in Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota have been attempting to block trucks transporting grain and livestock from Canada. They have directed state police to employ a variety of weight regulations and safety and health measures to stop trucks, inspect them, and either delay or turn them back. State officials are urging the federal government to bring a case against Canada before the International Trade Commission accusing the country of dumping grain at below-cost prices.

At several Canada-U.S. border crossings, farm groups have organized U.S. farmers and ranchers in actions to stop trucks. Following Montana governor Marc Racicot's announcement that on September 21 state cops would accelerate their checks for compliance with truck weight and livestock health, a protest of several hundred, including farmers and ranchers, blocked trucks in Sweetgrass on that day. A similar action occurred near Portal, North Dakota, where a tractor on a railroad track stopped a Canadian Pacific freight train for 20 minutes.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, responding to the truck stoppages, stated, "I understand the concerns that have prompted these governors to take action against agricultural imports. Their acts," he said, "reflect deep and understandable frustrations."

The Canadian government suspended its initial request for consultations under the World Trade Organization and the North American Free Trade Organization when U.S. trade officials agreed to meet with representatives from Canada.

## 'Overproduction' of wheat causes crisis

The backdrop to this trade dispute is the severe conditions confronting working farmers. In the United States, prices for most farm commodities have plummeted. The price of wheat for example has dropped to a 21-year low. In September the price of wheat dropped to an average \$2.37 a bushel—it was \$3.66 in the same month last year and as high as \$5.20 a bushel in some areas just two years ago. Most farmers estimate they



This million-ton mountain of "excess" wheat in Kahlotus, Washington, gives a glimpse of the depth of capitalism's crisis of "overproduction."

need between \$3.25 and \$3.50 a bushel to make enough for their families to live on.

The main reasons for the plunging price of wheat and other grains are a worldwide glut resulting from bumper crops in the United States, Canada, and Australia and cuts in exports to countries in Asia. This has led to the stockpiling of 340 million bushels of wheat in the United States, enough to fill a line of hopper rail cars stretching from Seattle to Chicago.

One of the grievances raised by U.S. government officials is that the Canadian Wheat Board is subsidizing wheat farmers in Canada and marketing wheat at below the costs of production. To get the International Trade Organization to take up a U.S. grievance against this alleged "dumping," however, U.S. officials have to convince the Wheat Board to allow them to audit its books. Efforts by the Congress's General Accounting Office to get the Wheat Board to permit this have failed.

The Canadian Wheat Board, a government-run agency, was established in the 1930s as the result of protests by farmers who demanded the government guarantee some protection from the instability of prices and buffer farmers against monopoly grain traders, processors, and railroad owners. U.S.-based grain monopolies like Cargill and Continental have been pressing the U.S. government to get the Canadian government to weaken the firm hold the Wheat Board has on marketing all wheat produced in western Canada.

For example, four years ago when there was a big uproar against the importing of durum wheat (used for pasta) from Canada, then U.S. secretary of agriculture Mike Espy sharply criticized the Canadian Wheat Board for engaging in unfair and predatory market practices.

Washington is pressing to put this issue on the agenda for the next round of international trade negotiations that are to begin next year.

Between June 1993 and May 1994 some 91 million bushels of wheat were imported from Canada. During that period the Clinton administration imposed a limit of 55 mil-

lion bushels that could come from Canada without being subjected to tariffs. The following year the law used to enact the tariffs was abolished as part of negotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the year ending May 31, the number of bushels had risen to 73.2 million. These imports, however, amount to only about 3.5 percent of U.S. wheat exports. This is not enough to depress wheat prices to today's level.

## Farmers: get no relief from Washington

Fueling the anger of farmers in the United States is the failure of either the Clinton administration or the Republican-dominated Congress to offer relief. House and Senate Republicans proposed a \$3.9 billion program that included some disaster relief funds as well as early transition payments that are part of the 1996 farm law. The Clinton administration proposed a \$7.1 billion aid program to subsidize farmers when commodity prices fall below set levels. Wheat growers would gain 57 cents a bushel more; corn growers 28 cents. This, however, is far too little for producers to even break even.

Editorially commenting on the tinkering of Congress and the White House, *AgriNews*, published in Rochester, Minnesota, offered this description of the farmers' dilemma. An October 1 editorial stated:

"Farmers aren't sure where government policy is headed. They are also in no position to control markets and stop what many of them fear is a rapid march toward corporate agriculture. All they know for sure is that the success or failure of their operations ought to be determined by their own abilities, not by the fickleness of federal farm policy and the unreliability of foreign demand."



## Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

DOUG JENNESS

Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain. \$3.50

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Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba, Two

Speeches by FIDEL CASTRO

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## LETTERS

### Exaggeration doesn't help

In the introduction to the reproduction of president Fidel Castro's speech to South Africa's National Assembly in the *Militant*, vol. 62, no. 34 dated Sept. 28, 1998, it is claimed that "The Cuban leader was given a hero's welcome by millions of South Africans during his two-day state visit."

I have followed the newspaper and television coverage of comrade Fidel Castro's visit to South Africa and I attended his visit to the memorial to the youth of Soweto. I found no evidence to support this claim.

There weren't any mass demonstrations of welcome for comrade Castro that numbered more than 2,000 people, let alone millions. At his visit to the Soweto memorial there were at most 500 people—this in the heart of Soweto where mass rallies of tens of thousands were called at short notice in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The mass democratic movement is in decline, most working people who were participants in this movement no longer play any political role whatsoever. I am certain that vast sections of the South African people are attracted to the Cuban

revolution and its leadership, they are just too demoralized and disoriented to express this attraction. Recently three immigrant workers were murdered in public after a demonstration of unemployed workers—this is certainly another example of this demoralization.

The strength of the *Militant* has been its accurate reportage of the facts so that readers will be able to understand the world in order to change it. This is an important strength that needs to be maintained if the *Militant* is to remain a weapon in the hands of fighters the world over.

Jairaj Chetty  
South Africa

*Editors' reply: Chetty is right—"millions" was an exaggeration that was not supported by the facts. The news article on Castro's visit to South Africa in the previous Militant accurately described the warm response the Cuban president got, without suggesting that any of the actions were larger than a couple of thousand people.*

### Discussion on AMFA

The *Militant* article "AMFA is

part of boss antiunion campaign" in the September 28 issue has attracted a lot of attention here. This article passed through many hands and work areas in the hanger [at Northwest Airlines], and has prompted plenty of comments. Supporters of the *Militant* sold three subscriptions and over a dozen single copies.

One mechanic said that after he got the *Militant*, he showed the article on AMFA [the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association] to a friend in the machine shop, which is a stronghold of support for the IAM [International Association of Machinists].

After that he never saw the paper again because so many liked it and wanted to read it. The next issue, with the article "IAM restructuring divides, weakens union at Northwest" convinced him that he would take the *Militant* home first, so that he could read the rest of the paper before showing it to anyone else.

The Northwest pilots' strike renewed some workers' confidence that it is possible to fight and win. More mechanics are open to discussing AMFA now than before the strike, and "AMFA No" buttons are being worn.

A mechanic and a machinist, one from Pennsylvania and the other from West Virginia, told me that they have coal miners in their family and were brought up to be pro-union, and appreciated the fact that the *Militant* article showed that AMFA attacks on ramp workers have nothing to do with union solidarity among workers.

Mike Italie  
Atlanta, Georgia

### Hidden sports history

One of the most publicized stories on the sports pages in recent years has been the attempts by Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa to establish a new record for the most home runs hit in a single season.

It may be of interest to readers of the *Militant* that the media, for the most part, got this story completely wrong. According to Cum Posey, who tabulated the records for the Negro Baseball Leagues, Josh Gibson hit 65 home runs in 1930 and 72 home runs in 1931.

Today, baseball officials and most of the media claim that Mark McGwire holds the record for the most home runs because he hit 70 this season.

Those who believe that McGwire has this record will argue that the Negro Leagues were not the "Major Leagues" and therefore Gibson's record should not count. However, due to racial discrimination, the Negro Leagues were the major leagues for African Americans. Most of the games played between the "majors" and the Negro League All Stars were won by the Negro League.

Throughout his life Josh Gibson was enraged by the fact that he never received the recognition he deserved.

Today, sports fans throughout the world have a right to be enraged at the media, which chooses to continue to ignore the accomplishments of Josh Gibson and the Negro Leagues.

Steve Halpern  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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.

## Polarization sharpens in Australia as ultrarightist party gains in vote

BY BOB AIKEN  
AND RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, an incipient fascist outfit contesting its first federal election, made the biggest gains in elections in Australia October 3, winning just over 8 percent of the vote nationally.

The sharpened political polarization was shown in the support for One Nation across the country. The vote for the ultrarightists was highest in rural and provincial areas and outskirts of the main cities. One Nation took almost 15 percent in Queensland, down from its 23 percent vote in the June state elections but enough to win one of the six Senate seats up for election there.

The nascent fascist formation also won almost 10 percent of the vote in the most populous state, New South Wales. One Nation leaders immediately announced a campaign for the state elections there scheduled for March 1999. Hanson's party will get A\$3 million (US\$1.8 million) in federal funding as a result of its showing in the national elections.

Despite a sharp drop in support for the Liberal-National coalition as One Nation surged, the conservative government of Prime Minister John Howard was returned to office.

### Antilabor offensive meets resistance

Howard called the polls before the end of his first three-year term amid gathering storm clouds of the world capitalist depression, and in the face of deepening resistance to his government's offensive against the union movement, social welfare, and Aboriginal land rights. Waterfront workers in the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) dealt a blow to the bosses' antiunion drive in a major battle in April and May of this year. Winning widespread support, wharves employed by Patrick, one of two main stevedoring companies in Australia, blocked a joint company-government attempt to sack the unionized workforce and drive the MUA from the docks.

The central plank of the Coalition's election campaign was the introduction of a broad-based consumption tax, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), sweetened by promised income tax reductions aimed at middle class families. The GST, along with the announcement of further antiunion laws have become key to the Coalition plans to deepen its offensive on working people.

The coalition of the two main capitalist parties, Liberal and National, against the Australian Labor Party (ALP) has been an institution in bourgeois politics since World



June 7 demonstration against Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Brisbane, Australia, just before Queensland state elections, where the ultrarightist party polled 23 percent. Results of national election October 3 reflected continued polarization.

War II. These parties' direct vote fell from 47 percent at the last election in March 1996 to just under 40 percent this time. The ALP, which needed to win an additional 27 seats to take office again, picked up 18 seats as its vote rose from 39 to 41 percent. The social democratic vote increased mainly in working-class areas, as union supporters rallied to oppose the Howard government.

The ALP had previously held office from 1983 to 1996 under prime ministers Robert

Hawke and Paul Keating, who presided over an "accord" between the government, top union officials, and business leaders. This class-collaborationist pact was aimed at binding the union movement to helping boost Australian big-business profits and competitiveness on the world market. It saw a marked decline in union mobilizations, real wages, and social benefits.

The ALP's main slogan in the elections was "Jobs not GST." Its leader, Kim Beazley, promised to cut unemployment from its current level of 8 percent to 5 percent within six years.

In an attempt to cut Hanson out of the electoral arena, the Liberal Party and most National candidates joined the chorus of the major dailies, the ALP, and minor pro-capitalist parties to put One Nation last in preferential voting. In federal and state elections in Australia, voters number the candidates on the ballot in order of preference. As lower-polling candidates are eliminated, these "preferences" are added up until one candidate has a majority.

Hanson topped the poll for the new House of Representatives seat of Blair, west of Brisbane, with 36 percent of the primary vote, but with a "preference" total of 48 percent she failed to win election. She will continue to function as the national leader of One Nation.

### Fight for Aboriginal rights

Along with an increase in defensive battles by unions, protests against Hanson's racist attacks on

Aborigines and Asian immigrants have been at the center of Australian politics over the last two years. These antiracist protests, recently spearheaded by thousands of high school students, have dovetailed with protests against Howard's legislation to gut Aboriginal native title rights.

Howard's campaign trail was dogged by protesters against the Jabiluka uranium mine being developed on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory. Several thousand protested the mine on October 2, election eve, in Melbourne.

Resistance has also grown in the Northern Territory where Aborigines led a campaign for a "no" vote in a referendum on statehood held along with the election. The Country Liberal Party (CLP) government in the Northern Territory, which had sponsored the proposal, was stunned when it was defeated 53-47 percent.

The rightist CLP government is moving to break up the two main Aboriginal Land Councils in the Territory against the wishes of Aboriginal people there, and has already moved to restrict native title negotiating rights using new federal laws passed July 8.

Earlier this year Aboriginal representatives walked out of the official Statehood Convention in protest of its refusal to recognize indigenous rights.

In August, more than 700 Aborigines from across the Territory met at their own Constitutional Convention at Kalkaringi. Among the demands they put forward were the recognition of their right to self-government and the repeal of mandatory sentencing laws. Aborigines make up around a quarter of the population in the Northern Territory.

### Economy on verge of recession

The domestic economy is already on the verge of recession under the impact of the global financial crisis and the slowing world economy, especially in Australian imperialism's key Asian markets.

This slowdown has been sharpened by overproduction and intensified competition in world markets for the main exports of Australian capitalism, from coal and metal ores to wheat and wool. The resultant fall in commodity prices triggered a sharp slide in the value of the Australian dollar relative to the U.S. currency in recent months.

There is growing concern among the multimillionaire families who rule Australia over the weakened conservative government amidst this growing international economic and political turmoil. This was shown in the lukewarm endorsement for Howard's return in the editorial columns of the capitalist dailies.

In its election-eve editorial the *Sydney Morning Herald* endorsed the return of a coalition government. But it scored Howard's first term in office as "a wasted opportunity to move ahead with structural change, industrial relations reform and improvements in public sector efficiency" — in other words, to deepen the bosses' offensive against working people. Howard "is no national leader" the Herald declared, calling for a change in Coalition leadership. The *Australian* likewise condemned Howard's cabinet as "an administration characterized by indecision or lack of thought," such as the "ultimate debacle over waterfront reform," referring to the failed attempt to bust the MUA.

After the election the *Australian Financial Review* concluded, "There is now a real question mark over the capacity of both sides of mainstream politics... [in] not just winning elections but actually governing the country well in increasingly difficult and complex times."

Bob Aiken is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. Ron Poulsen is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia.

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