

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Miners rally to defend
right to lifetime health care

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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N. Carolina tire strikers lead Labor Day parade

BY JEANNE FITZMAURICE
AND FLOYD FOWLER

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — “What do we want? A contract! “When do we want it? Now!”

Striking Continental General Tire workers, members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 850, led the first-ever Labor Day parade in Charlotte, North Carolina. At least 3,000 rubber workers, machinists, truck drivers, electricians, tobacco plant workers, and others marched from downtown Charlotte to Independence Park.

“I didn’t think it would be this big. It’s beautiful! People are tired of the way corporations are running over people. This parade shows the whole South that you have to organize. This parade today sends a message to Continental General, no doubt about it!” said John Froneberger, a striker from USWA Local 850.

Earl Propst, Local 850 president, said at the rally that the rubber workers have been fighting for “351 days — into the 51st week” against Continental, fighting for their jobs and for a contract that limits overtime and subcontracting. Local 850 is also signing up strikers for a bus to the September 11 rally

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Puerto Rican independence fighters set to win release

Backers press White House to free them without delay

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

CHICAGO—Eleven Puerto Rican political prisoners, most of whom have spent two decades in U.S. prisons because of their pro-independence actions, are due to be released soon under a “pardon” issued by U.S. president William Clinton. The victory is the result of an international campaign on their behalf that over the years has won broad backing.

In Puerto Rico, as well as in New York and this city, where the defense campaign has been the strongest, preparations are being made to welcome the *independentistas* back to the struggle.

As the *Militant* goes to press, however, White House and U.S. prison authorities are delaying the release of the 11. Supporters of the political prisoners are demanding their immediate release, charging that the delaying tactics are aimed at disrupting plans for all the prisoners to come out together and join the victory celebrations. On September 7 the 11 pro-independence fighters, together with a 12th prisoner who would be eligible for release in five years, agreed to the conditions stipulated by Clinton for being freed

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Students at August 29 demonstration in San Juan demand immediate release of political prisoners

Militant/Martin Koppel

Socialists report success in selling ‘Capitalism’s World Disorder’

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A team of *Militant* supporters spent two days in the Petersburg, Virginia, area talking to farmers who are fighting to stay on the land, steelworkers who had struck the Newport News shipyard and their supporters, and visiting bookstores suggested by these workers to place copies of *Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

At a U.S. government settlement application meeting for farmers, six copies of the *Militant* and one copy of the *International Socialist Review* supplement to the *Militant* were sold.

Earlier this year a ruling was handed down on a class-action suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture brought by thousands of farmers who are Black, charging discrimination in loan policies. The U.S. government was forced to admit to this discrimination, which drove thousands of farmers off the land and others to the brink of bankruptcy. Hoping to quell the farmers’ momentum, the government agreed to pay settlements to those who could document discrimination to a judge’s satisfaction.

In a final round of settlement application sessions held in Virginia, a few dozen farmers and their supporters came not only from Virginia but from Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina to seek compen-

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E. Timorese defy thugs in independence vote, imperialists prepare to send troops

BY BOBAIKEN
AND DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—In a massive repudiation of nearly 24 years of Indonesian rule and months of terror by rightist death squads, 78.5 percent of East Timorese voted for independence in an August 30 referendum on East Timor’s future. As the *Militant* goes to press, the imperialist powers are preparing for military intervention. The Australian government has offered to lead an international force to East Timor and provide 2,000 troops. U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright is taking part in talks on the situation with the foreign ministers of Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand.

United Nations Security Council president Peter van Walsum of the Netherlands

stated September 8 that “if the security situation does not improve...the council will need to consider further action.” If an occupying force is assembled, it will likely take place under the United Nations flag.

Economic sanctions against the Indonesian government, which rules East Timor, are also being discussed. These measures include the possible withdrawal of International Monetary Fund loans to the crisis-ridden country. Jakarta has rejected calls for “armed peacekeepers” and has declared martial law in the territory. It has pledged to reinforce the 20,000 soldiers and police it has stationed there.

To win support for possible military action, the imperialists are relying on the impact on public opinion of the reign of terror imposed

by rightist East Timorese thugs organized in militias by a section of the Indonesian military officer caste. According to press reports up to 200,000 people have been forced to flee East Timor since the referendum results were announced September 4.

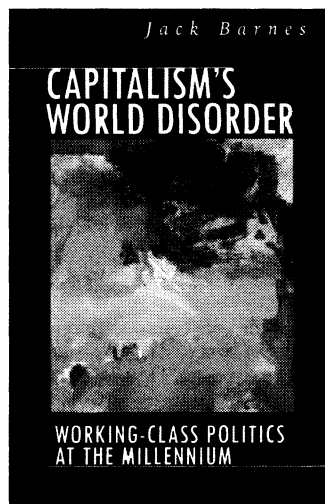
Observers say the capital, Dili, lies deserted and in ruins. The arson and massacres that have detonated this exodus are the handiwork of the forces that suffered a huge defeat at the ballot box at the end of August.

First opportunity ever to vote

“This is our chance to start as a new nation. It’s like being reborn,” beamed 23-year-old Jairson Da Silva Rosa after casting his vote in the Sydney suburb of Liverpool. Nine poll-

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Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium



JACK BARNES

“The nightmare unfolding across the Americas and elsewhere is not born of chaos. It is the product of the lawful, predictable, irreversible, and unreformable inner workings — the ‘value relations’ — of the world capitalist system.

“This is the outcome of the lawful functioning of parasitic imperialism. There is no mystery to it; it is perfectly comprehensible.

“What is less comprehensible to the rulers — and more comprehensible to workers — are the struggles these workings of capitalism will engender. What’s more, this imperialist reality is also a damned good reason for the toilers to overthrow those who benefit from and defend the capitalist system....”

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

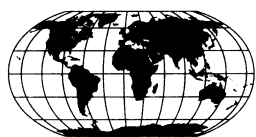
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Puerto Ricans tell U.S. Navy to leave Vieques — pages 8-9



Student strike in Mexico

Student protests have kept Mexico's largest university closed for more than four months. On April 20 students at the National Autonomous University, which has an enrollment of 270,000, began their strike against the university administration's plans to charge tuition of \$150 a year. After seven weeks the administration backed down, saying the fees would not be obligatory. The students decided to continue their action, explaining that they are striking in support of education as a social right for all.

Strikers guard barricades blocking the university entrances. They organize themselves at nighttime assemblies, and have held frequent rallies and marches. Counterdemonstrations, involving some students and faculty and administration members, have also been mounted, reflecting a wider polarization. Members of the largest union of blue collar workers on campus have worked without pay to assist the strikers.

White House probes vs. Iraq

A new White House report lays the basis for stepped-up bullying of Iraq. Sent to Congress August 23, it states that U.S. spies are monitoring Iraqi sites for signs of alleged production of "weapons of mass destruction." The report also claims concern about Baghdad's purchase of "dual use" materials, with both civilian and weapons applications.

Washington calls for resuming weapons inspections under the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and supports a Dutch-British proposal for an aggressive inspection regime. UNSCOM inspectors were withdrawn from Iraq last December, after four months of Iraqi protests about their intrusive investigations. The same day Washington and London launched a sustained bombing campaign named Operation Desert Fox. Since then, U.S. and British warplanes have carried out almost daily bombing raids on Iraq, as they patrol the "no fly zones" imposed on the country after the 1991 Gulf War.

1,000 workers rally in Jakarta

Dressed in their blue-and-white uniforms,

Workers and farmers protest austerity in Brazil



Up to 90,000 workers and farmers demonstrated in the Brazilian capital of Brasilia August 26. Organized by unions and opposition parties, participants chanted, "FHC out, IMF out!," targeting President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and the International Monetary Fund. In November last year the IMF loaned \$41.5 million to Cardoso's government, which has undertaken a severe austerity drive.

more than 1,000 supermarket workers rallied in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta September 1. Employed by the Hero supermarket chain, they gathered outside the company's head office to demand a wage increase of 50 percent. Fourteen of Hero's Jakarta city stores were represented.

The owners and managers finally agreed to meet 11 workers' representatives, but turned down the demand for an immediate raise. "There [were] no concrete results for us," said one of the workers' spokespeople. The protesters made plans to call on Hero workers in the neighboring cities of Bekasi, Tangerang, and Bogor — part of the greater Jakarta area in which the firm

has 40 supermarkets — to join a stoppage and rally. This "massive strike will make the owner suffer large losses, and he will think twice about his attitude to our requirements," one of the workers commented.

Calls to cancel debt in Africa

Finance ministers and central bank governors from 17 countries in Africa met in Nairobi, Kenya, at the end of August, where many argued for the cancellation of their foreign debt. Festus G. Mogae, the president of Botswana, said collapsing commodity prices are exacerbating the debt crisis.

African nations owe unpayable sums to imperialist banks and governments. Of the 41 "Heavily Indebted Poor Countries" listed by the World Bank, 33 are in Africa. To cite one example, Ethiopia's debt of \$10 billion stands at 13 times its 1996 export income, nearly half of which went to debt payments. The social costs of this burden are illustrated by the fact that in the continent, only South Africa spends more on health care than on debt service.

Malaria on the rise

Malaria is making a deadly comeback. According to the World Health Organization the tropical disease infects 300 to 500 million people each year. It kills up to 2.7 million people annually, most of them children in semi-colonial countries. This toll is being used to drum up support for the rehabilitation

of DDT, an insecticide with proven harmful effects to wildlife, and possibly to human beings. The chemical has been banned or restricted in the U.S. and many other countries. Scientists campaigning for its use against mosquitoes that carry the parasite say that treatments and alternative preventive measures are too expensive.

Snooping powers for FBI boosted

Standards adopted by the Federal Communications Commission August 27 for cellular phones give increased powers to government snoops. Information required of phone companies will facilitate the police tapping of conference calls, including after the stated target of an inquiry has left the conversation. Federal and local spy agencies will also be able to pinpoint the location of a cell phone user, and to determine whether features like call waiting and call forwarding are being used. Text messages sent over cellular connections can also be monitored.

Communication intercepts approved by courts have nearly doubled over the past decade, among them taps on cell phones. U.S. attorney general Janet Reno said the ruling will assist "law enforcement." Jim Dempsey of the Center for Democracy and Technology said that "the commission ruled against privacy and in favor of expanded FBI surveillance."

Ballot on affirmative action

A ballot initiative announced in August targets affirmative action programs in Florida. The initiative's backers hope to end measures that have helped boost the proportion of students and employees who are Black, of other oppressed nationalities, and women in colleges and in public employment. They propose to place this on the ballot in the presidential elections in 2000. One of the prime movers of the proposal, businessman Ward Connerly, helped promote similar measures passed in California and Washington State in 1996 and 1998.

Connerly has formed a group named the American Civil Rights Institute. Supporters of the initiative claim it defends equality for all, presenting it as a civil rights measure. Affirmative action programs were largely a product of massive civil rights struggle in the decades after World War II. They were forged to address the deep inequalities that pervade U.S. society.

— FRANK EVANS

THE MILITANT

No imperialist troops to East Timor!

Australian, New Zealand, and other forces are being readied to intervene in East Timor. These imperialist powers implacably oppose national self-determination. The "Militant" covers and supports the fight in East Timor for independence — independence from Indonesian subjugation, and from occupation by these imperialist predators. Don't miss a single issue!



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Imperialists prepare to send troops to East Timor

Continued from front page

ing centers were established in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, and Darwin to allow 12,000 East Timorese exiles in Australia aged 17 and older to join some 440,000 others voting in East Timor and elsewhere. The overall turnout was an estimated 98.6 percent.

"This is our first opportunity to vote in 450 years—from the Portuguese colonial era through the Indonesian occupation till now," activist Brian Da-Luz said, as he handed out campaign leaflets from the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), the proindependence umbrella organization, to hundreds lined up to vote in Liverpool.

In East Timor, referendum organizers in the UN-supervised self-determination poll were reportedly amazed that half the registered voters had queued by dawn at many of the 200 polling stations, with many in the countryside walking all night in their Sunday best to vote. The turnout and result came despite months of terror and intimidation as Indonesian police and military looked on. There are more than 10,000 Indonesian troops and 8,000 police currently occupying East Timor. Rightist activity was sharply curtailed on voting day, with only six polling centers shut, but picked up again immediately after.

May 5 UN agreement

Voters had to tick off an answer to one of two questions: "Do you accept the proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia?" or "Do you reject the proposed special autonomy for East Timor, leading to East Timor's separation from Indonesia?"

The governments of Indonesia and Portugal agreed May 5 in tripartite negotiations with UN officials to a three-phase timetable that may lead to independence for East Timor in three to four years. Phase I ran from May 5 until the vote. Phase II lasts until the Indonesian parliament meets, probably in November, to consider the referendum results.

The parliament was the body that annexed East Timor in 1976 after Indonesian forces invaded and occupied the country in December 1975, overthrowing the new government headed by Fretilin, the national liberation movement that led the struggle against Portuguese colonial rule. Jakarta's pretext was imposing "peace" following a three-week civil war initiated by pro-Indonesian political forces.

Canberra was the only imperialist government to ever formally recognize the annexation, which until December 1998 it considered "irreversible." Should the parliament agree to respect the massive vote for independence and repeal the annexation, as Indonesian president B.J. Habibie has publicly pledged, East Timor will become a UN protectorate for three to four years before independence, according to the terms of the May 5 agreement.

Divisions among rulers

The unbreakable spirit of resistance by East Timor's workers and peasants reflected in decades of armed struggle, mass mobilizations, and now in the vote has caused divisions over the last year among Indonesia's rulers and forced a change in course by U.S. imperialism and smaller imperialist powers like Australia and New Zealand. The Portuguese government, headed by the Socialist Party for much of the last 25 years, has long postured as an ally of the freedom struggle.

Indonesia's more than two-year-old economic crisis forced the rulers to jettison the 32-year authoritarian rule of President Suharto in May 1998. Suharto was replaced by Habibie, his vice president, who will govern until the parliament chooses a replacement coming out of the June 1999 Indonesian election.

Habibie's decision to permit a referendum has not been universally supported among the rulers in Jakarta. Sections of the ruling class, in particular part of the military officer caste who are capitalists in their own right, fear the consequences of allowing East Timor to become independent in the face of growing instability and separatist movements in Aceh and West Papua (Irian Jaya). Others, with Habibie in the lead, have decided they must jettison East Timor to restabilize their rule in the world's fourth most populous

nation.

Jakarta has come under increasing pressure on East Timor from various imperialist powers who have become more and more alarmed at the growing political instability.

Leading up to the referendum, Stanley Roth, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, told the National Press Club in Canberra August 26, "It won't be business as usual.... They [the Indonesian government] will pay a price if this is not managed well."

Hamish McDonald, foreign editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, opined August 7, "By all means, keep up the moral pressure on Jakarta, and keep up the threats that World Bank and International Monetary Fund finance, military equipment, and so on might be hard to justify if it allows a bloodbath in Timor."

Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer met with Indonesian presidential front-runner and bourgeois opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri July 28, who immediately shifted her position that East Timor could not separate from Indonesia. In a July 29 speech, she stated that while still opposing independence, if elected president she too would recognize a proindependence vote.

Timorese respond to rightist terror

In the immediate aftermath of the August 30 vote, rightist gangs went on the rampage, burning dozens of houses and setting up roadblocks in Dili, and in three northwest towns, Maliana, Liquica, and Gleno. Four Timorese employed by the UN were among those killed, with a further six missing.

The leaders of the anti-independence militias, as they are described in the big-business press, are closely tied to Indonesian military officers, who supply them and direct their activities.

Many members are unemployed youth or thugs attracted by the pay. Others have been press-ganged under threat of beatings or death.

The gangs have massacred an estimated 400 people since they were unleashed in January, burned hundreds of homes, and created tens of thousands of refugees, but proved inadequate to the task of preventing a massive vote for independence. These outfits have often clashed with Timorese workers, farmers, and youth defending their neighborhoods and villages.

On July 16, the first day of voter registration, for instance, hundreds of villagers turned out to enroll in Liquica in defiance of the BMP gang, which has killed dozens of people in the district. In Salesa the same day villagers repulsed an attack by local thugs, killing one. On August 27 villagers in Memo, near Maliana, expecting an attack, rang warning bells as 300 rightists escorted by Indonesian police approached. They armed themselves with rocks, spears, machetes, and swords and repulsed the attack.

Throughout the registration period, and during the two-week campaign prior to the ballot, UN representatives repeatedly called on the Indonesian police — part of the repressive force in East Timor for the last quarter century — to restore law and order in face of the rightist campaign. UN secretary-general Kofi Annan twice postponed the vote.

Mass mobilizations

The relationship of forces on the ground was also shown by massive turnouts at proindependence rallies. Some 5,000 people attended the August 15 opening of the National Council of Timorese Resistance campaign offices in Dili. The offices were attacked and sacked by the Aitarak thugs August 26 as Indonesian police stood by.

Hundreds of university students returned to East Timor from Indonesia to mobilize support for independence.

Over August 19–20 up to 10,000 people took part in celebrations of the anniversary of Falantil, held in the mountains at Waimori. Falantil is the guerrilla army that has waged an armed struggle against the Indonesian occupation. It has maintained a cease-fire since early 1999 with many of its fighters regrouped in mountain camps.

In Dili August 25, more than 10,000 poured into the streets in a huge, jubilant rally, despite appeals from some independence leaders against mass gatherings for fear of provoking anti-independence gangs. "They have come out to say that we are still here, that we

will not be intimidated," CNRT leader David Ximenes said. "We have fought for our freedom and now they have to give it to us," he told the crowd.

The following day at least five people were killed in an Aitarak rampage that included attacks on foreign journalists. Proindependence youth in many neighborhoods stood up to the heavily armed thugs, killing at least one.

Imperialist intervention

Military preparations for imperialist intervention have also deepened. Australian army forces have been placed on standby, ready to intervene on the pretext of restoring order. A British warship in the region, the HMS *Glasgow*, is on alert.

Imperialist pressure has intensified on the Indonesian government to permit a large



Top, line at polling station in East Timor. Hundreds of thousands turned out for referendum and voted overwhelmingly for independence. Below, residents in Dili arm themselves to defend their neighborhood against attack by pro-Jakarta militias.

"peacekeeping" force in East Timor under the UN flag in the immediate aftermath of the referendum result.

Intervention independent of the UN by Australian, New Zealand, Japanese, and U.S. forces—ignoring the diplomatic formalities of obtaining Indonesian government agreement—has also been posed. Donald McKinnon, the New Zealand foreign minister, called September 1 for such intervention by "like-minded" countries if the situation deteriorated. But Australian defense minister John Moore said that while Canberra was prepared for evacuations, "Troops from Australia will not go in unless it's at the invitation of the United Nations with the sanction of Indonesia."

Some 7,000 U.S. troops are currently engaged in joint exercises with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in north Queensland.

A report that contingency planning by the U.S. Pacific Command includes, as one option, sending 15,000 U.S. troops to East Timor, in "extreme circumstances," on the pretext of stopping large-scale violence by the rightist groups, was leaked to the Australian press August 10.

Washington responded that it has "no plans to send U.S. forces to East Timor, independently of the UN." But U.S. assistant secretary of state Roth said September 2, "At this point, we would have to consider all the different options depending on the situation on the ground; depending on the position of the Indonesian government."

UN forces in Phase II are due to be bolstered with an increase of military liaison officers from 50 to 350, with civilian police numbers increased by 460 to over 730. Plans for a UN force of up to 15,000 troops, ostensibly for Phase III after the parliament meets in Jakarta, are also being put in place.

Australian forces are on standby to play a

central role in such a force. The Australian army has assembled its largest combat-ready military force since the Vietnam War. It now has two brigades on "28-day preparedness" notice, with significant units on higher alert.

Fourteen Blackhawk helicopters recently arrived at Tindall airbase, near Katherine in the Northern Territory, fitted with long-range fuel tanks that enable them to fly nonstop to Dili. They are on "30-minute standby," along with hundreds of soldiers.

The 3rd Brigade, based in Townsville, Queensland, has over 3,000 troops, and the new ready response unit, the Darwin-based 1st Brigade, has 325 armored vehicles. With 2,100 troops in Darwin, the brigade also has artillery and parachute regiments based in Sydney.

Most supporters of East Timorese independence around the world favor intervention. They have taken their lead from CNRT leaders, including the imprisoned Xanana Gusmao. CNRT representative in Australia João Carrascalao said September 2, the Indonesians "will try to destroy the country as much as they can and only the deployment of an international peacekeeping force will deter them."

Meanwhile, CNRT leader Jose Ramos Horta is in the United States to ask the World Bank and Congress to impose comprehensive sanctions on Indonesia, whose workers and peasants continue to reel under the impact of the devastating economic crisis.

While the imperialist powers hope to restrain proindependence fighters and organize an orderly transition, the situation remains highly volatile. East Timor's toilers have placed themselves in a stronger position to have the last word.

Bob Aiken is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

Youth conference: 'We must fight to change world capitalism offers'

BY CAROL VILLANUEVA
AND MANUEL GONZÁLEZ

HAVANA — "The century is closing, and humanity views the future with greater uncertainty and concern than ever," read the call for the August 15-19 International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism, which drew more than 500 students and young workers from 62 countries.

"The crisis of the financial markets, growth of corruption, unemployment, poverty, child prostitution, and juvenile crime, among other evils... are the great challenges humanity confronts. Changing those prospects, requires, above all, the active participation of youth — those to whom the 21st century belongs."

The gathering was sponsored and organized by several Cuban youth organizations, including the Union of Young Communists (UJC), the Federation of University Students, the federation of High School Students, and the Center of Studies on Youth. The Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (OCLAE), and the regional coordinating committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Federation of Democratic Youth also sponsored the event.

Much of the political discussion during the conference took place in workshops on the themes of youth participation, employment, environment and development, culture and identity, social exclusion, and student movements.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, addressed the Youth and Participation workshop. Alarcón described neoliberalism as one variant of the "policy of capitalism, which is imposed on the world beneath that deceitful name." He pointed to the lack of access to education and employment, and other effects of these policies on youth, as examples of what capitalism has to offer humanity today.

The Cuban leader condemned the rapacious imperialist attacks on working people the world over — from the U.S.-NATO assault on the working people of Yugoslavia, to the U.S. bombings of Iraq and Sudan, to Washington's economic war against Cuba, and the denial by the imperialist powers of nations' rights to self-determination.

Alarcón concluded his presentation by stressing the necessity for youth and students to become involved in the struggles of the working class, stating, "We have to reclaim our role in social change, reclaim our duty to act together with others fighting for social change — primarily the working class."

Delegations from the Americas, Africa

Seminar participants came from almost every country of Latin America and the Caribbean. Those from Africa included repre-

sentatives from the African National Congress Youth League of South Africa, the South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) from Namibia, and others from Burkina Faso and the Congo.

The largest delegation came from Mexico, numbering almost 100 participants. The majority of them were affiliated with the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), one of the main bourgeois liberal parties in Mexico. Some of the delegates were students active in the student strike at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), protesting the government's attempt to impose tuition fees and cut access to public education.

There were also large delegations from Venezuela and Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican delegation included members of a number of political organizations, including the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI), Socialist Front, and the New Independence Movement.

Twenty-three participants came from the United States. Many of them learned about the conference through the tour of two Cuban youth leaders, Luis Ernesto Morejón and Itamys García, who spoke at university campuses in several U.S. cities earlier this year. The delegation from the United States included students and workers involved in a range of activity, including a Puerto Rican *independentista* from San Francisco and a number of activists in fights against police brutality and for immigrants' rights.

Other delegations came from China, Vietnam, Italy, Russia, Iraq, Lebanon, and the Basque Country. The Young Socialists sent a delegation of two from the U.S. There were also representatives from the Young Socialists in Canada and Sweden.

Education is a right

The right to education, and how to achieve that right, was discussed in practically all the workshops. One of the student strikers from Mexico commented that education is becoming more privatized and accessible only to those who can afford it. That's what their fight is about.

A youth from Guinea who is the president of the foreign exchange students organization at his university spoke about Cuba's exemplary education system, saying it was a model for fighting youth to emulate. Education in Cuba is free and accessible to all Cubans—one of the conquests of the 1959 revolution when workers and farmers took power in this country.

Conference participants had the opportunity to see for themselves an aspect of the Cuban education system, and an example of the international solidarity that has been at the heart of the Cuban revolution for 40 years. On the last day of the seminar, par-



Militant/Manuel González

Young people and workers must fight for "globalization of solidarity" in face of capitalist system that creates ever new crises affecting overwhelming majority of humanity, said Cuban president Fidel Castro at international youth conference in Havana.

ticipants visited the Latin American School of Medicine, where 1,658 students from 15 countries throughout Latin America are currently enrolled, all with full scholarships. Like all Cuban students, these international youth pay no tuition and receive books, educational materials, housing, food, and health care free of charge.

Carlos Flores, a representative of the students, expressed their gratitude to the Cuban revolution on behalf of all the students at the Latin American School of Medicine. He urged participants in the conference to get out the facts about Cuba when they return home, to break through the distorted image that is perpetuated by Washington and other opponents of the revolution.

Another thread of discussion was on culture and development, which was the theme of a presentation by Cuban minister of culture Abel Prieto at the closing ceremony of the conference. Prieto's speech addressed the negative effects of the capitalist media in the United States on the various cultures throughout Latin America. He pointed out that the means of mass communication are essential in forming consciousness, and contrasted the situation in Cuba, where the means of communication are in the hands of a socialist government that defends the interests of workers, farmers, and youth. This fact, Prieto said, greatly contributes to the political and cultural education of all society.

Prieto welcomed questions and comments following his talk. One of the advocates of Puerto Rican independence from the island asked how national identity can be preserved without falling into nationalism. How can revolutionaries keep an internationalist perspective?

Prieto answered by saying that Cubans have learned more about their identity and cultural history. The rich culture and traditions of Cuban society have been strengthened through international missions and internationalist perspective, Prieto added. These missions range from the 300,000 volunteer soldiers who fought against the South African invasion of Angola and the forces backed by imperialism in the 1970s and 80s, to the hundreds of Cuban doctors volunteering in post-apartheid South Africa and in Central America today.

Involvement in working-class struggles

The workshop on Youth and Employment addressed the challenges faced by the working class, in particular young workers. The discussion focused on the concentration of capital in the hands of a few, the slashing of jobs and working conditions that is one of the goals of the sell-off of state-owned companies to private owners and imperialist investors, lack of employment opportunities, and cutbacks in social programs. Many participants gave concrete examples of the fights that have broken out in their countries as companies push to increase work loads, speed up production lines, and cut wages.

A number of students who have recently been a part of student and working-class struggles spoke at the Student Movement

workshop. Student strikers from Mexico spoke not only about their fight but about joint picket lines they have organized with electrical workers from Mexico City, who are resisting government attempts to privatize the electrical company. A number of students from around the world cited examples of similar struggles to push back the rulers' attempts to privatize public education and transfer the costs of education onto the backs of individual students and their families.

Delegates also discussed the role of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in deepening the imperialist plunder of the nations of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. A very popular demand that was raised in each workshop was to cancel the Third World debt.

Some of the independentistas from Puerto Rico spoke about the telephone workers' strike last year and the general strike that swept the island in support of their fight against the sale of the phone company to the U.S. communications giant GTE.

At the workshop on the environment Zulma Oliveras, a supporter of Puerto Rican independence from San Francisco, spoke about the environmental devastation caused by the U.S. Navy occupation of the island of Vieques. Washington uses the Puerto Rican island for live ammunition and bombing practice, as well as the testing of napalm, she explained. The demand for the U.S. Navy to leave Vieques was one of the main themes of a 50,000-strong demonstration in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico, August 29.

Some delegates spoke of the protest campaigns that have been waged worldwide against Washington's bombing of Yugoslavia earlier this year, and against the continued attacks against Iraq. One of the delegates from Iraq made an appeal to the conference participants to continue protesting the U.S. rulers' campaign to further violate the sovereignty of Iraq and the economic sanctions imposed on his country.

Addressing the closing session, Cuban president Fidel Castro returned to the need to put an end to the capitalist market system and the devastation it breeds. He pointed to the growing instability of world capitalism, a system that "turns the world into a casino with ever new problems, each time more uncontrollable. It's like a game of roulette, but Russian roulette.... The system has its laws, and no one controls them. Even less so in a globalized world where everything that happens, for example in Southeast Asia, immediately effects every part of the globe."

Castro called for the "globalization of solidarity," to fight for a more just world capable of harnessing the advances in science and technology to serve the needs of humanity.

The conference closed with an announcement by OCLEA calling an international youth conference April 1-4, 2000, which will be hosted by the UJC of Cuba. Conference delegates pledged to work throughout the rest of the year to build the conference in their respective countries and to join again in Cuba in the year 2000.

FROM PATHFINDER

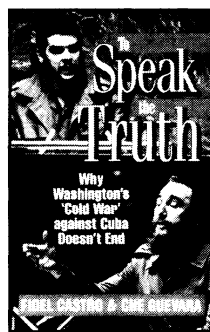
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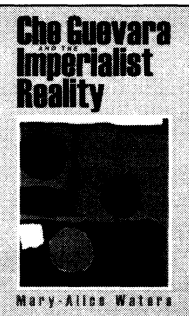
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Che Guevara and the Imperialist Reality

MARY-ALICE WATERS
Ernesto Che Guevara

was among the most outstanding leaders to emerge from the millions of men and women who have made the socialist revolution in Cuba, changing the history of our epoch. These pages highlight the internationalist perspective that Guevara, as part of the Cuban leadership, acted on — from Vietnam to Cuba, from Africa to Latin America and the United States. Waters explains how Che's course strengthened by the working class and its allies within the center of world capitalism itself while improving the odds in the worldwide struggle. In English and Spanish. \$3.50



Labor Day conferences kick off fall campaigns, fund

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, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY PATRICIA GUTIERREZ AND JASON VERGARA

LOS ANGELES — The California Young Socialists and the California Socialist Workers Party sponsored a two-day Socialist Educational Conference over Labor Day Weekend. The conference included three classes, a Saturday night forum, dinner and party, and a meeting of the California YS.

The class on Farrell Dobbs's *Teamster Rebellion* gave a clear example for present day workers and fighting youth of how rank-and-file workers organized a massive strike, which successfully defeated the bosses, their thugs, the state, and the U.S. government.

At the center of discussion in the class on *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity* was the question: Why is independence for Puerto Rico central to the working class here in the U.S.? Marx's writing on the independence of Ireland from England helped explain the answer. Marx said that workers at home would never be free as long as others abroad are still in chains under imperialist rule.

The third class, on V.I. Lenin's pamphlet *To the Rural Poor*, focused on the workers and farmers alliance and how communists must recognize the important role of the rural poor in revolutionary struggle.

The evening forum was a report from the International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism in Havana, Cuba. YS leader Carol Villagomez and Danielle Lafeyette, a student from Cal-State Los An-

geles, described how they had the chance to meet and interact with other youth from Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere around the world.

Around 75 people attended the Saturday night forum. Rebecca Williamson, a high school student from Seattle, said she enjoyed the report because she had considered going to the conference herself. She said that the Saturday night event "was one of the main reasons I came." Asked what she thought about the overall conference, she said, "The conference was like mental ammunition for the fighters."

The weekend ended with a meeting of the California Young Socialists. Eight members of the California YS participated, with two members of the Young Socialists from Vancouver and one from Seattle participating as invited guests. Three young people interested in joining the YS were invited to hear the report as well.

Samantha Kern, organizer of the California Young Socialists, gave a report on the fall perspectives for building the Young Socialists in California. YS members discussed how the California YS needed to help lead the YS national fund drive (see below). The California YS decided to take a fund drive goal of \$2,000. In the discussion there was a collective effort to construct viable ways for each chapter to contribute to making the California goal. Ideas ranged from garage sales to campus movies, raffles, pre-forum dinners, and pledges. At the Saturday night party we kicked off the national fund drive with an auction that raised \$350.

The Seattle YS announced their goal of \$400 and the members of YS in Vancouver said that the discussion was very helpful because they will soon be launching their own national fund-drive in Canada.



Militant/John Sarge
YS member Migdalia Jiménez presents class on *Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity* at educational conference in Chicago. YS members and other youth met during Labor Day weekend regional conferences there and in Los Angeles to share experiences and plan fall campaigns.

The California Young Socialists also discussed how we can help organize and lead the participation of supporters of Pathfinder Press at the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico in November. The meeting also discussed how the YS can make the *Capitalism's World Disorder* sales campaign our own, as well as the importance of having a Young Socialist on every political team in our region.

Two teams were planned immediately following the conference. One is going to King City, California, to meet food processing workers on strike at Basic Vegetable, and the second will carry out the campaign to get *Capitalism's World Disorder* into outlets where workers buy books, and to meet with students in Tucson, Arizona, who are interested in the Young Socialists.

By participating in these national campaigns, the California YS can reach its central goal: to recruit and build chapters. Members of the Los Angeles chapter who attend UC Santa Cruz will head up a week early to take advantage of the first week of school, where we can meet new revolutionary-minded youth, and kick the fall off to a successful start.

BY JACOB PERASSO

CHICAGO — The Young Socialists launched their fall fund drive at two regional Socialist Educational Conferences this weekend. In Chicago, a fund pitch was given and a total of \$962 was pledged from conference participants from the Midwest. In Los Angeles \$350 was raised in an auction.

YS members have committed themselves to an \$8,000 dollar fund drive that aims to reach out to the broadest layer of support possible. YS members are gearing up to use the fund drive at plant gate sales, coalition meetings, literature tables, and other opportunities. YS chapters based on or around college campuses are looking to organize events on campuses that take advantage of recent YS assignments in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

The drive will last 10 weeks, through November 14 and will be a central campaign of the YS nationally.

To make a contribution to the YS national fund drive, call or visit the YS chapter nearest you listed on page 12, or contact the YS National Office listed at the beginning of this column.

Chicago socialist conference draws youth

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

CHICAGO — The place of the Cuban revolution in today's world, uniting workers and the rural poor, and the need for the working class to champion the fight for Puerto Rican independence were topics at the heart of classes and discussions during the Midwest Socialist Educational Conference held here over the Labor Day weekend. More than 60 workers and young people came from seven other states to take part in the conference sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. The weekend was kicked off with a program entitled, "40 years of the Cuban Revolution," featuring talks by YS leader Manuel González, who recently participated in an international youth conference in Cuba, and SWP National Committee member Brian Taylor.

"We live in a world where natural disasters, like the earthquake in Turkey, become giant social crises. This is what capitalism has to offer," González stated. Cuba, he said, offers a different road. He described how students at Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine were among the first to volunteer to aid countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch earlier this year. Taylor pointed to lessons on forging a revolutionary alliance of workers and peasants contained in books like *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*

by Ernesto Che Guevara and *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla* by Harry Villegas.

Bill Schmitt, a high school student from Detroit, said he was excited by the opportunity to meet, talk with, and hear about the experiences of fellow socialists and others from around the region. In preparing for the conference, he read the pamphlet *To the Rural Poor*, by Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin. "I got a lot out of reading an explanation of socialism for a farmer audience," he said. Lenin's pamphlet was the topic of a class given by YS leader Heidi Lord from Minnesota. She said that the 1903 booklet continues to be an excellent guide for the SWP, YS, and other vanguard fighters in organizing workers and farmers today.

Lord has participated in a series of hearings and farm meetings organized by capitalist politicians, bankers, and wealthier farmers. These meetings attract many working farmers who are being devastated by the squeeze between low prices for their products and high production costs and interest rates. Organizers of these meetings argue that poorer farmers should work with bankers and rich farmers to find solutions for the farm crisis. Lenin explained in his pamphlet that instead of small farmers identifying with and trying to become rich farmers, they must unite with workers to fight against capitalism and build a society based on the interests of the exploited producers.

Migdalia Jiménez kicked off a class on the fight for independence in Puerto Rico. The YS member just returned from the big demonstration in San Juan, Puerto Rico, called to support freeing Puerto Rican political prisoners without conditions. Jiménez said that marchers also raised demands calling for the U.S. Navy to get out of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques and in support of health-care and water workers fighting the privatizations of their industries.

Harvey McArthur gave a talk explaining why the fates of workers and farmers in the United States and in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico are intertwined. Participants in the conference signed a message of solidarity with Jose Solis, a Puerto Rican independence fighter who was framed-up and sentenced to 57 months in jail.

Participants in the conference bought 20 copies of *To the Rural Poor* by Lenin, 1 of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other

books. Jake Perasso, the fund director for the Young Socialists, made an appeal for the \$8,000 YS national fund drive.

Ten young people, including YS members and others attending the conference, held a meeting at the close of the weekend. They discussed carrying out YS campaigns including the YS fund drive and the campaign to place *Capitalism's World Disorder* in bookstores and other outlets. They also discussed plans for a forum and class in Cleveland, where one conference participant has requested to join the YS and a number of other young people are interested.

Pathfinder Fund backers in Boston set plan to meet goal

BY PAT HUNTER

Four weeks into the campaign to raise \$125,000 to help finance Pathfinder's continuing reprint program and several new books, \$7,285 has been received. At the same time, the potential to meet and surpass the goal by the November 15 deadline is shown by pledges to date adding up to more than \$76,000. Supporters around the world are considering goals and plans to maximize their contributions.

Simultaneously, the campaign to expand the availability of Pathfinder books is showing its first results. At the end of last week, Pathfinder received an order for five titles—with the check included—from a bookstore in Virden, Illinois. Last November, Virden was the location of a demonstration and rally both commemorating a battle between union miners and the Chicago-Virden Coal Co. 100 years ago and supporting the members of the United Mineworkers of America on strike against the Freeman United Coal Co. at that time.

Pathfinder supporters in Boston were the first ones to send in a definite goal and a plan for achieving it. Close behind came news that supporters in New Zealand have set a goal of raising \$2,550, of which \$104 has already been collected.

Greg McCartan, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, is heading the fund effort in Boston. The garment worker explained the three-point plan to raise \$4,100 which has been worked out by

a broad layer of supporters. Next week, an appeal letter explaining the aims of the 1999 Pathfinder Fund will be issued by three of these supporters—two from the garment and textile industries and one active in the work in defense of the Cuban revolution, all of whom value Pathfinder books. Boston supporters are also planning a fund-raising event featuring Martin Koppel. In addition to editing the Spanish-language monthly magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*, Koppel was part of the meetings that resulted in Pathfinder's upcoming new title *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. This book is on course for its launching—along with the Spanish edition to be issued by Cuba's Editora Política—in November at the Guadalajara book fair in Mexico. The third focus for Boston's fund-raising will be an event where supporters will discuss their experiences from a recent visit to West Africa. They will report discussions they had with many workers who support the Cuban revolution and the revolutionary course charted by Thomas Sankara during the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso.

To find out more about the fund, to get involved or make a contribution, contact your nearest Pathfinder bookstore listed on page 12. Please make all checks and money orders payable to Pathfinder, earmarked Pathfinder Fund, and send to: Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

| YS Fund Drive | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Initial goals adopted by chapters | |
| Birmingham | \$400 |
| Chicago | \$1,000 |
| Chippewa Falls | \$200 |
| Detroit | \$200 |
| Des Moines | \$100 |
| Fort Collins | \$200 |
| Los Angeles | \$550 |
| New York | \$700 |
| Pittsburgh | \$200 |
| San Francisco | \$800 |
| Santa Cruz | \$650 |
| Seattle | \$400 |
| Twin Cities | \$400 |

Pathfinder reprint project volunteers make strides forward

BY TOMTOMASKO

OAKLAND, California — The effort to keep all of Pathfinder Press's books and pamphlets in print took some strides forward at the recent Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, August 5-8. Thirteen more supporters of the communist movement volunteered to work on the project.

Pathfinder installed an Agfa Gallileo computer-to-plate machine last year that can create printing plates rapidly from a computer file, with less labor and skill than earlier prepress methods. To use this equipment, a book or pamphlet must be in a digital form. However, the majority of Pathfinder's titles only exist on the paper they are printed on. About 110 volunteers in seven countries are involved in a complex and detailed effort to turn the printed books into digital ones.

This reporter participated in the rolling panels that covered the sweep of union, farm, and other struggles that conference participants are involved in, and efforts to produce and distribute the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder's books and discuss their ideas. "We have a sense of renewal, a reinvigoration that will help us when we are staring at computer screens for hours on end," said this reporter during a summary of the conference at the Saturday night rally. "We have heard stories here of workers who first came in contact with these revolutionary books on a picket line and now are here today. Whether you are a person who has received a book on a picket line or a campus literature table or the person who brought the book there, you know that the ideas contained in them can change the course of a person's life, show them a different future than they had imagined for themselves. What more motivation do you

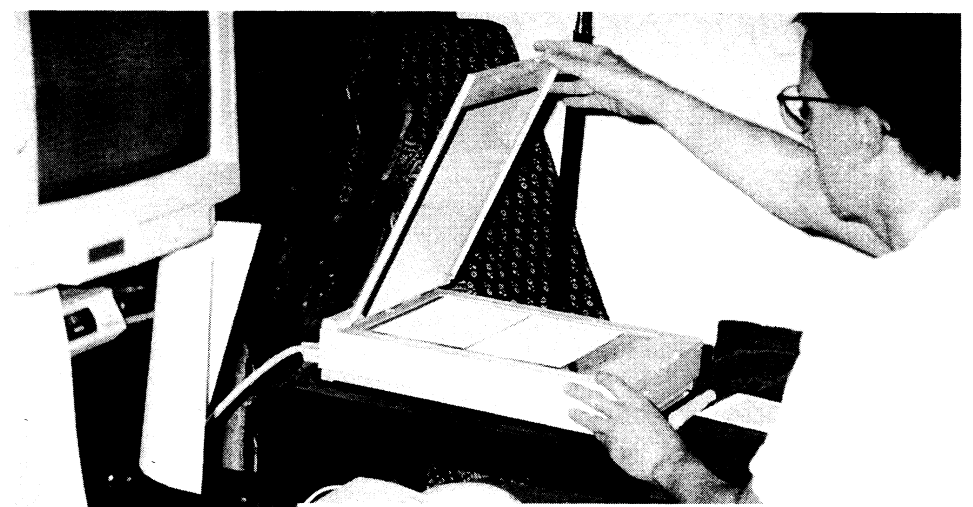
need to be involved in a campaign to keep these books in print?"

The Reprint Project also put itself on a firm financial foundation during the course of the conference. The project is self-financing. Each person involved is responsible for his or her own computer, software, Internet access and other expenses. Collectively the project also needs to pay for graphical work for book covers and inside photos. There are also costs incurred for using an Internet database where volunteers both receive new work and post finished work. The project needs \$1,000 a month in small contributions from those who work on the project. At the beginning of the conference \$675 a month was pledged. By the end the goal was surpassed, with pledges totaling \$1,077 a month.

On Sunday, August 8, 66 project volunteers held four workshops for those participating in scanning books, proofreading, formatting, and graphics. This was the first time many had met face-to-face to work on common problems.

Jerry Gardner, a member of the three-person steering committee of the project in San Francisco who organizes the formatting said, "A team of five experienced formatters was appointed to take responsibility, in turn, for the quality of each reprint — a big step toward achieving consistency in the quality standards of every book."

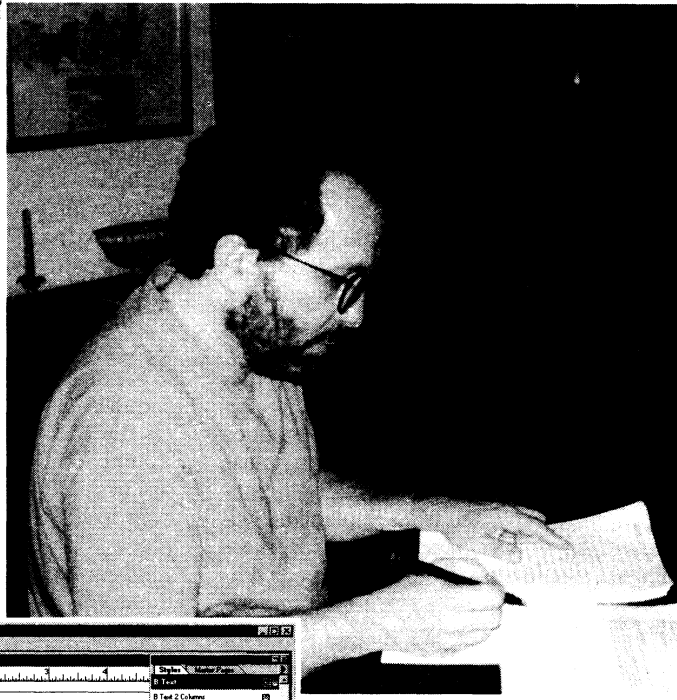
The scan workshop focused on finishing scanning all remaining books and pamphlets by January 1, 2000. There are about 50 books and a dozen pamphlets left that need to be



Militant photos

The first step in preparing a book for reprint is to scan the text into a computer. Above, Warren Simons, who organizes the scanning team, loads a page of a book into a scanner. Reprint volunteers plan to complete the scanning step by Jan. 1, 2000. There are about 60 titles left.

Every new manuscript created by scanning is carefully proofread twice. At right is Arnold Weissberg, a member of the proofreading team.



October 1917 and open the road to a worldwide struggle for socialism. Until now this important, 1,350-page book existed only on film and paper. Having a digital version will make the book easier, cheaper and quicker to reprint.

In August project volunteers also turned over to Pathfinder *Democracy and Revolution* by George Novack, *Problems of Women's Liberation* by Evelyn Reed, and *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara. In September six titles are projected to be completed. So far 45 books and pamphlets have been converted to CDs.

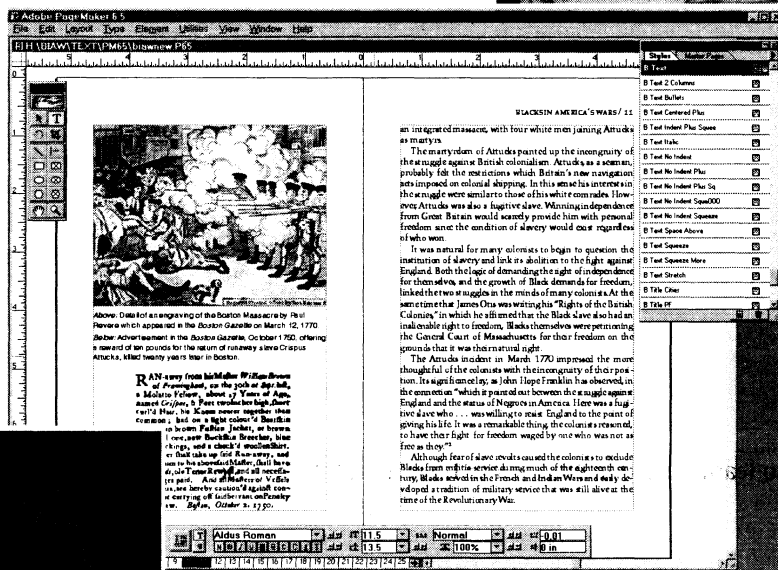
In addition to getting ready for reprint the largest book in Pathfinder's arsenal, the project volunteers also made another conquest. They successfully organized a team of 18 people over seven weeks who worked to reproduce the index for such a huge book. A book prepared for reprint often is reformatted with different page numbers. Each time this happens an index with new page numbers has to be produced.

Based upon the experience with *History*, the project has assigned two people to organize teams of volunteers on an as-needed basis to tackle more indices, insure quality control and to organize the indexing months ahead of time.

The photos on this page show the process through which a book is converted to digital format.

If you wish to join in the effort to keep Pathfinder's titles in print, please contact Ruth Cheney, the chairperson of the project, by E-mail at ruthchen@flash.net.

Tom Tomasko is a member of the Reprint Project steering committee and of International Association of Machinists Local 1781.

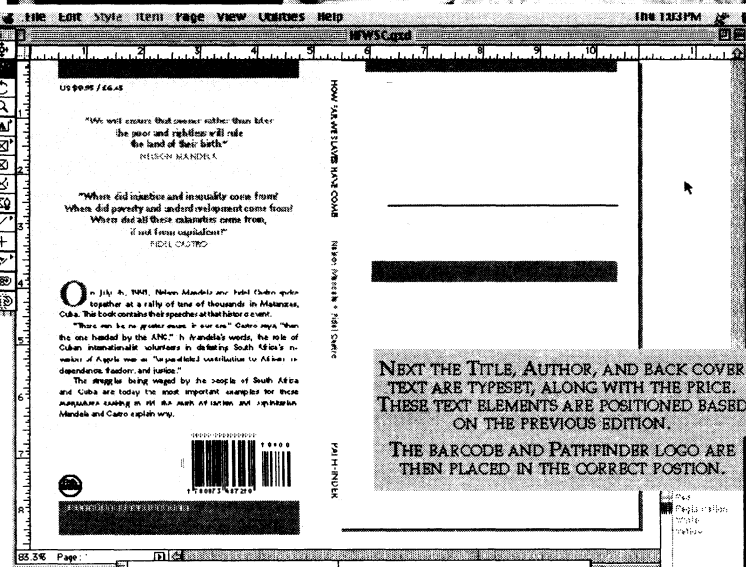
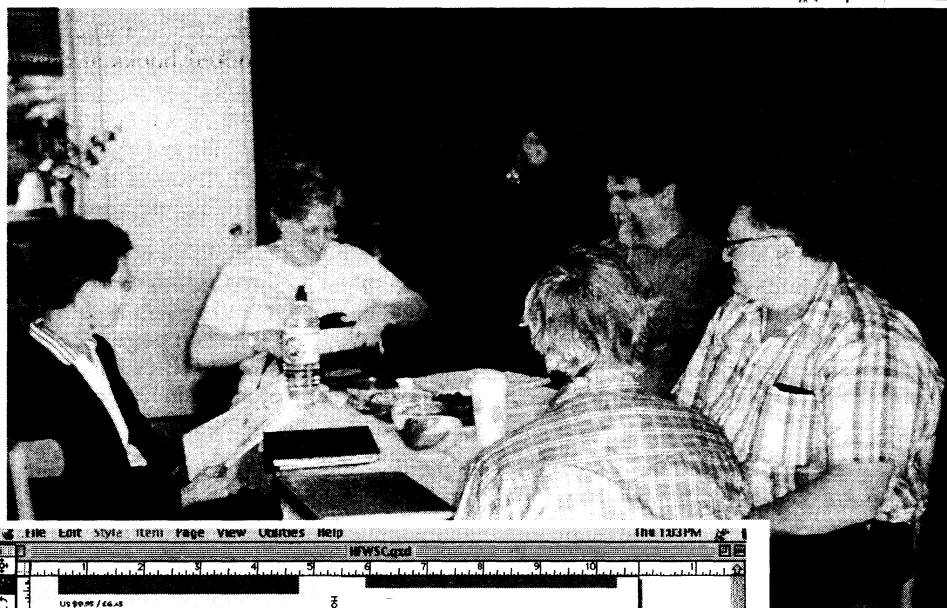


The third major step is to format a new book. Volunteers use several formatting styles created by Pathfinder to give all the books and pamphlets a shared look. Often the new fonts are more readable than the old text. Above, a page from *Blacks in America's Wars* being formatted. Robert Mullen, the book's author, wrote to Pathfinder how "extremely satisfied I am with the improved print quality of my book, *Blacks in America's Wars*. The new digitized process is great! I am also struck by the improved quality of the photos and the attractive appearance of the digitized readable type. Please thank everyone responsible, including your staff and especially your group of volunteers."

put in digital form, ready to be proofread. "Once this is done," said Warren Simons, who heads up scanning, "the dozen of us can throw ourselves into other aspects of the project, thereby increasing the pace."

Currently, the project is getting 4-5 books a month ready for reprint and trying to reach a goal of 10 a month.

On September 1 the Reprint Project delivered to Pathfinder Press a compact disk with *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky. A central leader of the communist movement in Russia, Trotsky describes the role of the Bolshevik party in leading the working class and peasantry to take political power in

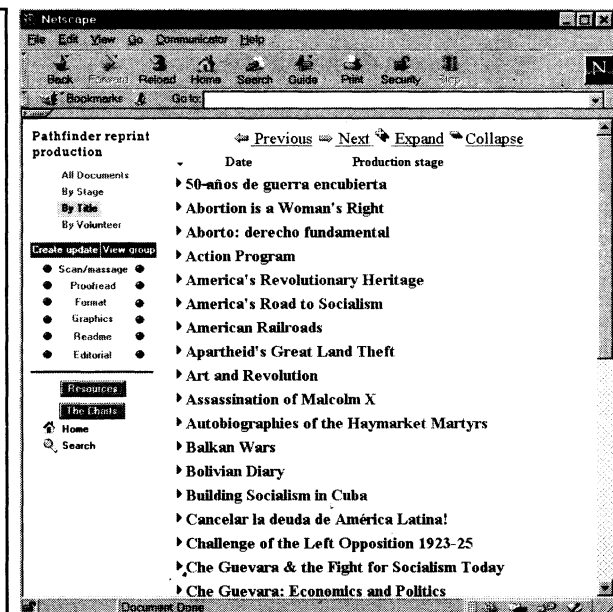


The Reprint Project's worldwide effort is led by a three-person steering committee in the San Francisco Bay Area. Top, clockwise from left, Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters meets with steering committee members Ruth Cheney and Tom Tomasko, Socialist Workers Party leader Norton Sandler, and steering committee member Jerry Gardner.

The graphics team creates digital replications of covers, photographs, maps, and other graphics. Above is the digital reconstruction of the cover for *How Far We Slaves Have Come*, containing speeches by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro.

The last step is to assemble a compact disk of the cover, text, and photographs, like the one at right for *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*.

The work is facilitated by the use of an Internet database. Each volunteer gets their work from this central area and, when finished, puts it back so the next volunteer can begin work. At far right is a computer screen of the first of more than 150 books now in production.



Virginia trip shows value of taking book to fighting workers

The reports below are from a team in the Tidewater region of Virginia headed by Nan Bailey, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's Trade Union Committee who is heading up the effort to get *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* into bookstores and libraries that workers use.

BY NAN BAILEY

We met up in Washington, D.C., this morning [Tuesday, August 24] because we wanted to get a short orientation on placing Pathfinder books in stores and libraries from Tom Headly, who could not join us. He's a rail worker in D.C. with experience placing books. He made it simple and to the point.

We did a short political orientation and discussed the plan for each day. One-third of time on book placements. We'll begin with suggestions we've gotten from workers we've met here on where they and others like them go to find books. Socialist workers from Washington came up with about seven such places by talking to Steelworkers at the Newport News shipyard gate and beginning to call the approximately 10 *Militant* subscribers in the Tidewater area. We'll also go to a number of plant gates. We'll spend the evenings doing some door-to-door sales, as well as talking to subscribers. We also want to get to one or two of the campuses in the area.

Accomplished Tuesday: A few of us spent about an hour talking to a member of USWA Local 8888 who has worked at the shipyard for 16 years. He just got a subscription to the *Militant* last week and we talked to him about a number of things, including getting *Capitalism's World Disorder*. He's already looked over the Pathfinder catalog and picked some things he's interested in.

He said he knows there's a stigma against socialism in this country and he's not a socialist but he wants to learn more about us. He said he likes the idea that capitalism in Russia can't be reestablished without smashing the workers first and he wants to learn more about this. He was impressed with a recent article he read on the internet about Russian workers at a mill taking over and sending management away.

He had already given us three bookstore

suggestions prior to our arrival and as we spoke he thought of another: a Black bookstore in town that he'd been to and whose manager he knows. Gave us the name and said to mention his.

Bookstore Visits: We've got three appointments for tomorrow. One in Newport News and two in nearby Hampton. That's where Hampton Institute is, a predominantly Black college. The team there will check out the campus to see if there's activity and we'll return if there is. We got these appointments from early evening phone calls.

We also reached a handful of subscribers. One said he'd meet us at the 8888 plant gate tomorrow. One not interested. Two more asked us to call back tomorrow to see if we could set a time to meet and talk.

Wednesday, August 25

Our big accomplishment today: Team of Ruth and Ned got a placement at a bookstore in Hampton of two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. This is a bookstore one of the 8888 strikers recommended we try out. They get most of their books from a large distributor, but the buyer bought the two books (paid on the spot) herself. She is looking through the catalog and indicated she will probably fax an order.

Ruth and Ned also kept an appointment at another bookstore in Hampton. This one was recommended to us by about three different steelworkers we met down here. This buyer said he doesn't make snap decisions and wanted to take more time to go through the catalog, but he's considering ordering a few of the titles on the fight for Black rights. Half the store is comic books. Other books sold are used paperbacks, and a small section of new books. A number in this section are directed to customers interested in the fight for Black rights.

Mary and Bobbi visited a store in Newport News. We got this one off a list sent to us by Pathfinder of bookstores in the Virginia area. Romance novels is what they sell. No interest in our titles. Proof that it's best to stay on course with the leads we get from workers and others we meet. Those are the stops where we got better results.

Nan and Ralph visited a community center in a Black neighborhood in Newport

News which has a section where music tapes, CDs, and books are sold. Manager we came to see was not in and we will call and revisit tomorrow. Looks promising. Sign posted on front door said "This establishment supports USWA Local 8888 steelworkers on strike."

Have appointment tomorrow at another store recommended by a steelworker. We also got two library recommendations from workers.

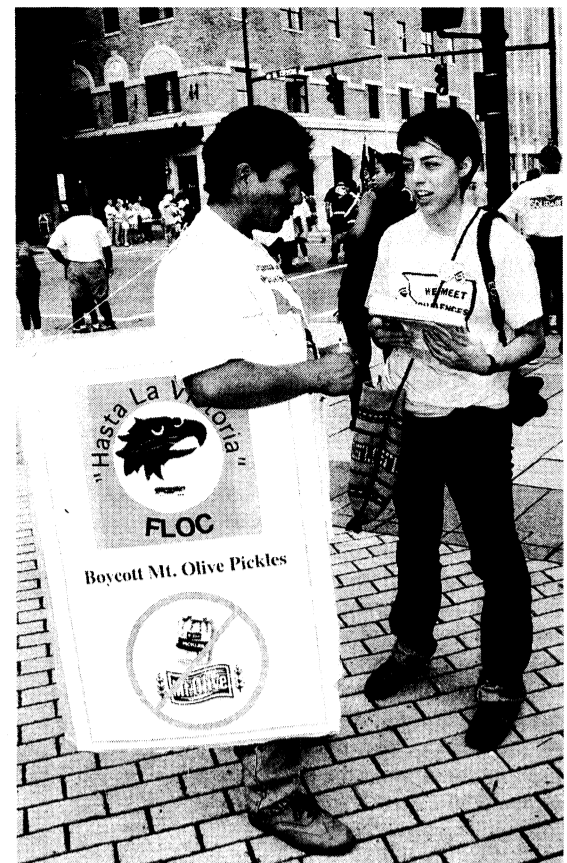
Plant Gates: We did an early morning plant gate at two adjacent meatpacking plants in Smithfield, Virginia. We sold 16 *Militants* and got two names of people considering whether to buy *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Main interest was in the article on the ending of the Newport News strike. Also got some interest in the Che Guevara speech from a few workers who wanted to see what he was like.

We tried to do the early morning shift at Newport News Shipbuilding, but we were 30 minutes off. Sold one *Militant*, but it was too late. We returned to the shipyard in the afternoon but were frustrated again by a heavy downpour of rain. We went to a nearby restaurant where workers stop in before and after the shift and were able to get into some discussions with steelworkers and sold five *Militants*.

Several of the steelworkers we met at the shipyard wanted to discuss the mess they are in financially because of how the union officials treated them in giving out benefits — or not giving them out — after scrutinizing people's personal bills. They told us a few co-workers are in jail for nonpayment of child support because the union officials refused to okay these benefits payments. They said that after going through the humiliation of waiting for hours each week with their bills in hand to be interviewed in detail, many were denied benefits.

Thursday, August 26

We sold two more copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* today. Our day began with an early morning plantgate at Norshipco shipyard in Norfolk. Shipyard where work-



Militant/Margrethe Siem

YS member Romina Green talks with worker at Charlotte Labor Day parade September 6. Three workers in North Carolina bought copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* that weekend.

ers told us about 1,300 workers are employed. They're organized by the boilermakers. We sold eight *Militants* and got one callback for a *Capitalism's World Disorder*. In the background while the sale was going on was maybe 75 sailors doing their morning exercises in formation right in front of the Norshipco main gate.

Next we went to Tidewater Community College, Norfolk campus. We had a table up outside for about an hour and a half. Sold four *Militants* and one Pathfinder catalog. Nan and Bobbi visited the campus library. Buyer wasn't in and we left a catalog, got her name and Nan will follow up to call her. We also visited a bookstore we noticed down the street from the campus but no sale. The selection there made us think we could get some books placed, but the owner said he only buys overstocked books at discount prices, no new titles.

Buyers at two Black community bookstores had given us a time to come in but neither was there when we went in. We should visit both again on next return trip to the area.

We did the afternoon shipyard sale at Newport News shipyard. A couple of us hawked *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Sold nine *Militants*, one *Capitalism's World Disorder*, one Malcolm X pamphlet, one Pathfinder catalog. Two workers who recognized us from a sale at the plantgate the previous day stopped to say hello.

In the evening we met with one of the Newport News steelworkers. He said the solidarity inside the yard and the numbers who had joined the union prior to the strike (he's been there several years and said the number of union members had noticeably grown early this year) inspired him.

We had a final meeting with a worker who had helped us to let him know what we had accomplished here. Since he had made some of the suggestions on bookstore visits, he wanted to know how we'd done.

We've had three useful political discussions on the team over the last 24 hours:

1. One was on the sections of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* which refer to the Newport News shipyard organizing drive and earlier strike (1979), and the SWP's work.

2. We discussed why we were prioritizing the bookstores that were recommended to us by workers. Someone passed along to us a listing of bookstores in the area around here and there was temptation to go down that listing. One team member asked why aren't we prioritizing the bigger book chains also. We discussed this and why we can't prioritize both right now (we truly haven't even had enough time to follow through on all the suggestions made to us), why the stores and libraries workers in struggle lead us to are the priority of this campaign. Some of our results are proof of this. We'll get back to the larger chains, but doing this along the lines of how this centralized campaign has been launched by the party is critical. We don't want to get diverted.

3. We discussed how we have to look for the workers who are interested in our politics when we do these plant gates and when we get into discussions with workers like those we've been setting up meetings with.

Selling 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

Continued from front page

sation. In addition to discussing the crisis conditions facing farmers — from drought to falling prices for farm products — many had on their minds the developments effecting workers in industries back home. One farmer from North Carolina said a sports clothing factory in a town near her farm recently closed down, throwing dozens out of work, and moved to Mexico for cheaper labor. She got a copy of the *ISR* featuring "A sea change in working class politics," which is the opening chapter of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, to read more about workers' resistance to the crisis of capitalism.

Another farm family member from North Carolina, said he had worked in the past at the Pillowtex (formerly Fieldcrest Cannon) textile plant in Kannapolis, North Carolina. He was pleased to learn of the recent successful union organizing drive there. "That's a positive development for the workers. We really had to stick together in there," he said. He also told the team that the tire factory near his family farm was going on 12-hour shifts and he hoped the union would take this up. "It's hard enough work for eight hours, no one should be forced to work like that for 12 hours."

One farm family member from Virginia was an airline worker and a member of the same union local as one of the team members. They made plans to get together at the airport for political discussion and to check out *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

After the farmers settlement application session, the team met with a member of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888 who was recently on strike at the shipyard in Newport News. He bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, as he had been planning on doing after getting back to work. He also suggested some book-

stores in the area to visit for placing the book and other Pathfinder titles. Over lunch, the team met with another steelworker from a different USWA local based in a chemical plant in Hopewell, Virginia. He was among dozens from his union who went to the Newport News strike periodically to walk the picket line and bring solidarity. He was on his way to work. After looking over the *Militant*, he decided to subscribe, saying "I never thought I would find a paper like this." He also took a Pathfinder catalog and invited us to come to his plant gate in the near future and meet other workers and show the literature we had.

Following up on the lead given to us from both steelworkers, the team visited a bookstore in a shopping mall in Colonial Heights, Virginia. After looking over the "Millennium" section, we asked to speak to the buyer. Although the buyer was not in, the bookstore manager listened with interest to the explanation given of why *Capitalism's World Disorder* should be on their bookshelves and would sell. She took an order of two books on the spot and said she would be ordering more.



BY JOEL BRITTON

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — Young Socialists leader Manuel González, recently returned from an international youth conference in Cuba, and Joel Britton, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's Trade Union Committee, drove from Chicago to Central Illinois September 2-3. We arrived at Freeman United's Crown II mine in time for the Thursday afternoon shift change.

Three miners and one truck driver hauling coal to a power plant in Champaign-Urbana had bought the *Militant* when we were joined by miner Dave Yard, one of the

rank-and-file leaders of the 98-day strike against Freeman last fall. Yard got out of his car, smiling and celebrating the fact that the United Mine Workers union had succeeded — over Freeman's opposition — in scheduling a miners memorial day off with pay the next day, extending the Labor Day weekend to a four-day break. Yard said a miner had put up a sign in the bathhouse: "Enjoy your four days off." The final three miners driving out the gate all stopped and bought the *Militant*.

Yard arranged for us to meet Carl Taylor, a trustee on the Palmer, Illinois, town council and a leader of a fight to block a very large dairy operation from being set up in the area. Taylor works with farmers and workers who fear that the capitalist cattle confinement set-up will poison the aquifer from which they pump their water. He is a retired Decatur, Illinois, Caterpillar worker and veteran of many United Auto Workers strike struggles against the heavy equipment maker. Yard told Taylor that he and several other miners were starting Miners for Clean Water and joining the fight.

We went on to Springfield to visit a bookstore and libraries recommended by a USWA militant who works at the Bridgestone-Firestone tire plant in Bloomington-Normal and who attended the Active Workers Conference last month and wants to help promote *Capitalism's World Disorder*. On the way to Springfield, we stopped at the monument to Mary "Mother" Jones in the Union Cemetery in Mt. Olive. The monument commemorates the deaths of some two dozen miners killed during the October 1898 Battle of Virden and in mine strikes in 1932-36. A plaque memorializes this and what could be every revolutionary fighter's epitaph: "We count it death to falter, not to die."

Vieques residents to U.S. Navy: leave our Puerto Rican fishermen, workers, youth protest U.S. military occupation of

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

VIEQUES, Puerto Rico — The metal shards are visible along the hillsides in all directions. They dot the arid ground that is now being covered with a new growth of vegetation.

Crossing the island along a dirt trail, visitors walk by a rusted rocket launcher, the hulks of a couple of tanks and jeeps, the carcass of a jet plane riddled with bullet holes. Bullets and shells are strewn everywhere. Here and there, a five-foot bomb juts out, half-buried in the ground. Once-beautiful lagoons are pock-marked with bomb craters that give them a moon-like appearance.

The turquoise coast and gleaming white beaches in the distance, as well as the wild cotton plants rapidly growing back amid the brush, are a reminder of what this area might look like undisturbed.

We are in the U.S. Navy's restricted zone in eastern Vieques, known as the "Inner Range."

Militant reporters visited this area August 28 at the invitation of Ismael Guadalupe, a school teacher and leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. We accompanied a group of 20 high school and junior high school students from the town of Vieques. Two activist fishermen took us in their boats to the restricted zone, a wet 30-minute ride from the town's port.

The U.S. military has used this area as a live-fire range for decades. No bombing has occurred since April 19, however, when a Navy warplane allegedly went "off course" and dropped two 500-pound bombs on an observation post, killing David Sanes, a 35-year-old Vieques resident employed as a civilian guard, and wounding four others. The Pentagon suspended training exercises on the island in face of public anger. Protesters quickly set up several makeshift camps in the restricted zone to deter the Navy from resuming its target practice.

Example of U.S. colonial rule

"The fundamental reason for what we face in Vieques is that Puerto Rico is not a sov-

erign nation," Guadalupe tells the students. "Others make the decisions. For example, the governor of Puerto Rico, who says he wants the Navy out of Vieques too, must request this of another government — the U.S. government."

Another example of Puerto Rico's colonial status, Guadalupe adds, is the fact that Washington has 17 political prisoners in its jails, many of whom have been locked up for 19

of jobs left, unemployment is high.

The U.S. Navy occupies two thirds of the island. It uses the western tip as an ammunition storage area and the eastern zone as a firing range, squeezing the residents into the middle. Vieques is part of the Navy's Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility, together with the Roosevelt Roads naval base on the main island.

Pentagon officials argue that Vieques is

tional Congress, a pro-independence coalition, have built a wooden schoolhouse there. The camp is named after Eugenio María de Hostos, a 19th century educator and leader of Puerto Rico's independence struggle. The schoolhouse, now with a modest library, has been visited by brigades of teachers, students, and others over the past four months.

Under a tent nearby, Guadalupe and Carlos Ruiz, a junior high school physical education



High school students in teachers camp, set up in U.S. Navy restricted zone, take part in discussion on history of fight against U.S. military occupation of Vieques. Speaking at right is Ismael Guadalupe, leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques.

Militant photos by Martín Koppel

years because of their actions on behalf of Puerto Rico's independence.

The controversy over Vieques has erupted into a major political question in Puerto Rico, sparking popular outrage and forcing all political parties and figures to take a position. The U.S. government too is worried about keeping a lid on these developments.

Vieques is a small island, 18 miles long and 5 miles wide, off the eastern coast of the main island of Puerto Rico. Many of its 9,300 residents earn their livelihood from fishing or are public employees; with few other sources

"irreplaceable" as the biggest training range for the Atlantic fleet and their only facility for combined air, land, and sea operations using live ammunition. Military training here involves marines, Navy SEALs, aircraft carriers, and nuclear submarines. Most of the U.S. pilots sent to Yugoslavia for Washington's bombing campaign earlier this year trained in Vieques.

The fishermen took us to one of the civil disobedience camps set up on a beach the U.S. military normally uses for amphibious landings. Teachers affiliated to the Hostos Na-

teacher, begin an exchange with the students on the history of the struggle to force the U.S. Navy out of their island. Ruiz is part of a group of teachers who have been coming to the restricted zone every weekday after work and camping here on weekends.

When the teachers are at work, the camp is tended by Martín Irizarry, a heavy equipment mechanic from Utuado, on the main island. He explains, "I came here when I heard the Navy make statements that they were only bombing on 'uninhabited land.' That outraged me — as if the residents of Vieques don't exist! This is our land."

Decades of struggle

Guadalupe reminds the youth that the Navy has occupied most of the island since 1940, when Washington was preparing to enter World War II. The U.S. military authorities evicted 3,000 residents to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands — a nearby U.S. colony — and elsewhere. Fishermen, farmers, and workers were given 24 hours to evacuate. Squatters' homes were bulldozed, but the owners of three sugar plantations were bought out.

"Our parents and grandparents began the fight 50 years ago," Guadalupe points out. Fishermen have spearheaded an ongoing struggle that has seen ups and downs over the decades, every peak coinciding with a rise in the independence movement.

The constant bombings and naval and submarine maneuvers have devastated the livelihood of Vieques residents as well as the environment. Agriculture was decimated. On the days of bombing practice Navy officials would tell the fishermen to wait until nighttime to fish. The military-caused pollution has destroyed coral reefs, sandbars, mangrove trees, and other flora and fauna.

Guadalupe himself joined protests as a student in 1964, when the Navy was seeking further land encroachments. In the early 1960s "the Cuban revolution helped awaken the independence struggle and the issue of Vieques," he noted.

By 1975, protests forced the Navy to stop bombing the nearby island of Culebra.

Another uprising began in 1978. Fishermen launched the Crusade for the Rescue of Vieques. When Washington launched its Springboard 78 war maneuvers against revolutionary Cuba, U.S. admiral Robert Flanagan told the fishermen to stop fishing for three weeks until the maneuvers were over. Instead, fishermen ran their boats in front of the warships, disrupting the maneuvers and tangling the expensive propellers in their fishing nets.

Puerto Rican prisoners to be released

Continued from front page

on parole. As part of Washington's "antiterrorist" drive against the Puerto Rican independence movement, 16 Puerto Rican independentistas were railroaded to prison in the early and mid-1980s with sentences ranging between 35 years and life in prison. Most were accused of "seditious conspiracy" and related charges. A 17th political prisoner, José Solís, was framed up by the FBI and sentenced to 51 months in prison in Chicago last July.

The 11 to be released are Elizam Escobar, Ricardo Jiménez, Adolfo Matos, Dylcia Pagán, Alicia Rodríguez, Ida Luz Rodríguez, Luis Rosa, Carmen Valentín, Alberto Rodríguez, Alejandrina Torres, and Edwin Cortés. In addition, Juan Segarra Palmer will be eligible for release in five years instead of serving a longer term. Two prisoners, Oscar López and Antonio Camacho, rejected the government's onerous conditions. The government refused to offer parole to Carlos Alberto Torres, who is serving a 70-year sentence.

Haydée Beltrán, who is serving a life sentence, is pursuing her own effort to win parole. She and Solís are not covered by Clinton's conditional release offer.

Supporters in Chicago are planning a "hero's welcome" for the freed prisoners, according to Marcos Vilar of the National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners. Supporters can call the committee at (773) 278-0885 for more information.

Vilar said the committee is also seeking financial contributions to help the independentistas establish themselves once out of prison. Contributions can be sent to the National Committee at 2607 West Division St., Chicago, IL 60622.

The Clinton administration set a series of harsh conditions the independence activists had to agree to in order to win release. These include renouncing "the use, threatened use,

or advocacy of the use of violence for any purpose, including the achieving of any goal concerning the status of Puerto Rico."

They have to submit to terms of parole policed by U.S. officials, including not meeting with or communicating with each other or other Puerto Rican independence activists, not traveling without U.S. government permission, reporting to parole authorities, not possessing firearms of "destructive devices," and submitting to drug tests on demand.

At a press conference in Chicago September 6, José López, director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center here and brother of prisoner Oscar López, stated, "We echo the announcement [Democratic U.S. congressman] Luis Gutiérrez made yesterday urging the prisoners to accept the conditions and come home. They've been in jail too long."

"We don't agree with the conditions, but we want them home," declared Josefina Rodríguez, mother of prisoners Ida Luz and Alicia Rodríguez. "It has to be clear we are not asking them to renounce their fight for independence," she added.

Rise in anticolonial, labor resistance

Clinton's August 11 parole offer came after a several-year-long campaign calling on the U.S. government free the Puerto Rican political prisoners, among the longest-held in the world. The demand for their release has won unprecedented support in Puerto Rico, including the trade unions, religious figures such as the archbishop of San Juan, and even leaders of both ruling colonial parties.

The campaign stands on the precedent of the victorious struggle that in 1979 won the unconditional release of five Nationalist political prisoners who had spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons. Two of them, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Lolita Lebrón, remain prominent and respected spokespeople of the fight

for Puerto Rico's independence.

The defense campaign for the prisoners has gained momentum from the current rise in anti-colonial and labor resistance in Puerto Rico, as well as the impact of increased struggles by working people in the United States.

A 41-day strike by telephone workers last year opposing government moves to sell the state-owned phone company to private investors drew widespread support, culminating in a two-day island-wide general strike. More recently, water workers and hospital workers have protested the privatization of state-owned companies and related wage cuts and layoffs.

The death of a civilian guard during U.S. Navy practice bombing runs on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques in April of this year has touched off further protests, leading to a march of 50,000 July 4 demanding the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques.

'Antiterrorist' countercampaign

The conditions demanded by Clinton for the release of the political prisoners and the fact that not all of them were included in the offer sparked outrage in Puerto Rico and in Puerto Rican communities in the United States. On August 29 thousands marched in San Juan, Puerto Rico, demanding unconditional freedom for all the prisoners.

In response, police officials and a number of capitalist politicians launched a countercampaign against the release, slandering the independence activists as "terrorists."

Officials of the FBI and U.S. Bureau of Prisons, as well as U.S. attorneys in Illinois and New York, denounced Clinton's offer, calling on him to reverse it.

The FBI has long played a prominent role in framing up and harassing activists in the Puerto Rican independence movement. The FBI, for example, set off bombs at a Puerto

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land island

In protests in May 1979, 21 people were arrested and 13 were jailed. Guadalupe spent almost five months in U.S. prisons in Atlanta and Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. One young pro-independence protester, Angel Rodríguez Cristóbal, was killed while in a federal prison in Tallahassee.

To quell the protests, the Navy signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" in 1983 with the colonial administration of Gov. Carlos Romero Barceló, promising to fund industrial development to generate jobs and to protect the environment.

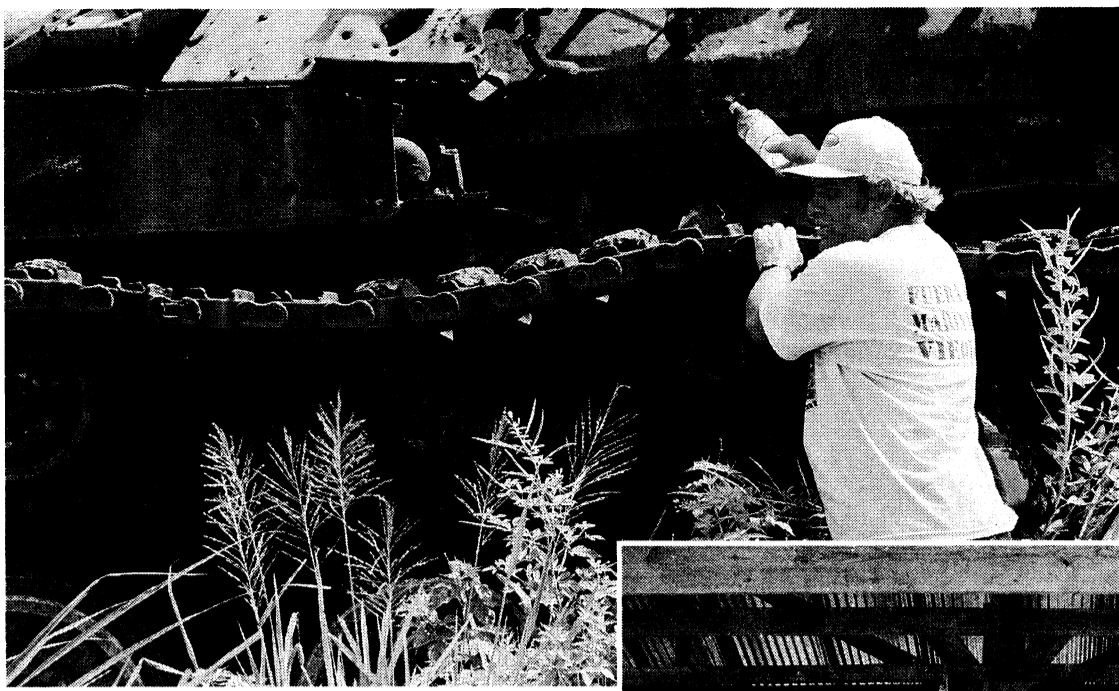
A company making military uniforms opened in Vieques but closed in a few months. "The new factories all shut down and the economic situation got worse," Guadalupe said. Unemployment here is 50 percent and 73 percent of the island's residents live below the official poverty line, compared with 58 percent in the rest of Puerto Rico.

"Endangered species were found dead. Explosive devices kept flying over our towns," he added. The 3,000 mahogany trees planted by the Navy were later cut down to make room for a military radar facility. Washington has used Vieques as a springboard for military interventions in Central America and the Caribbean. In 1983, U.S. troops practiced their invasion of Grenada on the Puerto Rican island. When Vieques fishermen discovered that U.S. forces were practicing war moves there against Nicaragua, they alerted the revolutionary government of that country. The island was also used in the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama.

The F/A-18 Hornet jet that took off from the *USS John F. Kennedy* aircraft carrier and dropped the bombs that killed David Sanes was carrying out target practice before joining the U.S. forces assaulting Yugoslavia. Since then, U.S. military officials have howled that the suspension of training exercises in Vieques is damaging U.S. troops' military preparedness.

The *New York Daily News* reported September 7 that 2,200 soldiers in the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit will sail from North Carolina for the Mediterranean to relieve the 26th expeditionary unit that fought in Kosova "without having trained for their main mission by hitting the beach in Vieques under cover of naval gunfire and airstrikes." And the U.S. destroyer *John Hancock* is set to sail from Norfolk, Virginia, to the Persian Gulf or the Mediterranean "without any sailors aboard qualified to fire its fore-and-aft 5-inch deck guns," the paper reported. "It's a serious issue," a U.S. Navy official whined.

When the news of Sanes' death was reported, the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques mobilized immediately. Within hours, 200 angry protesters demonstrated at the entrance to the U.S. Navy's Camp García. The next day, 300 people picketed at City Hall to



Militant photos by Martin Koppel
Above, Ismael Guadalupe points out bullet holes in tank used for Navy target practice. It became clear Washington was using uranium bullets on Vieques "because only that kind of shell can penetrate such thick armor," he noted. At right, Vieques high school students visit school-house built on beach used for amphibious landings. Banner reads, "No to militarism—Navy out of Vieques."

demand the U.S. military leave.

The Association of Fishermen of the South organized a protest by two dozen fishermen who took their boats to the area where Sanes was killed. They laid wreaths and placed an eight-foot cross at the top of the hill in his memory, renaming the site Mount David.

'Life or death for fishermen'

"The fishermen have always been in the forefront of this struggle," said Tito Ventura, 40, a member of the fishermen's association who has fished since he was a boy. "It's a matter of life or death to us." There are about 500 fishermen in Vieques today, but only 150 fish full-time; the rest have to work a second job, Ventura said.

In addition to Mount David, several other protest camps have been established in the restricted zone in defiance of the Navy—one by the fishermen, the teachers' camp, and a camp organized by the Puerto Rican Independence Party, whose president, Rubén Berrios, a senator in Puerto Rico's legislature, has been living there for more than three months. The pro-statehood mayor of the town of Cataño set up his own camp for a while.

Guadalupe pointed out that delegations of unionists, fishermen from around Puerto Rico, students, and political and religious figures have visited the camps to express support for the fight to get the U.S. military out of Vieques.

"When teachers' brigades come to this camp, we give them a talk and prepare an educational program about Vieques for them to take back and teach their students when classes start in September," he told the visiting students.

"Delegations of electrical workers, telephone workers, water workers, members of the Puerto Rican Workers Federation, and other unions have come here or marched in the town of Vieques," Guadalupe noted. The Teamsters



union issued a statement supporting the July 4 demonstration of 50,000 at the Roosevelt Roads naval base in Ceiba, which called for the U.S. military to leave Vieques. The protest attracted a broad range of political forces, including *independentista* groups and the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party, as well as endorsement from sections of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party. Martín Irizarry, the mechanic, noted that they have received delegations from several U.S. cities, underscoring the impact this political struggle has had among working people and youth in the United States who are Puerto Rican.

In face of this groundswell of opposition, Gov. Pedro Rosselló appointed a special commission on Vieques. The governor's panel issued a scathing report detailing the disastrous economic and environmental effects of the U.S. Navy's use of the island and recommending its complete withdrawal. Rosselló presented this report at United Nations hearings in July on the colonial status of Puerto Rico.

The Clinton administration appointed its own panel, which conducted hearings in Vieques and is soon supposed to present its findings to the U.S. government. The *Baltimore Sun* reported September 3 that the panel will recommend the Navy relocate within five years, continuing its target practice during that period. In response, Berrios announced that his camp will remain in the restricted zone if the U.S. Navy resumes its war maneuvers there.

In face of this public outrage, U.S. authorities admitted in May what Vieques residents have been charging for years—that the Navy had been firing uranium bullets. Navy officials claimed one "accidental" firing of 263 uranium bullets had taken place in February.

Guadalupe showed visitors one of the rusty tanks used for target practice. Pointing to the gaping bullet holes, he said, "When [fishermen's leader Carlos] 'Prieto' Ventura and I saw the perforations in one of these tanks in 1994, we realized they were using uranium bullets, because only that kind of shell can penetrate such thick armor."

The Navy has even polluted Vieques with napalm, another fact that only now is being widely acknowledged.

The Navy-caused contamination "is noticeable when it rains—you can smell the chemicals coming from the lagoon," Guadalupe said, pointing to some of the water-filled craters. Cancer rates for Vieques inhabitants are almost double the average in the rest of Puerto Rico.

After observing some of the destruction caused by the U.S. military, many of the youthful visitors expressed shock. "I had heard about all this, but seeing the craters and bullets and everything is a brutal thing to witness," said

Vicente Ballesteros, 17.

Emanuel Portera, 17, remarked, "The Navy is arrogant. It will be a hard fight but we have to get them out of here." Portera's mother was recently laid off from the General Electric fuse plant on the island.

'We must be the owners'

In the discussion with the students at the camp, Guadalupe pointed out that part

of the fight is to force the U.S. military to clean up their toxic mess when they leave. It's also over the future of the island and who will control it—the residents or the wealthy investors who have plans to build big tourist hotels on the beautiful beaches.

"We haven't been fighting all these years so you will become the garbage collectors for the rich," Guadalupe told the group of youth. "No, you must be the owners. The land must be enjoyed by the people of Vieques. The beaches must be open to all. We must protect the coral reefs. We must not only take back Vieques but develop it."

Guadalupe said the goals of the movement are "the four D's: demilitarization, devolution, decontamination, and development."

He pointed to the broader issues involved in the fight beyond the U.S. Navy presence. Vieques—along with Ft. Allen near the town of Juana Díaz on the main island—is the site of over-the-horizon radar facilities, which U.S. authorities claim are nonmilitary because they are supposedly for tracking international drug trafficking. There have been numerous protests in Puerto Rico against the radar system, however, which in fact is part of Washington's increased military intervention in Latin America under the cover of the "war on drugs."

"We're not fighting simply to get the Navy out of Vieques—we have to get all the U.S."

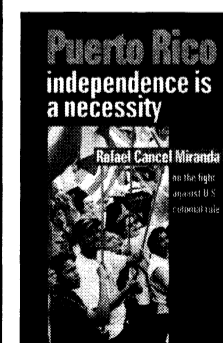
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Militant/Martin Koppel
Militant reporter Migdalia Jiménez next to one of many Navy bombs on Vieques land

From *Pathfinder*

Puerto Rico: independence is a necessity



Interviews with Rafael Cancel Miranda

Cancel Miranda—one of the five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979—speaks out on the

brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. \$3.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

As auto workers' contracts expire, Big Three employers deepen drive for profits

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT, Michigan — Contracts between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Big Three auto makers — General Motors (GM), Ford, and DaimlerChrysler (DCX) — expire September 14. One week later agreements between the Big Three and the Canadian Auto Workers end. This takes place as the auto bosses' continued drive to cut production costs and worsen conditions of their unionized workforce.

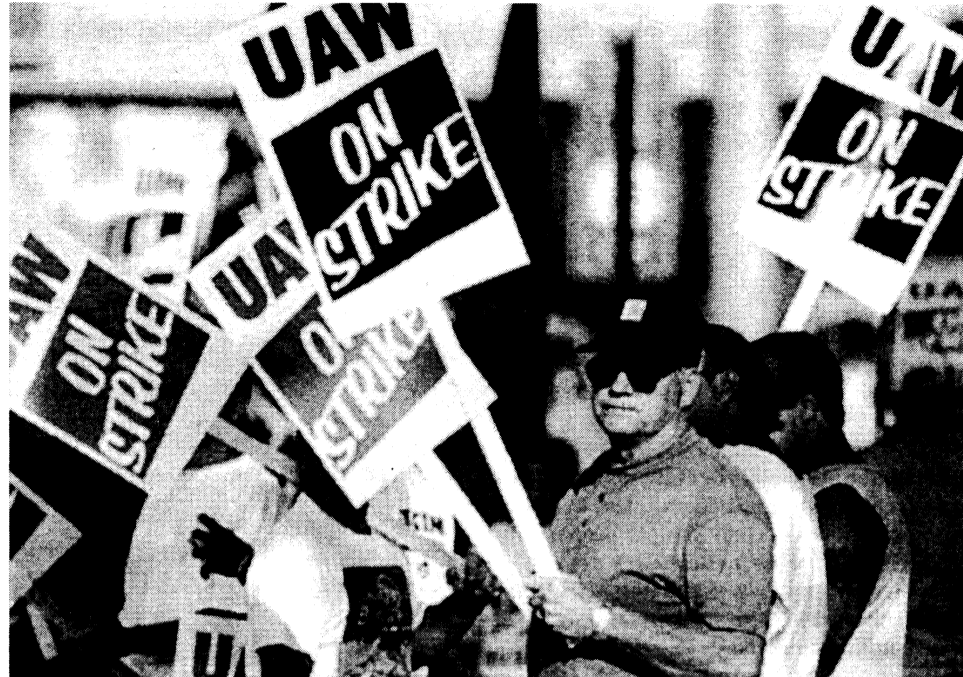
The UAW represents almost 400,000 auto workers currently under the Big Three contracts: 75,000 at 50 DCX locations, over 100,000 at 60 Ford sites, 150,000 at GM assembly and powertrain locations, and about 46,000 at Delphi Automotive Systems, GM's parts division, which was recently spun off as a separate company.

The bosses have made clear that they plan to continue the decades-long drive to increase their return on investment. The only way they can do this is by lowering their costs to assemble vehicles, which means using fewer workers per car or truck. At GM and DCX, it still takes in excess of 31 hours on average to assemble a unit. At Ford it takes 23 and a half hours. All of the Big Three want to match their international competition, led by Nissan, which assembles an average vehicle in just over 19 hours. The Big Three have cut total employment in the U.S., union and nonunion, from over 960,000 to barely 525,000 between 1979 and 1999.

Bosses impose job cuts, speedup

After lagging behind Ford and Chrysler for years, GM has been leading the charge, slashing 125,000 hourly jobs this decade. It has either spun off or sold most of its parts-making operation in the last five years. Beginning with the sale of their axle division in 1994, with the creation of American Axle Manufacturing, through the May spin-off of Delphi, the bosses will have shrunk the number of workers covered under the national agreement. Delphi workers are covered under the contract until September 14.

Soon after Ford reorganized its parts operation and renamed it Visteon, with 23,500 workers, speculation surfaced of its spin-



Picket line at GM parts plant in Flint, Michigan, during last year's strike.

off. Recently numerous reports in the business press point to well-developed plans to hive off Visteon quickly and merge it with Lear, a major auto parts supplier.

These moves to divide the unionized assembly workers and parts workers are designed to weaken the union in both sectors of the industry to allow more speedup. As the auto industry is presently structured, workers at Big Three-owned parts and assembly plants have similar wages and benefits, while workers at other auto parts makers earn substantially less. Strikes at key parts plants have the power to disrupt auto production, such as the 54-day strike last summer in Flint, Michigan, by workers at a Delphi plant and a GM stamping plant. Those walkouts closed most of the auto giant's assembly operations and idled nearly 200,000 workers. A strike in 1997 to win a union contract at a Johnson Controls seat-assembly plant in Michigan shuttered Ford's most profitable assembly operation, its Michigan Truck Plant, for a time. At the same time, union membership in the auto

parts sector has fallen sharply, and with it, wages, benefits, and conditions.

The bosses hope to use the pressure from nonunion and lower-paid union plants to undercut wages and conditions in previously Big Three-owned parts plants and to use this combined pressure to force concessions on all UAW workers. The effects of the bosses' strategy can be seen in the recent local contract at GM's Baltimore van plant. Union officials of UAW Local 239 argued that workers there had to make concessions in hope of winning a new product when the van they presently build is phased out.

The bosses want more of these local agreements, at the same time that they want to weaken the national agreement. Press reports indicate that the auto barons hope to get a national agreement that allows the shifting of more work to outside suppliers, using lower-paid workers in auto plants, and other concessions. These reports also indicate that the bosses want a contract longer than the three years that has become a tradition in the industry. The bosses want to gut

any union control on the job that still exists as they prepare to hire tens of thousands of new workers. An estimated 300,000 UAW members are approaching retirement.

More mood to fight in UAW ranks

The last national UAW strike against an auto maker was a 12-day walkout at Chrysler, forerunner to DCX, in 1986. The last national shutdown at Ford was in 1976, and at GM in 1970. But today the union ranks are growing restive. There have been 18 local strikes against GM since 1993. Chrysler has faced local issue strikes, including a 29-day walkout at its Detroit engine plant in April 1997. In August union members at Ford voted 96.4 percent in favor of strike authorization. Ford UAW locals reported increased turnout for this year's strike authorization vote over the 1996 ballot.

Many in the ranks of the union, like other workers, are responding to the growing pressures by the bosses and sense that they are in a better position to fight. The auto industry has seen an extended period of sales expansion and massive profits. In the five years between 1994 and 1998, the Big Three have reported combined profits of almost \$70 billion, and sales this year are on a pace to set new records in the U.S..

Since the contract talks opened in June, the auto barons have come under public scrutiny for their actions. While DCX upper management claims that it is neutral in the union-organizing drive by workers at its Alabama Mercedes-Benz plant, press reports indicate that the company is a member of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. The partnership has established a foundation to fight the UAW drive and has hired an consultant to aid in that work.

Meanwhile, on September 2 Michigan state officials announced their findings on the blast that killed six workers at the Ford's Rouge Complex in February. While the company didn't admit guilt, it agreed to pay a \$1.5 million fine for safety violations in the plant. The company will not face criminal charges around the explosion.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 at Ford's Michigan Truck Plant.

From the pages of the *Vancouver Echo*, August 18, 1999

Socialist bookstore defends migrants



Pathfinder volunteer Mary Ellen Marus reads socialist paper.

By Brenda Jones
Staff writer

A SMALL SOCIALIST bookstore on Main Street is defending the well-known wave of 250 Chinese boat people who arrived on B.C. shores the last month.

A group at Pathfinder Bookstore held a forum in support of the migrants, calling them working people seeking a better life. Members who attended the weekly Militant Labour Forum called for the RCMP to release refugees held in custody.

Beverly Bernard, who led

Friday night's discussion with a 35 minute presentation, is appalled that the refugee claimants were referred to as "aliens" in early news reports.

"It dehumanizes people when you call them aliens," Bernard said. "Culturally it means 'outsider' and almost implies they're from another planet. There's an element of fear attached to it."

Bernard disagreed with calls to tighten up Canada's immigration laws.

"It's important for people to welcome immigrants from other countries, no matter what the circum-

stances through which they arrive," Bernard said. "What pushes people to emigrate from where they are is not always political persecution. It's poor economic conditions."

"I think Canada is one of the rich, imperialist nations in the world. Living conditions, including for the working class, are better than in third world countries."

Bernard, who works in an East Side garment factory, says all working class people must unite to defend themselves against exploitation from large corporations. Factory workers in China are largely exploited for cheap labour, she said.

She argued that accusations refugees are a drain on Canada's safety net diverts attention from large federal government cutbacks to social services and health care.

Militant Labour Forums are organized by Pathfinder bookstores around the world. The bookstore has a loyal following of socialists that includes university students, secretaries, union organizers, trades people and social workers.

Pathfinder Press, based in New York, is a publishing house that prints books solely about social history and politics. Some of its books are carried in mainstream bookstores, but most are obscure titles and subjects found only at a Pathfinder outlet.

"People who want to learn about the anti-racism movement could find 30 titles on Malcolm X at Chapters, but here we have eight or nine books of his exact speeches," Pathfinder forum director Mary Ellen Marus said.

Pathfinder Bookstore has been in Vancouver for three decades, and at its Main Street location for the last five years. The volunteer-run store makes just enough money from book sales to pay the rent and restock books.

Pathfinder Bookstore, 3967 Main St., is open 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday to Friday, and noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

The Militant Labour Forums run every Friday night at 7:30 p.m. in the store's back room. Donations are requested. Call 872-8343 for information.

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Valdosta protesters: cops abuse, intimidate, and kill

BY MIKE ITALIE

VALDOSTA, Georgia — Hundreds of protesters marked the anniversary of the police killing of Willie James Williams in this southern Georgia city with a September 2 rally and a September 4 march to the Lowndes County jail.

The family of Williams and other working people in the area continue to participate in protests demanding justice, rejecting police claims that the Black man's death was accidental, the result of a fall. Katie Williams, his sister-in-law, a school bus driver and former textile mill worker, was one of several family members who attended the September 2 rally and commemorative service at the St. James Missionary Baptist Church. "I think it stinks," she said about the police story. "They're saying nothing happened, they're trying to cover up their tracks. Everybody knows that you don't just fall and die. And when I asked a question of the District Attorney at a hearing, he just said, 'That's for the grand jury to answer.'"

A coroner's inquest ruled the death "accidental" on Dec. 2, 1998, with the three jury members who were white outvoting two Blacks. On December 18 a grand jury voted not to indict any police officers involved.

Over the last year the People's Tribunal of Valdosta has organized numerous protests — one as large as 2,000 in this city of 42,000. Opponents of police brutality continue to press their demand for charges to be filed against the cops who killed Williams.

Police violence has become a topic of debate in workplaces throughout the area. Keith Marshall, a 32-year-old assistant machine operator at Southern Bag and Paper, pointed out that some of his co-workers say, "Let bygones be bygones." But someone was killed. Someone was consciously beating this guy. There needs to be a continuous effort until justice is done. This is a humanitarian issue, like stopping the death penalty." Three workers from Marshall's plant joined the September 4 march.

This fight has become a rallying point for the workers, farmers, and youth in Lowndes County. Willie Head, a leader of the People's Tribunal as well as of farmers fighting to hold onto their land, pointed out that this struggle against police brutality "was the forming issue for the People's Tribunal. We started with the churches, but only a few ministers joined. So then we handed out flyers everywhere — in apartment buildings, in parking lots, across the counter to people

working at Taco Bell." Many of the small businesses in the Black community here put rally flyers in their store windows and on their counters.

Video shows cop beating

Ari Santos, a leader of the People's Tribunal and a professor of philosophy at Valdosta State University (VSU), pointed out that arresting officer Kevin Farmer claimed that Williams had tried to escape and in the scuffle had received a cut lip. Then the Georgia Bureau of Investigation reported that Williams, in handcuffs, reached for Farmer's gun. Finally the Coroner's Inquest claimed that Williams suffered only minor injuries.

Santos unraveled this police cover-up with a slide show of Williams' injuries from the medical examiner's office, and videos taken from police cruisers of Williams's Sept. 1, 1998, arrest. "I've heard that facts speak for themselves. But the facts can only speak for themselves if the facts are allowed to speak," Santos declared. The medical examiner's report and photos listed a total of 32 injuries all over his body, including three separated ribs, two teeth knocked out, and ruled the cause of death "blunt force head trauma," he said.

Williams was arrested by Farmer on a traffic violation, and taken to jail on other charges from a computer check. The police videos were obtained by Williams' family attorney Joseph Wiley, law partner of Johnnie Cochran. Videos from the camera in Farmer's car and from the camera in the second police cruiser that arrived on the scene show no escape attempt by Williams, nor a grab for the officer's gun, but do show the cops using their flashlights to beat Williams down.

Tina Lott is one of many students from VSU who attended the rallies. Lott, 22, is an activist in the campus anti-racist group HOPE, and has been following the attacks on affirmative action around the country. Opponents of affirmative action "say they are against all discrimination," she stated, "but they really think Black folks aren't smart enough. Then I was watching the issue of police brutality, and I've always had the sneaking suspicion that something wasn't right about the police story that 'he fell.' Then I heard about all the injuries. The airing of the police video tape is a vindication. Sheriff Ashley Paulk should resign for not trying to get to the bottom of this, and

charges should be filed against the police."

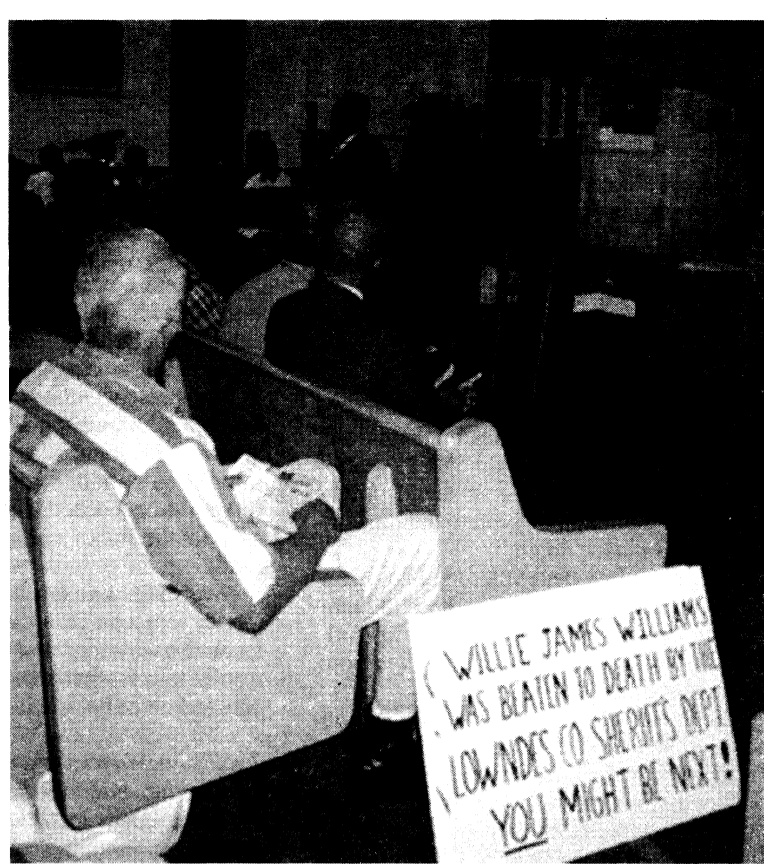
The videotapes and Medical Examiner's photos were released only after a year of struggle to keep the issue alive, noted Reverend Floyd Rose, president of the People's Tribunal, as he called on all in attendance to come out to the September 4 march to the Lowndes County jail.

March for justice

The September 4 March for Justice began at the site on South Lee St. where Williams was arrested one year ago. As the crowd marched to the Lowndes County Correctional Center, it swelled to 250 people. Tim Bentley, a 28-year-old forklift driver, said he was there to "make sure everyone gets treated equal. People in high office are trying to push this under the rug, to make their position safer. At work people say everybody needs to get out and show support, and I see two or three out here already."

The march ended in a field a hundred yards from the jail. John Cole Vodicka, a leader of the Prison and Jail Project in Americus, Georgia, told the marchers he had "come across case after case just like what happened to Willie James Williams. Law enforcement is here to abuse, arrest, check up on, intimidate, and sometimes to kill." The People's Tribunal has denounced the overall treatment of prisoners at the Lowndes County jail. It charges that at least two other men have died under suspicious circumstances, that there are beatings at the jail, and that in recent months as many as 20 Black guards have been fired or forced to resign.

Rose announced that he and those who wished to join him would march directly to the jail to conclude the rally. As soon as Rose and the majority of protesters turned to walk



Militant/Mike Italie

September 2 meeting on the anniversary of the death of Willie James Williams at the hands of the police in Valdosta, Georgia.

toward the jail entrance, several cops swung their cruisers into the parking lot, jumped out, and blocked the marchers' way.

After a brief standoff between the sheriff and leaders of the People's Tribunal, and when proof was given that a permit had been obtained for the action, the police stepped out of the way. The marchers proceeded to the steps of the jail to pray and to express satisfaction in the victories won. One protester who had been taken away in handcuffs was quickly released and rejoined the others. At the close of the final rally, prisoners from their cells cheered the marchers, who waved back in return.

At the end of the day's events, Willie Head said, "This is the new birth of the civil rights movement in this area. The old one didn't come this far south in Georgia; it didn't come to Lowndes County. This fight is giving people a voice. People had wanted to speak out about things like this but were scared. I have been involved in farm protests for three years — in Mississippi, Kentucky, other places. So now I have to get involved in more things. Willie James Williams is not going to die in vain. We're going to get charges against the police who killed him."

Mike Italie is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 1997.

U.S. gov't threatens N. Korea as talks begin

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Representatives of the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) began a meeting with U.S. government officials September 7 in Berlin. Washington has declared that its goal in the negotiations is to persuade Pyongyang to cancel alleged plans to test a long-range missile it has supposedly built.

The big-business media have published repeated articles and editorials for the last two months spreading unsubstantiated statements, originating largely from U.S. intelligence, of "threatening behavior" from the DPRK.

"The United States says the Berlin talks are intended to emphasize the advantages to North Korea of toning down its threatening behavior, and in particular of shelving its plan to test its newest long-range rocket, the Taepodong 2," said an article in the September 7 *New York Times*. "The rocket may have a range of up to 6,000 miles, enabling it to hit Hawaii and parts of Alaska."

A year ago, Tokyo and Washington accused the DPRK of test-firing a shorter range missile over Japan. The DPRK government has maintained the rocket launched a satellite.

In August, Washington dispatched two additional military reconnaissance ships near the DPRK, supposedly to monitor the imminent launch of the new rocket. The White House has also used these allegations to justify its previous decision to deploy the Theater Missile Defense system in southeast Asia, signing an agreement with Tokyo August 16 to do this as a joint project.

This system would give U.S. imperialism a first-strike nuclear capacity for the first time,

augmenting its already large military deployments in that part of the world aimed against the workers states in China and Korea.

Washington — which carried out the bloody 1950-53 war against the Korean people and has kept the country divided ever since — maintains 40,000 troops in south Korea, armed with nuclear weapons, and 50,000 in Japan. It has recently threatened the government of Kazakhstan with sanctions if it went ahead with sales of MIG jet fighters to the DPRK, and has promised Seoul it will lift limits in order to allow the south Korean regime to obtain missiles that can reach northern Korea.

Some politicians in Washington are attempting to whip up anticommunism and war hype around this issue. U.S. Senator Mitchell McConnell, chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, recently sent a fund-raising letter to the public stating, "Dear Fellow American: My colleagues in the United States Senate must have your immediate help to protect our country from a potentially devastating nuclear attack."

Titled "Nuclear Crisis Action Survey," the letter solicited contributions ranging from \$25 to \$1,000 while asking questions such as: "We want your opinions on how you want the Senate to act on the shocking information that has only recently come to our attention: The Communist North Korean government has obtained nuclear technology and possibly the capability of reaching our shores with nuclear missiles...."

"By the time we retaliate with our own missiles, their nuclear bombs will have already killed hundreds of thousands of our

citizens. And the reason is the Clinton-Gore administration for years refused to allow deployment of the military's missile defense program."

Initially peddled as an idea during the administration of former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, this "Star Wars" missile system is now under implementation by the Clinton administration.

This has gone hand-in-hand with stepped up moves by the White House against the rights of working people in the United States — the establishment of a North American military command aimed at "domestic" supporters of "rogue" nations, soaring incarceration rates, use of federal police agencies against workers on strike, and the attempts to whip up hysteria over supposed Chinese spies. The DPRK is on Washington's list of such "rogue" nations that supposedly promote terrorism.

Washington and Tokyo are threatening to cut off the small amounts of food aid they sent to Pyongyang after repeated floods caused severe food shortages in the DPRK between 1995 and 1998. The Japanese government has also stated it will suspend permission to Koreans living in Japan to send remittances to relatives at home, which total between \$250 million and \$600 million per year, if the alleged rocket testing is carried out.

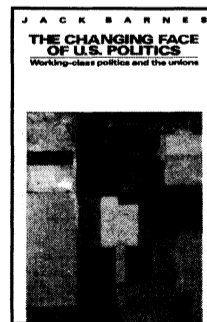
These threats are equally aimed against Beijing. "The Chinese must know that there is no chance of putting off the theater missile defense if the North Koreans launch," said James Kelly, president of the Pacific Forum of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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Workers from Carolinas march in Charlotte

Continued from front page

in Natchez, Mississippi, where tire workers are marking the one year anniversary of their strike against Titan Tire Co.

Members of Local 850 are proud of the strength of their long strike. Only 15 or 16 members have crossed the picket line and returned to work. "They're trying to break us but they're losing. I never thought we'd be out this long. I don't think anybody did. It's been hard, but you can't turn your back on the union," said John Chapman, a worker with 11 years in the plant. He went on, "I've seen from the beginning, this fight is about the unions getting stronger in the South."

The parade included trucks driven by members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and members of the United Auto Workers from a truck assembly plant in Winnsboro, South Carolina.

There were contingents from the Communication Workers of America, construction electricians in the International Brotherhood of Electricians, postal workers, and a float from Philip Morris tobacco plant workers who are organized by the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers in Concord, North Carolina. A marching band and precision dancers from Johnson C. Smith University, a historically Black campus, helped lead the parade.

A member of USWA Local 1133, Cise Thompson, said this was his first Labor Day off work, won by his local in their last contract. Thompson, who works at Firestone Tire in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, wore his hard hat and carried a sledge hammer as he marched.

Members of Distributive Workers Local 2828 at Merita Bakery came to support the Local 850 strikers. Ethel Roseboro, a member of 2828, said, "When we went on strike at the bakery it made the company look at us as people for the first time. They learned a lesson from us, that together there is strength."

Public service workers, including housekeepers at the campuses of the University of

North Carolina, are organizing into Local 150 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. At least two students came to the rally from the University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill.

The one contingent from the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) was from Whiteville, near Wilmington, North Carolina.

Also present were mechanics from the International Association of Machinists at US Airways. Their local has formed a strike committee and a phone tree, and are prepared to set up a strike kitchen if they are forced out on strike at the end of a 30-day "cooling off period"

"We've drawn a line in the sand," said Ken Corley, a mechanic at the US Airways maintenance base here, "and we have to have the resolve to cross that line. We have to go out as one, and come back as one."

Jeanne FitzMaurice is a member of UNITE in Centreville, Alabama. Floyd Fowler is member of the USWA in Atlanta.



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Tire strikers from USWA Local 850 led Labor Day parade in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Miners rally to defend lifetime health care

BY CLAY DENNISON

BESSEMER, Alabama — A standing-room-only crowd of more than 1,600 people, a large number of them retired miners and their spouses, packed the Bessemer Civic Center September 7 for a "Keep the Promise: Save the Coal Act" meeting called by United Mineworkers of America (UMWA).

The Coal Act is federal legislation that guarantees company-funded, lifetime health coverage for UMWA retirees and their dependants. This Combined Benefit Plan currently covers 66,000 retirees, their spouses, and miners' widows. The rally kicked off a national campaign that will involve rallies in

Indiana, Utah, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and will culminate with a march in Washington, D.C., in November.

The president, vice president, and secretary treasurer of the UMWA were present on the stage, as well as district officials and area politicians.

Grant Crandall, general counsel for the UMWA, reviewed three recent federal court decisions favoring coal operators that chip away at the funding for the health plan. One decision said that the operators need pay into the health care fund only 90 percent of what they had been paying, another ruled that the fund had to reimburse the companies for "over-

payments," and a third released companies who claimed to have stopped operations before 1974 from the obligation to pay into the fund.

Mike Holland, a trustee of the health fund, explained that the fund was in danger of being unable to pay medical bills as early as the first quarter of next year.

UMWA president Cecil Roberts explained the history of the fund — the promise of lifetime health care was one of the gains won by miners in a 1946 strike. He urged pensioners and widows who aren't currently members of the union to rejoin, and called on everyone present to sign up two associate members.

Puerto Rican prisoners prepare to be released

Continued from Page 8

Rican post office in 1978 and attributed it to independence fighters. FBI agents were involved in the cover-up of the 1978 cop murder of two young independence advocates at the Cerro Maravilla mountaintop in Puerto Rico.

Prominent capitalist politicians from Democratic presidential candidate William Bradley and Sen. Daniel Moynihan to Republican House of Representatives Majority Leader Richard Arney and Senator Orrin Hatch joined the campaign to pressure Clinton to withdraw the offer. Other outspoken critics include New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Chicago mayor Richard Daley, New York police commissioner Howard Safir, and other cops.

Committees in both the House and Senate have announced investigations into Clinton's so-called clemency offer, arguing that Clinton made the move to win votes for Hillary Rodham Clinton's U.S. Senate campaign in New York state, where more than 1 million Puerto Ricans live.

In response, Hillary Clinton herself attacked the prisoners on September 4 and called on Clinton to withdraw the offer, saying they had "failed to renounce violence." That same day, the White House suddenly announced it was giving the prisoners a deadline of September 10 to accept its terms of release.

The dispute put prominent Democratic politicians who are Puerto Rican in a bind, since they both support the Clintons and have voiced

support for the campaign to free the political prisoners. Some of them lashed out sharply at Hillary Clinton. Democratic congressman José Serrano said he felt "grave disappointment and anger" at her for not consulting with him before issuing her public statement and said he was "rescinding my encouragement of her candidacy."

The countercampaign against the independentistas underscores challenges they will face once released from prison. Last year one of them, Antonio Camacho, was paroled but soon reincarcerated for supposedly violating the restrictive conditions of

his release.

At the September 6 press conference in Chicago, José López pointed to the danger of the FBI and other cop agencies railroading the activists back to prison on charges of parole violations. Puerto Rican activists, family members, and attorneys planned to organize a "citizens alert network" to guard against such attacks, he said.

In San Juan, the human rights commission of the Puerto Rican Bar Association announced on September 8 the formation of a committee of 20 attorneys who would work as a network of monitors "to see that [the

government] respects the rights of the Puerto Rican prisoners." Harry Andaluz, head of the monitors committee, told the press that if any of the freed independence fighters is harassed, those responsible "will have to confront the entire people of Puerto Rico."

Most of the independentistas have expressed their desire to move to Puerto Rico once they are released.

Harvey McArthur is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers. Patricia Thompson and Bill Estrada contributed to this article.

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Single mothers, sin taxes are class questions

The following excerpts are from "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder," a talk presented by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes to participants in a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, in April 1993. The selection appears under the heading, "All politics is class politics." The entire talk, with a question-and-answer period, is published in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The book is copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

Every time some politician pontificates about the "culture war," workers should remember it is really about justifying reactionary assaults on our rights and conditions on and off the job. It is about justifying the cop

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

beatings of workers every night. It is about justifying assaults on women's rights. It is about dignity. It is about getting us to accept that since we are working people, we should expect a lesser standard of dignity than is accorded those who sanctimoniously preach to us about dignity. It is about getting us to accept being treated as commodities.

Labor's answer to the "culture war" must be to build a leadership capable of acting on the conviction that every time the capitalists say "we" — "we" Americans, "we" at General Motors, "we" family people, "we" who speak English — they are lying.

Every time the capitalists blame *part of us* for what *they* are trying to impose on *all of us*, they are trying to turn us against each other. They do not want *us* to be able to effectively fight *them*.

They want us to become the kind of people they say we should aspire to be. Beneath their moralizing pronouncements, the capitalists promote ever more reactionary, ever more antihuman attitudes in their drive to undermine social solidarity and crush the ability of the working class and our organizations to organize struggles and win.

That is why communists insist on looking at everything the employers and their government do as *class* questions. That is what lies behind all their policies. But the rulers do everything they can to stop us from recognizing politics as class questions.

They do all they can to stop us from acting politically as a class. They do not want us to think about each other as workers. They want us to think about each other as employed or unemployed, Black or white, "American" or immigrant, men or women, young or old. But we have to cut through the way they present things and explain the class realities they are covering up.

'Single mothers'

Politicians talk a lot these days about the "problem of single mothers," for example. But what about women in the capitalist class, or even the surviving remnants of the feudal aristocracy? Aren't they all single mothers? Isn't the queen of England a single mother? Such ruling-class women may or may not be connected with a husband through some legal, financial arrangement. That is irrelevant, however. Their husbands certainly do not build their lives around their families. Talk about "deadbeat dads"!

Men and women in the ruling class are very busy people; they have *things to do*. They have professions to engage in, hobbies to enjoy, money to make, governments to run, charities to organize, employees to keep an eye on. They *hire* people to raise their children. The children are raised very well. They are taught to read and write when they are very young. They receive good educations. They are given self-confidence and taught that they have an important place in the world.

So, women in the ruling class, and many upper-middle-class women too, are single mothers; the difference is in the economic and social arrangements these mothers have....

Whenever the capitalist politicians and their defenders seek to justify their reactionary policies, we have to go deeper to the class question behind every single one of them. Take

the widely publicized protest organized in February by this new right-wing group "Lead or Leave" outside the American Association of Retired Persons headquarters, for example. When leaders of this self-proclaimed youth organization rail demagogically against the cost of Social Security, we have to explain that it is not "the elderly" they are attacking. It is an assault on a section of the working class — those who depend on Social Security. Many elderly people in this country have no need for Social Security and actually agree with Lead or Leave. The minute we reduce this to an attack on "the elderly" we begin losing the battle.

Vanguard workers want "the elderly" to have an equal opportunity to participate fully in social life as part of their lifetime of creating social wealth. We are for being generous to the "high net worth" elderly in this regard too. Ross Perot's demagoguery about the "outrage" of billionaires like himself receiving Social Security checks is simply designed to soften up public opinion to begin unraveling retirement pensions as a social entitlement. The working class must fight for universal Social Security, regardless of class or income.

The trap of liberal 'reforms'

Or take the attempt to use a "sin tax" as economic pressure. Clinton, for example, is putting an increased tax on cigarettes in his budget proposal to Congress. Think about what such taxes mean in class terms. One class can afford to pay the "sin tax" without even stopping to think about it. The other class is punished economically for buying certain things and then scolded by their inferiors in the bargain.

I believe that cigarettes cause cancer and do all kinds of harmful things to your health. But under a workers government, there will be not one penny of tax on cigarettes. Or on beer. That is the pledge of a workers government. Not one penny. If the workers movement is going to educate adults on the health effects of different habits, it has to do so without combining such education with differential economic punishments. That is the only road to free women and men remaking themselves.

The Clinton administration's national health care proposal is another example. It is all well and good for Hillary Clinton, the head of the White House health care task force, to say that everyone will stand in the same lines for limited medical resources and everything is going to be fair. Most workers would be ready to fight for the principle that if William or Hillary Clinton got on line as number five at a Health Maintenance Organization and somebody else got on line as number seven, one of the Clintons has a right to the prior appointment. But most workers also know this is not how it works in the real world, even if they do not explain it in clear class terms. Most workers know that the members of the entire class whose interests William Clinton represents do not have to stand on line, ever.

The truth is that the Clinton administration's so-called national health care program is a fraud. It is a way to further the *class* organization of medicine. It is a scheme to subsidize the ruling class and their giant insurance companies, HMOs, and other big businesses. It is the institutionalization of class differentiation in health care rationing in the name of "reform."¹

Communist workers are also against what is broadly referred to as "prison reform." That, for sure, is a class question. We are *for* defending any con against any brutality or arbitrariness, and we are *for* prisoners taking as much space as they can get to break down the barriers that

1. In his January 1995 State of the Union address, Clinton dumped the proposed health care plan, saying his administration had bitten "Off more than we could chew." Meanwhile, the percentage of the U.S. population with no health insurance coverage increased to 16 percent in 1999 from 13.6 percent in 1990. The share of employed U.S. workers covered by employer-sponsored health plans has fallen by nearly 10 percent since the late 1980s, while more and more workers are being forced to pay an increasing share of the costs of job-linked insurance plans.



Militant/Scott Breen
"The rulers ... do not want us to think about each other as workers. They want us to think about each other as employed or unemployed, Black or white, 'American' or immigrant, men or women, young or old." Above, picket of Teamsters on strike at IBP meatpacking plant in Wallula, Washington, in June 1999.

separate them from the rest of society and deprive them of their rights.

But we are *against* education being organized by the prisons. We are *against* therapy being organized by the prisons. Because anything organized through the prison system and imposed upon a con, even if supposedly "voluntary," is an attempt to control them, to break them, to make them complicit with the horrors of how prisons are organized and run under capitalism. It is a degrading reflection of the values and brutalities of declining bourgeois society.

Better alcoholic treatment programs, better sex offenders programs, better substance abuse programs, better job training programs for prisoners — these reforms are all designed to do the same thing as gangs in the prison yard and corruption in the cell blocks. Everything is organized to turn cons against one another, to reinforce the worst, dog-eat-dog values of bourgeois society, to differentiate the incarcerated.

The fight of the working class is the opposite. Not to organize anything through the prisons, but to break down every barrier we can between the life of prisoners and life beyond those walls.

None of these prison programs have anything to do with education or medical treatment. None have anything to do with raising the self-confidence and affirming the dignity of anyone. All are part of "owning up" to your own supposed inhumanity, instead of reaching beyond the bars to productive work and revolutionary activity as free men and

women with dignity intact.

The expansion of supposedly voluntary sexual offenders programs in the prisons in recent years is part of the hysteria the rulers have had some success in whipping up around this question; it is one of the most effective pretexts they have found so far to justify pushing back democratic rights. These programs are of a piece with repressive laws like the one passed in Washington state three years ago allowing juries to indefinitely jail — and inflict "therapy" on — individuals convicted of violent sex crimes who have already served out their terms.²

2. Although the Washington state law was ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge in August 1995 on grounds that it violated due process by punishing individuals twice for a single crime, a similar Kansas state law was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 1997. In May 1996 Clinton signed into law a federal statute making it mandatory for state governments to notify communities when a person previously convicted of a sex offense moves into a local neighborhood; the 1994 Federal Crime Bill had already required state and local authorities to register and track these persons for at least ten years. While neighbor notification provisions in several states have been ruled unconstitutional in federal court, the highest U.S. appeals courts to rule on the constitutionality of such laws upheld the New Jersey legislation (the so-called Megan's Law) and a similar law in New York in August 1997.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO

35 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

September 20, 1974

Vice-president-designate Nelson Rockefeller commended President Ford's pardon of Nixon, saying it was an act "of conscience, compassion, and courage."

"Rockefeller has a lot of nerve commending the pardon," George Preston, a Black teacher at the City College of New York, told *The Militant* in an on-the-street interview on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

"What about Attica?" Preston continued. "Rockefeller didn't pardon those brothers at Attica! Where was Rockefeller's conscience, where was his compassion, where was his courage when he ordered those brothers killed?!"

Why were the Attica inmates murdered? Because they were fighting against the inhuman conditions they were forced to live under.

Sixty-one of these men, who were standing up for their dignity as human beings, are the ones who have been indicted for the Attica revolt. Not a single prison guard, state trooper, National Guard, or government official faces any charges stemming from the bloody crushing of that rebellion. The grand jury that indicted the 61 Attica Brothers let Rockefeller and Nixon remain at large.

George Preston said: "Nixon is a criminal. He should be in jail, but if they're going to give him an unconditional pardon they should give all the criminals — whatever that means — and unconditional pardon too.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
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September 19, 1949

Through his steel "fact-finding" board, Truman has leveled a crippling blow at the "fourth round" wage drive of the CIO. The board's report rejects any wage increase for the CIO steel workers and urges a wage freeze for all industry.

The board coupled its ban on wage increases with a statement of economic doctrine that has disastrous implications for all future wage demands of labor. The board denied that higher profits and productivity justify higher wages.

Philip Murray, president of both the CIO and the United Steel Workers, had committed the union in advance to accept anything the board proposed, no matter how meager. He promptly accepted the board's report because it contained a sop by way of recommendation for company financed health insurance and pensions at a miserably low level.

If the steel workers are now forced to strike, they enter the struggle under the tremendous handicap of the Truman board's report which would limit their aims to insurance and pensions that would cost the companies not more than 8 cents an hour average per worker and would not add a penny to their immediate incomes. How much better off the workers would have been if Murray had not saddled them with Truman's board and its recommendations. But they may be forced to fight in spite of all handicaps for the defense of their union and living standards.

Free all the Puerto Rican patriots!

We weren't freed from prison because suddenly the U.S. government, like St. Paul, saw the light. They freed us from prison because of international pressure.

RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA
"Puerto Rico: Independence Is A Necessity"

The expected release from jail of 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners registers a victory for all working people and a step forward in the fight for Puerto Rico's independence. It's the result of the new rise for more than a year of the struggle to end U.S. colonial rule of the island nation, which has coincided with a change in the mass psychology of the working class in the United States. It's a pressure similar to what Rafael Cancel Miranda points to above — referring to the release of himself and four other pro-independence fighters from U.S. jails 20 years ago — that brought about this result.

One indication that this struggle has a growing mass character today is that the demand to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners became a prominent issue in bourgeois politics in recent weeks. The storm of debate among capitalist politicians touched off by Hillary Clinton's call to withdraw her husband's "pardon" offer shows that.

The conditions for release imposed by the Clinton administration are onerous. Supporters of the defense campaign correctly took the stance that they would respect whatever decision the prisoners made on Clinton's offer. As Cancel Miranda aptly put it, "We will greet any freed prisoner with open arms, but we demand all 17 prisoners be released immediately with no conditions. They are all patriots and none is a criminal. Justice cannot be done halfway."

Independentistas from Chicago to New York to San Juan are now preparing a hero's welcome for the fighters when they walk out of jail. There's every reason to celebrate. At the same time, supporters of Puerto Rico's independence and all backers of the struggle to free the 17 must remain vigilant and demand the Clinton administration hold its word and release them now. After 12 of the prisoners accepted Clinton's restrictive conditions prior to his September 10 deadline, the

White House said the release was now out of its hands and under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. But the bureau's officials were among the first to oppose the U.S. president's offer of "clemency" to begin with. Until they walk out of prison, the fire must remain on the Clinton administration to free them immediately.

This struggle is completely intertwined with the fight for the independence of Puerto Rico, which is a necessity to advance the interests not only of the Puerto Rican people but of the overwhelming majority of the people in the United States.

The conditions U.S. domination has created in Puerto Rico — where the average income is less than half that of Mississippi, the poorest U.S. state — have forced 4 of every 10 Puerto Ricans to emigrate to the United States in search of jobs and a living income. Puerto Ricans are an important component of the working class in the United States.

U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico reinforces racism and other divisions among working people in the United States that undermine the labor movement and serve the interests of the employers. Colonialism feeds every reactionary force in U.S. society — from those who promote "English only" measures and want to end bilingual education, to those who attack affirmative action and other hard-fought gains of working people.

Colonial rule of Puerto Rico also strengthens the ability of the U.S. rulers to erode the democratic rights of working people in the United States. FBI spying, harassment, and frame-ups of Puerto Rican advocates of independence, unionists, and other fighters have been well documented for more than half a century.

All those who work for a living have a stake in learning and telling the truth about the struggle against U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

We urge our readers to join a campaign of protests and public events to press the U.S. government to stop delaying its release of 11 of the prisoners, as well as to oppose any victimization of them once they are out. And we must redouble our demand that Washington free all the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners.

Imperialist hands off E. Timor

All supporters of the East Timorese struggle for national independence must oppose the imperialist intervention in East Timor that is now being prepared. Assuming the mantle of "peacekeepers," the troops will stand between the East Timorese and their fight for nationhood.

Events are moving with great speed in East Timor. In the days after their defeat in a referendum on autonomy, pro-Jakarta militias organized by the Indonesian army have used murderous terror to force many East Timorese from their homes.

As devastating as these brutal tactics are for working people, they derive from weakness and desperation. The referendum results threw in the face of Indonesia's rulers their complete failure to gain acquiescence for their "integration" of East Timor. Four out of five voters cast a vote against it. This came after 24 years of occupation and 200,000 dead. And in spite of the superior weaponry and organization of the militias, the residents of Dili and other cities have organized self-defense against the massacres and burnings, along with mass political actions.

Citing the "emergency" and seeming "chaos," the imperialist powers are preparing to send in their troops. Two Australian navy ships carrying 500 soldiers are now in East Timorese waters, and up to 5,000 troops have been placed on alert. The New Zealand rulers have prepared as many as 800 troops to be involved. Other powers are also preparing to intervene.

In citing "emergency and chaos" the imperialists are fundamentally thinking of the independence struggle and its consequences. Working people in East Timor took up arms against Portuguese colonialism in a successful re-

bellion 25 years ago. Pro-independence forces then emerged victorious from a short-lived civil war.

It was then, in 1975, that Indonesian troops invaded. Behind the Indonesian invasion was the hand of Washington and its allies, including Canberra and Wellington. They feared the independence struggle as much as did Jakarta, and viewed the Indonesian government and military as trustworthy allies. The military won that trust with the massacres of the mid-1960s, which set back the struggles of working people in Indonesia for generations and established the Suharto "New Order" regime.

The alliance of these powers with the Indonesian government continues to this day. But Jakarta — weakened by a formidable economic crisis, the fall of the Suharto regime, and deepening social struggles — can no longer ensure stability in East Timor. That is behind the imperialists' preparation for intervention.

The East Timorese people, who have shown time and time again that they will accept nothing short of genuine independence, are not well served by those who call for imperialist intervention under the United Nations flag or on some other basis. They are not "defenseless."

Calls for economic sanctions against Indonesia itself are also misdirected. They place trust in the imperialist powers, who are the deadly enemy of working peoples' struggles. And sanctions would drive down even further the living standards of workers and farmers in Indonesia, who are waging struggles of their own on many fronts.

Today, supporting the fight for East Timor's independence starts with opposing both occupation by Indonesian forces and intervention by imperialist troops.

End U.S. threats to N. Korea

Below we reprint the greetings Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes sent to the Workers Party of Korea on the occasion of the September 9 anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Socialist Workers Party sends revolutionary greetings on this 51st anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We denounce the recent threats of military aggression and provocations by Washington and Tokyo, as well as by their backers in Seoul, against your country — using the supposed imminent testing of a rocket by the DPRK to justify their prior decision to launch a "Star Wars" Theater Missile Defense system, aimed not only against the people of Korea but of China as well. In June, Seoul's Navy, which is backed and financed by U.S. imperialism, sank a vessel from your country, killing all seventeen Korean seamen aboard in another indication of who is the

aggressor in the Korean peninsula.

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

We will continue to join with others in telling the truth about Korea, especially among working people resisting the attacks by the employers on their working and living conditions and democratic rights here in the United States. It is among these fighters in city and countryside, who are increasingly resisting the effects of the capitalist crisis, that the Korean people will find their best allies.

We stand with you in the fight to get all U.S. troops and weaponry out of Korea, to take the steps necessary to defend Korea's national sovereignty, and to reunify the Korean nation.

Eyewitness report from Navy zone in Vieques

Continued from Page 9

military bases out of Puerto Rico," Guadalupe emphasized.

Another aspect of the growing U.S. military presence in this Caribbean nation — which is already covered with U.S. bases — is the current transfer of the U.S. Southern Command from Panama to Puerto Rico. A protest against this stepped-up military presence took place August 27 in front of Ft. Buchanan in San Juan.

On September 1, under the banner "We want to study without the military," thousands of students marched through the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) campus in Río Piedras, in the San Juan metropolitan area, to protest the presence of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) on campus and demand the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques. Student struggles during the anti-Vietnam War movement forced ROTC out of the UPR campuses in 1971. But the officer-training program still recruits students from its off-campus site.

Rise in social struggles

The resurgence of the struggle to remove the U.S. Navy from Vieques has been intertwined with the fight to release the Puerto Rican political prisoners, a battle that appears on the verge of an important victory. A large demonstration calling for the release of the prisoners was held in San Juan August 29. Virtually all the high school students visiting the restricted area of Vieques expressed support for the release of the prisoners.

Both struggles register the new rise of anticolonial and labor resistance in Puerto Rico, signaled last year with the widely popular strike by telephone workers against the government's — ultimately successful — move to sell the state-owned telephone company. Half a million workers waged a two-day general strike in July 1998 in support of the phone workers and what they saw as their national patrimony.

The working-class resistance can also be seen in a number of other social struggles, from the fight against government attacks on the health-care system to protests against the deteriorating water service.

On August 20, the town of Toa Alta, west of San Juan, erupted in an angry protest over unmet promises to provide reliable water service and clean bathrooms at a local high school. Some 500 high school students, infuriated by the latest postponement in installing new water tanks, marched out of school that morning to demonstrate in front of the mayor's office.

When the police began to violently shove them around, the youth fought back, pelting the cops with rocks and lying down in the road to block traffic. Hundreds of students then marched to police headquarters to protest the brutality and trapped four cops in the station. Authorities responded by sending in riot police, SWAT teams, and police helicopters.

Migdalia Jiménez, a member of the Young Socialists in Chicago, contributed to this article.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sat., September 11

One Year of Struggle at Titan Tire

Natchez, Mississippi — Join the Titan Tire strike rally. For more information, contact USWA Local 303L, fax: (601) 445-5175.

Sat., October 16

March for Immigrants' Rights Washington, D.C. — Assemble

10 a.m. at Malcolm X Park. For more information call: (212) 473-3936 or 633-7108.

Sat., October 16

Rally and March for Justice for Max Antoine

Irvington, New Jersey — Join protest at noon to demand justice for Max Antoine, brutally beaten by cops. At Irvington Police Station, 1 Civic Plaza. For more information call: (201) 487-1531.

Alaska Airlines workers hold information pickets

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, work-

picket. He told the *Militant*, "We are fighting for money, after having had a 25 percent pay cut since 1985, and for more than \$15 an

ON THE PICKET LINE

ing conditions, and unions.

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

LOS ANGELES — Coordinated demonstrations were held at airports in Seattle and Spokane, Washington; Los Angeles; and Portland, Oregon, September 3 to support more than 3,000 customer service and reservations workers in their contract fight at Alaska Airlines. Contract talks between the airline and members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) have been on and off since early this year.

A central demand is for higher wages. Alaska workers are paid 30-50 percent below the industry average, and their wages have dropped 25 percent since 1985. A union brochure distributed to passengers in Los Angeles points out that "many employees qualify for public assistance and food stamps...but that company profits have been over \$200 million in the last two years."

Pickets chanted slogans all day, and hundreds of passing cars, buses, and trucks honked in solidarity.

As part of management's campaign to intimidate the unionists, they fired six workers for allegedly organizing a sick-out on April 16. On that day 28 Alaska flights were canceled; the airline claims more than 330 employees called in sick.

The all-day picket line in front of the Alaska Airlines ticket counter here drew 115 Alaska workers from Los Angeles, Burbank, Orange County, and Ontario airports. A dozen other IAM members from Northwest, Hudson General, US Airways, and TWA joined the picket, as did airport workers from the Service Employees International Union involved in efforts to organize Argenbright airport and ground service workers.

Dru Secrist from Orange County was one of 22 workers, out of a workforce of 32, who came to

hour after decades of seniority. The union is asking for the industry average." He added, "We should not sign any contract unless the six fired workers get their jobs back with back pay."

Christine Carey pointed out, "pay only goes up in pennies. After two years here I'm only making 30 cents an hour more."

David Edwards said, "We should stand up for a working wage and not be so submissive. I am really excited about this picket; it's the best thing we've done."

Ontario gold miners wage hard-fought strike

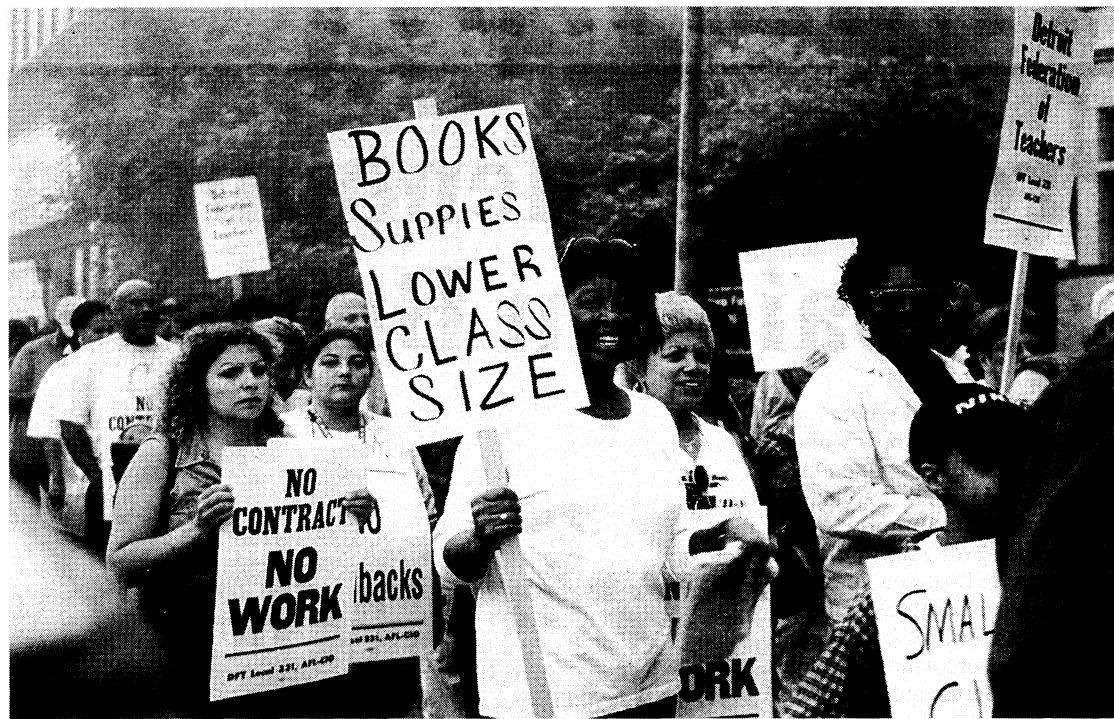
TORONTO — Gold miners in Red Lake, a small mining community in northwestern Ontario, are into their fourth year on strike against Goldcorp Inc. The strike by members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 950 began June 23, 1996, and is the longest gold-mining strike in Canadian history.

In a phone interview August 4, Dwight Globush, a millwright who has worked in the mine for 22 years and is also president of the local, said the strike was provoked by the attitude of Goldcorp's chairman and majority shareholder, Robert McEwen. "We've had a union contract at the mine since the mid-1960s," said Globush, "but McEwen decided he wanted to rewrite our contract, saying he thought our standard of living was too high."

Miners rejected McEwen's new contract offer, which proposed a 40-hour work week but did not specify over which days or weeks the 40 hours would be worked. The company demanded an end to shift premium payments as well. Miners at Goldcorp are paid Can\$3 (US\$2) less an hour than the industry average, said Globush. The company also wanted to weaken layoff and recall rights, as well as institute "security measures" that would include strip searches of miners.

Of the 187 miners who began the strike, 102 remain on the picket line. The others have found other jobs but remain strike supporters and donate their strike pay to the local, Globush said. Four miners

Detroit teachers strike for wages, education rights



Militant/John Sarge

More than 3,000 members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers and their supporters marched to the Detroit School Center Building September 3. The protest occurred five days after 7,200 teachers had begun strike action. The workers' demands for wage increases and smaller class sizes gained a sympathetic hearing among working people, deterring the authorities from the use of antiunion legislation. A newly passed measure aimed specifically at teachers was not employed. Strikers mounted spirited picket lines throughout the week. On September 8 they decided at a mass meeting to return to work while a vote is held on a tentative contract settlement.

have crossed the picket line. The strikers also face an injunction limiting four pickets to each gate.

The strikers are receiving regular cash donations from other USWA locals, including large regular donations from the two largest USWA locals in Ontario: copper miners from Local 6500 in Sudbury and basic steelworkers from Local 1005 in Hamilton.

Globush said the local's membership includes four women and a number of Native Indians. The Native Friendship Centre in Red Lake has organized food drives for the strike and a Strikers' Wives' Action Group has organized solidarity marches in the town.

On June 2, several striking miners made the 1,600-mile drive to Toronto to participate in a demonstration organized by the USWA Toronto Area Council outside Goldcorp's annual meeting of shareholders. Several miners went into the meeting, including Nancy Hutchinson, who attempted to explain the issues in the strike.

In 1995, a year before the strike began, Goldcorp claimed to have discovered a large vein of higher-grade ore below the mine. After the strike began, McEwen closed the mine and hired scabs to begin drilling and developing the new seam.

McEwen claims the richness of the new ore find, combined with the installation of more modern mining technology, will make the new seam one of the lowest-cost mines in the world, capable of pro-

ducing 240,000 ounces of gold a year at a cash-cost of US\$87 an ounce. According to Goldcorp, when the strike began the company's cost of production was US\$360 per ounce.

Production is expected to begin on the new seam in August 2000. McEwen said at the June 2 shareholders' meeting that production "could start without a settlement" unless the "unionized work force will share our vision of the future."

The business pages of Canada's national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*, have carried several articles encouraging investors to buy Goldcorp stock. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce reports that the company's stock value has risen 9.5 percent in the last year and rates the company as an "extremely attractive investment."

Michigan auto parts workers fight lockout

STERLING HEIGHTS, Michigan — Nine weeks into their strike and they see no quick resolution. That's the way members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 417 described what began as a lockout at A. G. Simpson here.

On June 16, as the workers gathered to vote on the company's second wage offer, management locked the gate.

John Vassallo, a six-year millwright, described some of the issues. "The workforce is down to 206 from 500. Many of us have

been laid off in the past; some are still on the callback list. Now management wants to install a new automatic line that can put out twice as much as the two existing lines with even fewer workers."

A.G. Simpson makes chrome-plated bumpers for Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors. The corporation is based in Canada with three plants in the United States. Strikers say the company had succeeded in getting a 30-day extension from the union on a two-year contract that expired June 1.

When supporters of the *Militant* first visited the line, more than a dozen Sterling Heights cops — infamous for their brutal, public treatment of the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* strikers in 1995 — had the line surrounded, dressed in riot gear. Today, though plant production is at a standstill, cops patrolling the area continue to harass pickets and their supporters.

At first a large hand-painted sheet, staked out at the intersection of Mound Road and Sterling, announced their struggle and spelled out the union's demands. Now yard signs clustered at the main intersection replace the sheet-sized banner, which the city of Sterling Heights has ordered them to remove.

Mark Friedman, a member of IAM Local 2785 in Los Angeles; Rosemary Ray, a member of USWA Local 5338 in Toronto; and Willie Reid, a member of the UAW in Detroit, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Labor Day parade

Pittsburgh's annual Labor Day parade drew about 50,000 participants representing 130 unions. Of note this year was the well-organized and spirited contingent of US Airways Association of Flight Attendants who are publicizing the fact that they have gone almost a thousand days without a contract. As they marched they chanted "We get peanuts! They get big bucks!" and handed out packets of peanuts to onlookers. They also chanted, "We support the IAM!" a reference to the 7,000 USAirways International Association of Machinists members who are counting down a 30-day "cooling-off period" to a strike deadline set for September 26.

Another group of workers in the march who were also reaching out for solidarity were in the Wilkinsburg Education Associa-

tion, which has worked for six years without a new contract or meaningful negotiations. In that period, the Wilkinsburg school board spent thousands to hand over the operation of an elementary school to a private, for-profit outfit that resulted in the layoffs of union members.

This private, for-profit school was later ruled illegal. The school board's latest maneuver is a quest to open a charter school for \$1.8 million. Mike Evans, president of the Wilkinsburg Education Association noted, "They tried privatization and now charter schools, like this is the medicine." He and many teachers felt the goal of the school board is to break the union. The union has announced picket lines for the start of the school year, which is September 7.

A group of around a dozen rank-and-file members of the Teamsters

union who are refuse haulers and predominantly Black came to the march with hand-lettered signs stating "Murphy is a liar!", "Murphy is anti-labor!" Thomas Murphy is mayor of Pittsburgh. These workers holding their signs took up a position across the street from the parade reviewing stand that holds many local politicians and union officials.

They explained to *Militant* supporters that they have gone nine months without a contract from the city. They proudly noted that their presence forced Mayor Murphy from the reviewing stand. Twenty *Militants* were sold to parade participants, including members of the flight attendants, IAM members, steelworkers, and a United Mine Workers member.

Lorraine Starsky
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

From behind prison bars

I am told that you are a socialist newspaper. I wasn't told if there is a subscription cost or not, nor how many issues are published a year. If there is a charge will you consider waiving it as I'm in segregation and can't work for the 17.5 cents an hour they pay here (surely you know how prisons do it) to afford a subscription. If not can you at least send me a couple of complementary issues. That will help if I ask someone to get me a gift subscription.

A prisoner
Munising, Michigan

I'm 21 years of age and currently in prison in solitary confinement. My young mind is in search of wisdom and truth about ancient Egyptian times up till the present day, and any other information that will help

me on my quest for supreme knowledge. I'm able to pay, but because of my situation I'm not allowed to have any books.

A prisoner
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

The *Militant* offers reduced-rate subscriptions to working people behind bars of \$6 for six months or \$12 for one year. Prisoners can also receive a sample copy on request. Contributions from other readers make these special rates possible. Donations earmarked "Prisoner Fund" can be sent to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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.

Protesters denounce anti-immigrant campaign in British Columbia

BY MARY ELLEN MARUS

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—“No, we are not sending them back!” declared Harinder Dylan from the Community Coalition Against Racism kicking off a rally outside a military base in Esquimalt, British Columbia, where 200 recent Chinese immigrants are detained.

The September 6 action was organized to welcome the immigrants and condemn their treatment by Canadian immigration authorities and the media. More than 75 people, half of them youth, turned out for the rally at the base, which is near the city of Victoria.

Since mid-July three ships crammed with nearly 450 Chinese migrants have been seized by the Canadian Coast Guard off the shores of British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province. The immigrants were taken to the military base in Esquimalt where men, women, and children have been strip-searched, handcuffed, and detained while waiting for immigration hearings.

Ever since, a daily anti-immigrant campaign has been waged by capitalist politicians and by the big-business media. One headline in the Victoria daily blared “Go Home.” The *Vancouver Province* insisted, “Enough Already,” in a front page headline. Other newspaper headlines have warned of the “threat” of a “flood” of “illegal” immigrants, especially from China.

The unregistered ships that carried the immigrants across the Pacific Ocean were overcrowded, with no life jackets or boats, unsanitary conditions, and limited food and medicine. Passengers from one boat were dumped into the sea and forced to swim to shore.

Smugglers known as “snakeheads” charge tens of thousands of dollars to smuggle people from China to North America, where accomplices arrange low-paid jobs in factories, restaurants, and brothels. The workers are then forced to repay their passage over a number of years working, in effect, as indentured servants.

Politicians from all capitalist parties have been campaigning for harsher action to stem what Ujjal Dosanjh, attorney general for the New Democratic Party administration in British Columbia, described as a “deluge.”

The rightist Reform Party has led this cam-



September 6 rally outside military base in Esquimalt, near Victoria, welcomes Chinese immigrants and denounces campaign against them by Canadian government and big-business media.

Militant/Annette Kouri

paign. Dan Stinson, a Reform Party Member of Parliament, has called on the government to “ship them back automatically.” Under current Canadian law any immigrant who claims refugee status has the right to an immigration hearing and the right to a lawyer. Many of those leading the campaign against the Chinese immigrants argue that immigration laws in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand are much tougher and that similar laws should be adopted here as well.

Conservative columnist Diane Francis of the *National Post* maintained, “Ottawa is exposing Canada to grave risks and financing a criminal class that will hurt this country for years to come.”

Paul Fromm is an ultrarightist who crusades against immigration from Asia and other semicolonial countries on his “Canada First” website. He claims that Ottawa in 1967 changed the source of immigration from Europe and Britain to the Third World.

Despite the claims of a “flood” of refugees to Canada “the fact is that Canada receives less than three-tenths of 1 percent of the world's refugees,” according to Francisco Rico-Martinez, the president of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

Each day hundreds of thousands of workers move from one country to another as a result

of poverty, war, famine, or political repression. Many are forced to emigrate without proper papers as a result of restrictive immigration laws.

The daily media barrage has polarized discussions among working people in Canada. The wide range of views is reflected in discussions among aerospace workers in the sheet metal department at Avcorp, a company south of Vancouver, where this reporter works. Ed Zuk, whose words reflected the view of many, asked, “If thousands come where will we get the jobs and money for them? The country will be in a worse recession.”

Gurmeet Gill from India said he felt torn. “If I think like a human being it makes no difference if they come in. But from a jobs perspective I worry there won't be enough jobs.”

Miners strike wins pay raise in Sweden

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Miners at LKAB iron ore mines in northern Sweden walked out September 2 over wages, pensions, and an acute shortage of workers at the above-ground sorting and pellet mills in the northern towns of Kiruna and Svappavaara.

The strike started in the pellet mill in Kiruna at 5:00 a.m. and spread to the underground miners there. Soon all the miners in Gällivare and Svappavaara also sat down. Workers from the second shift and the night shift never took the buses out to their workplaces.

The next morning the dock workers in Luleå, where the iron ore is shipped abroad, took “an extra long coffee break” and sat down.

By then all 2,000 miners at the LKAB mines and the port, which is owned by a subsidiary of the mine company, were on strike. The miners are members of the Metalworkers union, after a fusion between the Mineworkers and the Metalworkers unions.

According to Swedish antiunion laws, the strike was formally a “wild cat” because a national contract was already signed. The implementation of that contract in the mines had been stalled after local negotiations had dragged on. When the strike started, however, company representatives hurried up to Kiruna the same day to have talks with the union representatives.

On September 3 the company and the local unions started formal negotiations. Union rep-

Allan Morrison from Trinidad insisted, “We should welcome the immigrants. We all need sanctuary somewhere.”

Kit Tan, a young worker from Hong Kong, is among the one-third of Vancouver residents who are of Chinese origin. Originally he believed that the Chinese immigrants who entered Canada “illegally” should be deported.

Now, as a result of discussion, he said, “I've changed my mind. They should be allowed to stay. The politicians and media say we're paying thousands of dollars for each immigrant in order to try to convince us they should be deported.”

Marco Herrarte, who originally came from Guatemala as a refugee, pointed out, “Immigrants are just looking for a better life for themselves and their families.”

To counter the anti-immigrant campaign the Urban Youth Alliance helped organize the September 6 “Welcome the Chinese” rally in Esquimalt.

Lynn Highway, a student at Camosun College brought a hand-made sign that said: “Who you calling an immigrant... pilgrim?”

Teksiawa brought his own welcoming sign in Chinese that read: “How are you? Good luck.” He also translated all the comments made by the rally participants for the refugees in the base.

Daniel McKinnon of the Canadian Union of Postal workers explained why he and a co-worker came to the rally. “It's a trade union issue. Anyone who's under attack should be defended—an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Mary Ellen Marus is a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 11. Annette Kouri contributed to this article.

representatives called a meeting in Kiruna where the workers decided by hand vote to go back to work.

A day and a half later the union and company had signed a local contract. The miners will get a pay rise of 425 kronor (\$52) per month from the national contract and an additional 40 kronor (\$5) per month locally, one of the demands by the miners.

They will also get a lump sum of 4,100 kronor (\$500) for the six months that have passed since the negotiations started. The acute shortage of workers at the pellet mills in Kiruna and Svappavaara will be addressed by hiring 20 additional temporary workers; the company says it is still mapping out a plan for long-term personnel needs.

The miners' demands over pensions are still not satisfied. The perspective of the union officialdom is to take the issue to the labor court if the company does not agree to their demands.

The miners at the LKAB mines in northern Sweden have been known for their militancy since a 56-day strike over wages and working conditions in 1969-70, a walkout for “human dignity.” The strike came as a shock to the employers and union bureaucrats at the time. The miners gained nationwide respect among working people and set an example for a whole series of strikes on working conditions and on winning monthly wages as opposed to piece rate.

Catharina Tirsén is a member of Metalworkers Local 4 in Stockholm.

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