

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

In tour of Chile three decades ago,
Fidel Castro warned of coming coup
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‘Each soldier a rifleman’: radical shift in U.S. Army

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

“Every soldier is a rifleman.” That’s a credo of the U.S. Marines. It’s now also becoming the motto of the U.S. Army—a radical shift in how the Army trains all its enlisted troops.

Unlike the Marine Corps, the Army has too many soldiers who are specialized as clerks, cooks, or mechanics but get little training or experience in using weapons or fighting, according to what Gen. Kevin Byrnes, the Army’s top training officer, told

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Tel Aviv tries to murder main founder of Hamas

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Israeli forces attempted unsuccessfully to murder the central leader of the Palestinian organization Hamas, which Washington and Tel Aviv have labeled “terrorist,” by dropping a 550-lb bomb on the site where Sheik Ahmed Yassin was meeting with other Palestinians September 6. The assassination attempt prompted vows of retaliation by Hamas leaders. Later that day,

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George Bush: U.S. gov’t will stay the course in Iraq

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Placing Iraq within Washington’s larger “war on terrorism,” U.S. president George Bush stated in a nationally televised address September 7 that Washington will stay the course in maintaining and strengthening the occupation of the country. “Two years ago I told the Congress and the country that the war on terror would be a lengthy war, a different kind of war, fought on many

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U.S. prosecutors expand charges against six Cuban hijackers

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

U.S. prosecutors have expanded charges against six Cubans who hijacked this spring a DC-3 passenger plane scheduled to fly from Nueva Gerona on Cuba’s Isle of Youth to Havana. According to the Associated Press, the prosecution has added two counts to the charges that could carry possible life sentences. The hijackers had already been indicted on “air piracy” charges. They now also face charges of interfering with a flight crew and a related conspiracy count.

The six armed men commandeered the
Continued on Page 2

‘We fight imperialism, its drive to war, depression’

Young Socialists for Britton organize volunteers nationwide to campaign
SWP candidate for California governor presents program to defend working class

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

LOS ANGELES—“I’ve seen your statement. Just the other day I was talking about your campaign with a few people I know,” said Carmen Ortiz, a department store worker who came up to Joel Britton, the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California, to wish him well. Britton and a

Interview with Joel Britton

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group of his supporters were soapboxing on a street corner in the bustling garment district here on a hot Saturday afternoon, September 6.

Ortiz was referring to a campaign statement that socialist canvassers have been distributing among working people, youth, and others to introduce them to Britton’s action program to defend the toilers.

A day earlier Britton had flown up to Sacramento to tape a half-hour interview for the California Channel, a statewide cable TV program. In the interview, he outlined proposals to defend the interests of working people in the middle of a worsening capitalist economic crisis.

In face of increasing joblessness, the socialist campaign calls for organizing a fight “to make jobs available to all, at union-scale wages,” Britton said. In addition to



Militant/Frank Forrestal

Joel Britton (left), Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California, speaks with meat packers at shift change outside Farmer John plant in Los Angeles September 8.

the job-creating proposal of shortening the workweek with no cut in pay, he advocated “a massive public works program to rebuild hospitals, schools, child-care centers, housing, and other necessities” as well as defending affirmative action for

Blacks, Latinos, and women.

Young Socialists for Britton and other campaign supporters have been hitting the streets in working-class areas, from Los Angeles to San Francisco. They have joined

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French capitalism kills 12,000 during heat wave, Paris blames ‘mother nature’

BY LAUREN HART

The French ruling class has seized on the deaths of at least 12,000 people, most of them retirees, during a heat wave in August to cynically deflect blame from itself and the capitalist system, and present the death toll instead as a “natural disaster” exacerbated by declining “family values.” Paris has also used the occasion to push for deeper attacks on the working class.

Government officials have accused the victims’ families of abandoning their elders, in an attempt to direct the blame away from the state’s responsibility for an understaffed health system and the lack of government

action to address the crisis. As if to add insult to injury, the government has floated the idea of eliminating one of the country’s 11 national holidays, supposedly to pay for improved care for the elderly.

During the first half of August, France was hit by daily temperatures of up to 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius). Increasing numbers of people, especially elderly retirees, succumbed to dehydration and hyperthermia. As medical personnel and undertakers pointed to the mounting death toll, government officials took no emergency measures and denied what was happening. Health Minister Jean-Francois

Mattei was shown on television August 11 at his vacation home in southern France dismissing reports of the catastrophic death rates, alongside footage of overwhelmed emergency rooms. According to doctors, about 30 people usually die each day in the Paris area. With the heat wave the daily toll jumped to about 180.

It was only on August 14 that Mattei and French prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin met and announced some steps to increase hospital staffing and open more beds.

The disaster came after several years of cutbacks in health care and other services

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Sterling Laundry workers strike for union recognition in U.S. capital

BY SAM MANUEL
AND LEA SHERMAN

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Chanting “*¡Sí Se Puede!*” (Yes, we can do it), workers at the Sterling industrial laundry here went on strike for union recognition September 8. At the end of August a majority of the 110 workers in the plant signed cards to be represented by UNITE, the union of garment and textile workers.

“We are striking for better pay,” said Gleny Pichado, using a megaphone to lead workers chanting on the picket line. Many workers are paid as low as \$6 an hour. “We need health insurance, more holidays, sick days, and benefits,” she said.

Most of those on the picket line are immigrant workers from Latin America, largely women. They work in the section of the plant

where they clean laundry for hospitals and hotels. It is the hottest part of the facility, with temperatures often exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Pichado’s picture appeared prominently in the *Washington Post* along with an article in the big-business daily on a lunchtime rally the workers and their supporters held outside the plant August 29. “When the boss saw my picture in the paper he gave me three days off. But we will stay out as long as it takes,” said Pichado.

Union organizers said that the company has threatened retaliatory action including revoking its “sponsorship” of a number of immigrant workers. Some of the truck drivers for the company are on parole and must be employed as a condition of their release. The company has brought in 20–30 day
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Sterling workers strike

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laborers as scabs. “We have to deal with a number of things,” Kenneth Middleton, who operates industrial washers and dryers, told *Militant* reporters. He has worked in the plant for one year and now makes \$6.15 per hour. “We have to handle hypodermic needles. There is blood and feces in the sheets. And we have never been told that the company must provide us with hepatitis vaccinations,” Middleton added.
“We have worked too hard, too long, for a little bit of money,” said another worker with 10 years in the plant, who only identified herself as Evelyn. “If we didn’t go on strike, the owner wouldn’t take us seriously.” She makes \$8.50 an hour and pays \$119 a week for the family health-care plan. Evelyn works in the dry cleaning department and was sitting with one of her co-workers, Loraina, and Omar, who works in the washer room, both of whom speak Spanish. Pointing to them she explained that while she speaks very little Spanish, they all have figured out how to communicate with each other.

Being treated with respect by management was also a central issue for the strikers. Several UNITE placards included handwritten slogans reading, “For Respect and Dignity,” in English and Spanish.
“They don’t have any respect for us,” said Sixta Reding, who makes \$6.50 an hour. “They treat us like stepchildren,” added Middleton. Reding felt that getting medical coverage was an important goal of the strike to win a union.
A *Washington Post* article quoted the owner comparing the workers to cows. This angered workers who said they are human beings not animals. Workers said this was a typical type of comment from the owner.
A substantial challenge facing strikers is the hiring policy of the boss, which aims to divide recent Latin American immigrants from African Americans. Many Blacks work in the dry cleaning section and did not join the picket line. They are also paid somewhat higher wages. A number of Black workers were on the line, however—some chanting in Spanish.

UNITE union members and their supporters who have come in from around the region to back the fight for a union at Sterling participated in the August 29 rally in front of the plant. Other unionists from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania joined them. Among them were workers in other laundries, garment and textile shops, machine parts plants, and a clothing distribution center.
Those on the August picket line broke into cheers as dozens of workers poured out of the plant for the action during their lunch break. Many joined the picket line, donning UNITE T-shirts, carrying pro-union signs, and chanting for the union. Others sat on the side grass, watching and listening. The protesters marched behind a bed sheet painted to read, “Shame on Sterling Sweat-



Militant/Sam Manuel
UNITE backers rally outside Sterling Laundry, August 29.

shop.” They shook noisemakers, banged drums, and chanted in English and Spanish. “What do we want?” a unionist with a bullhorn bellowed. “Union!” a few dozen pickets yelled back. “When do we want it?” he asked. “Now!” the workers replied.
These workers are fighting for a union on the heels of the organizing victory by UNITE at Linens of the Week here, where laundry workers won union representation and a contract as part of a nationwide success. “The rent goes up, the bus goes up, the food goes up—why don’t our wages go up?” asked Enuce Taveras, 57, originally from the Dominican Republic, who folds clothes at Sterling for an hourly wage of \$6.15 per hour. “We want at least \$8 an hour.”
According to the *Washington Post*, company owner Eugene Jacobsen claims he can’t pay “unskilled workers” more than the minimum wage, which is \$6.15 an hour in Washington, D.C. “I’ve got to compete with companies in Maryland and Virginia,” the boss was quoted as telling the *Post*.
A giant inflatable rat, a symbol of resistance to the bosses’ anti-union drive, was brought to the rally. “It represents a rat employer,” Mario Rodríguez, a UNITE organizer, told the press. “You know, an employer who mistreats workers.”

Nancy Boyasko and Janice Lynn contributed to this article.

Six Cuban hijackers face more charges

Continued from front page
Cubana Airlines jet mid-air March 19 and ordered the pilots to fly to Florida. The plane was running out of fuel, however, and had to land in Havana, where authorities allowed it to refuel before taking off for Key West. U.S. authorities arrested and charged the perpetrators after the aircraft landed on U.S. soil, but they refused to return the plane or extradite the hijackers, as the Cuban government had demanded. On April 10, U.S. courts released the six on bail.
The revision of the charges followed an investigative trip to Cuba by five defense attorneys for the hijackers, prosecutors, and FBI agents. It was arranged on the request of the defense, and prosecutors joined in. The trial of the six was scheduled to start in Key West September 8.
The DC-3 was carrying 31 people on board. According to AP, some of the hijackers’ relatives who were on the flight have been allowed by Washington to stay in the United States.
The incident was one of a string of seven hijackings of Cuban planes and vessels between August 2002 and April of this year.

“Why do these people leave?” Cuban president Fidel Castro asked in a televised address March 19, the day of the DC-3 hijacking. “Because they are absolutely certain of their impunity. Why do these people leave, in addition to the certainty of their impunity? Because they are welcomed there as heroes and used as raw material for anti-Cuban propaganda. They leave because there is a law, in effect for 37 years now, called the Cuban Adjustment Act, a murderous law—as we define it—that has cost thousands of lives and created countless problems.”
Approved by the U.S. Congress in 1966, the Cuban Adjustment Act encourages people to leave Cuba for the United States by providing virtually automatic asylum to any Cuban who lands on Florida’s shores, regardless of crimes they may have committed to get there, and offering them expedited permanent residency status. It is one among a host of hostile policies Washington has directed at the Cuban people for more than four decades, since the triumph in 1959 of the Cuban Revolution. These measures have included bombings, sabotage, scores

of assassination attempts against Castro and other Cuban leaders, and an economic war that continues to this day.
Castro pointed out in his March 19 broadcast that the perpetrators of the first four hijackings up until that point walked free in the streets of Miami. The U.S. government holds that if a pilot not under coercion willingly flies a plane to the United States, then that act is not a hijacking and no criminal charges are brought.
On April 11, after a speedy trial, Cuban authorities convicted and executed three ringleaders of the hijacking of a passenger ferry in Havana nine days earlier. Since that time, no successful hijackings have taken place. In July, Cuban authorities foiled two attempts, including one on a boat belonging to the Cuban company GeoCuba, which made it to international waters in the Bahamas. After persistent demands by Havana, the U.S. Coast Guard returned the hijackers of the boat to the Caribbean nation along with the three guards of the vessel who had been overpowered by the attackers.
In August, a Cuban court sentenced six men convicted of hijacking the GeoCuba boat to jail terms of between 7 and 10 years.
Washington and other imperialist powers used the executions of the three ferry hijackers in April to launch an international propaganda campaign against Cuba. In this campaign they also used the earlier arrests by Cuban authorities of 75 opponents of the Cuban Revolution, who were convicted and jailed for taking money and collaborating with U.S. government representatives to aid Washington in carrying out its economic war on Cuba. The firm stance of the Cuban government in defending the country’s sovereignty, however, seems to be paying off in turning the tide of hijackings and similar provocative incidents in the recent period.

THE

MILITANT

U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War

Although Washington claims victory in the Cold War, the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s was not a boon for imperialism. The ‘Militant’ gives you the facts to understand why.

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Israel attacks Hamas

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the Israeli government ordered a full closure of the West Bank and Gaza and banned Palestinians from entering Israel.

The same day, Palestinian Authority prime minister Mahmoud Abbas, who assumed his post last spring with the stamp of approval of the White House, resigned.

This turn of events indicated that the U.S.-brokered “road map for peace” in the Middle East is resulting in more violence and further blows against the Palestinians. Washington’s goals in pushing through this accord included pressuring Tel Aviv to make minor concessions to Palestinians and deflating the Palestinian liberation struggle in exchange for a promise of a Palestinian state in a patchwork of land in the occupied territories with a leadership that meets with the U.S. rulers’ approval.

Washington had portrayed Abbas as someone it could work with in implementing the “peace plan” agreed to by Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, U.S. president George Bush, and Abbas at a June 4–5 summit in Aqaba, Jordan.

Abbas announced his resignation at a September 6 meeting of the Palestinian Authority (PA). “The fundamental problem was Israel’s unwillingness to implement its commitments in the road map,” he said. Alluding to opposition to his policies among the Palestinian people and disagreements with PA president Yasir Arafat, Abbas also complained of “lack of support” and “harsh and dangerous domestic incitement against this government.” Abbas had sought full control of Palestinian security forces, but was rebuffed by other PA leaders.

Arafat nominated Ahmed Qurei, the speaker of the Palestinian parliament and a former banker, to replace Abbas.

Bush presented the “peace plan” to the Israeli government and Palestinian leaders May 1, the day after Arafat appointed Abbas as prime minister. The so-called road map calls for the formation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza by 2005, on the condition that the PA put together a leadership acceptable to the White House and crack down on groups Washington deems “terrorist.” Sharon and Bush have refused to negotiate with Arafat, whom Tel Aviv has kept under virtual house arrest in his compound in Ramallah for two years.

While the Israeli regime made some initial concessions before and after the Aqaba summit—lifting the closure of the occupied territories, releasing a fraction of the nearly 6,000 Palestinian prisoners it holds, and shutting a few “illegal outposts” of Zionist settlements in the West Bank—it did not miss a beat in its military onslaught against those it considers the most vulner-

able obstacles to its forced dispossession of the Palestinian people. In the week after the Aqaba meeting, Tel Aviv carried out five assassination attempts against Hamas leaders, killing more than 20 Palestinians and injuring 100.

Abbas did no more than issue protests at these assaults. At the same time, he did not try to disarm or arrest Palestinian militants, as Washington and Tel Aviv insisted he do to implement the Aqaba accord. “We are not going backward,” Abbas stated. “A civil war—never.”

On June 29 Abbas reached agreement with Hamas and other Palestinian organizations for a suspension of military actions against Israeli forces. The cease-fire did not result in an end to Israeli attacks. Two weeks prior to the September 6 events a Palestinian official pointed to “the 22 Palestinians killed during the cease-fire, the [Palestinian] homes and businesses demolished, and the number of settlement outposts remaining.”

In the last three years nearly 800 Israelis and 2,600 Palestinians have been killed.

In addition, Tel Aviv has continued the construction of a 300-mile “security fence” to seal off Palestinian areas from Jerusalem. Some 70 miles of the enclosure have gone up so far, in some places as a cement wall, in others as an electrified razor-wire fence.

The White House blamed Arafat for Abbas’s resignation. National security adviser Condoleezza Rice told Fox News September 7 that Abbas had been “hamstrung by internal bickering inside the Palestinian Authority.” Secretary of State Colin Powell



Above, building destroyed by 550-pound bomb used in September 7 Israeli assassination attempt against Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, left, in wheelchair. Yassin was slightly wounded in the attack.



got more to the point, saying Washington “did everything we could to support” Abbas, but that Arafat “did not give Mr. Abbas the resources he needed to go after Hamas.”

Israeli forces—continuing their long-standing policy of assassinations against Palestinian leaders—dropped a 550-pound bomb the previous day on a building in the Gaza Strip in a failed effort to kill Sheikh

Ahmed Yassin, a central leader of Hamas. Yassin and an assistant, the BBC reports, were “alerted by the sound of approaching aircraft...and left the house just moments before an F-16 warplane dropped a bomb on it.” Israeli officials said their attack on the “head of the snake” had not achieved its objective because the air force had used a “relatively small bomb” in the residential neighborhood where the attack took place.

Tel Aviv promised a “relentless war against Hamas” in which its leaders, in Sharon’s words, are “marked for death.”

‘Every soldier a rifleman now,’ says Army

Continued from front page

reporters September 4.

“We’ve become too specialized,” said Byrnes, the head of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) at Fort Monroe, Virginia. “Ask a junior enlisted who they are, and they’ll tell you, ‘I’m a mechanic,’ not a soldier. We need to change that culturally in the Army.” Beginning next year for soldiers, and in three years for officers, the Army plans to formally inculcate a “warrior ethos” throughout its ranks, he added.

“I think the Marines do a good job on their basic combat training, and we’re trying to pull the better aspects out and embed them in our training,” Byrnes said.

This is part of a broader transformation of the entire U.S. armed forces, which includes giving central role to Special Operations units, combining commands of various branches of the military, outsourcing jobs like running military prisons and hospitals to non-military entities, and enhancing the

military’s volunteer character. This is happening, as U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld put it in a Jan. 31, 2002, speech to the War College in Washington D.C., because “In the 21st century...we need rapidly deployable, fully integrated joint forces capable of reaching distant theaters quickly and working with our air and sea forces to strike adversaries swiftly, successfully, and with devastating effect.”

In other words, the White House aims at turning the U.S. military into an instrument more like that of Israel’s armed forces, or even those of Cuba’s—not politically, of course, but in terms of rigorous training aimed at making it a more effective fighting machine for imperialism.

After praising the military’s performance in the assault and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, Byrnes said, “The initiatives TRADOC is leading now will ensure that the lessons of war are well learned and that every disciplined soldier thinks of himself or herself as an infantryman first. It is the Warrior Ethos—the culture of disciplined initiative, teamwork, determination, sac-

rifice, and self-reliance—that guides our soldiers today and tomorrow.”

These initiatives include adding a six-week leadership course to the officers’ training. The course would come before the officers’ 8- to 14-week training in their specialties, such as intelligence, infantry, or logistics, and emphasize small-unit leadership skills, similar to those possessed by Special Operations forces.

“They are very agile, very adaptive,” Byrnes said of those elite soldiers. “They are intelligence collectors, they’re war fighters. How can we take some of that goodness and bring it into our regular force?”

Like Marine mechanics and supply clerks who pride themselves on their shooting skills and ability to defend themselves in battle, GIs will undergo similar instruction. “Thus, mechanics not only will be required to fix engines but to repair them at night after a long road march. And all Army personnel, not just front-line combat units, could be required to qualify on marksmanship twice a year instead of just once,” said an article in the September 8 *Washington Post*.

Israeli premier visits India

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon on September 7 became the first Israeli head of state to visit India, 11 years after New Delhi established full diplomatic relations with Israel. The Indian rulers—known for years for their public rhetoric in support of Palestinian self-determination—have been cultivating an increasingly close relationship with Tel Aviv over the past decade.

New Delhi, which was a prominent member of the Nonaligned Movement—founded in 1961 as a forum for semicolonial nations many of which had achieved independence through national liberation struggles—was the first non-Arab government to recognize the Palestinian independence movement. It was also the last major government to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

India now tops the list of customers for Tel Aviv’s lucrative international arms trade—putting an estimated \$1.5–2 billion annually into the accounts of Israeli arms manufacturers. Israel, likewise, has displaced Russia as New Delhi’s number one arms supplier, recently completing the sale of a \$1 billion Phalcon radar system to New Delhi, with Washington’s approval.

After the Indian government carried out tests of its newly developed nuclear bomb in 1998, Washington, London, and other imperialist powers curbed technology exports to the country—as well as to Pakistan, which had also exploded an atomic bomb. Tel Aviv, which has developed its own clandestine nuclear arsenal, felt no

constraints whatsoever towards such sales to the Indian regime. The two governments are also sharing intelligence and increasing military co-operation. Indian special forces are receiving training in Israel. The two are facilitating this collaboration through a “counterterrorism working group.”

“India might pretend this is simply about buying arms from Israel and nothing more,” said Bharat Karnad, who played a central role in drafting New Delhi’s nuclear doctrine. “But the level of intelligence co-operation on Pakistan is more extensive [with Israel] than with the United States. This is a strategic relationship.”

Much of the intelligence sharing has to do with Muslim groups deemed as “terrorist” by both regimes, a number of which have been operating out of Pakistan.

Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Sharon will be meeting on the anniversary of the bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon, which they plan to use to paint their growing relationship as partners in Washington’s “war on terror.”

“Terror is the major issue and challenge for both countries,” said Yaron Mayer, a spokesperson for the Israeli Embassy to India. “We understand each other and we see each other in similar terms.”

India’s national security adviser, Brajesh Mishra, suggested in a May speech to the American Jewish Committee in the U.S. capital that New Delhi, Tel Aviv, and Washington should unite to fight “the common threat of terrorism.”

Washington stays course on Iraq

Continued from front page

fronts in many places,” Bush said. “Iraq is now the central front.” Emphasizing the open-ended character of the occupation, he drew a parallel with the U.S. occupation of Japan and Germany following World War II. “We committed years and resources to this cause,” he said. “America today accepts the challenge of helping Iraq in the same spirit, for their sake and our own.”

By his own account, some 130,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the country, along with 20,000 soldiers under the command of British and Polish officers.

The U.S. president addressed the arguments of liberal Democrats who say that the occupation threatens to become a quagmire. Such critics point to the increasing death toll among U.S. soldiers, 149 of whom have been killed since May 1, when Bush declared that “the United States and our allies have prevailed,” after U.S. forces toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein.

“The attacks you have heard and read about in the last few weeks have occurred predominantly in the central region of Iraq, between Baghdad and Tikrit,” Bush stated, “Saddam Hussein’s former stronghold.” Conditions are “generally stable” in the north and south, he asserted.

“We are staying on the offensive, with a series of enemy targets increasingly guided by intelligence given to us by Iraqi citizens,” Bush added. “Of the 55 most wanted

leaders, 42 are dead or in custody. We’re sending a clear message: Anyone who seeks to harm our soldiers can know that our soldiers are hunting for them.”

The administration has mounted a renewed push for troops from France, Germany, and other imperialist powers, along with major semicolonial countries like India and Turkey, to be deployed in Iraq. “Our commanders have requested a third multinational division to serve in Iraq,” Bush stated. “I have directed Secretary of State Colin Powell to introduce a new [UN] Security Council resolution, which would authorize the creation of a multinational force in Iraq, to be led by America.”

Paris and Berlin have reportedly rejected Washington’s initial draft resolution. According to *USA Today*, these governments said that it “did not cede enough authority to the UN and an Iraqi government.”

Bush said that he would “soon submit to Congress a request for \$87 billion,” 75 percent of which will cover “ongoing military and intelligence operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.”

Bush noted that Secretary of State Colin Powell would convene a “funding conference for the reconstruction of Iraq,” following a similar one for Afghanistan. He added, “Europe, Japan and states in the Middle East all will benefit from the success of freedom in the two countries, and they should contribute to that success.”

Calero meets New Zealand meat workers

BY FELICITY COGGAN
AND AGNES SULLIVAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—“Have you had a Maori welcome yet?” Doug Soloman, a meat worker at the Wilson Hellaby boning room, asked Róger Calero. He then formally welcomed Calero with a short speech in Maori and traditional *hongi* (rubbing noses). Some 20 workers from the department, part of a large meatpacking site in South Auckland, came out in the course of a break August 29 to meet with Calero.

A staff writer for the *Militant* newspaper and associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, Calero was visiting New Zealand as part of an international “Fight to Win” tour following his successful campaign against U.S. immigration authorities’ efforts to deport him. A permanent resident of the United States, he was arrested Dec. 3, 2002, at Houston Intercontinental Airport while returning home from reporting assignments in Cuba and Mexico. He was jailed by immigration agents as the first step in proceedings to deport him to his native Nicaragua on the basis of a plea-bargain conviction 15 years earlier for selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. After a public campaign won widespread backing for his fight, the U.S. government decided to drop the case in May. The government had waived this conviction in granting him permanent residence.

Calero thanked them for signing a petition calling for his release from jail. “I strongly believe that, if not for your and others’ signatures, I would still be in jail and would have been deported,” he said.

Soloman commented on Calero’s description of the struggle for fishing rights by the native Cheam in Canada, whom he had met during a recent visit there. “The same thing is happening over there as over here. It’s not a fight between races, but between Maori people and the Crown [state],” he said.

“Are you going round the world telling people about your experiences, or just thanking them?” asked Gloria Mau.

“Both,” replied Calero. He explained, “every year, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers are deported. Every single capitalist country is doing the same thing. It’s a way to divide us, to create a super-exploited layer they pay less, and by doing that to put pressure on the wages and benefits of everybody. My victory clearly came out of the political price they saw my fight was making them pay for trying to deport me. We want to speak about how we did it so others can do the same.”

“Good on you mate!” responded Mau.

Ian Clarke, the union delegate in the boning room, added that members of the Maori rugby team from New Zealand had recently been refused entry to Canada to tour there because of criminal convictions. “One had a drunk driving conviction,” he said. Another “hadn’t even been up in court. They were only playing sport, not staying there.”

Calero also addressed a lunchtime meeting of 17 students at the School of Visual Arts at the Manukau Institute of Technology. Jonathan Field, a student who had helped organize the meeting, chaired the session. He thanked Calero for coming to share his “amazing story—unprecedented in winning a case against the U.S. government.”

One participant asked if anyone had followed the steps Calero had taken and also won. Calero described some of the many immigrants threatened with deportation he had met in the course of his fight, and noted some that have successfully followed his example of waging a public fight. These victories show the limitations of the rulers, he said, and that they are not as invincible as they present themselves.

Another student said he thought that if countries like New Zealand opened their borders to immigrants it could create other problems, and there would be too many people and not enough resources or jobs. Calero replied that the bosses don’t want to get rid of immigrants; there are not massive deportations or concentration camps today. Attacks on immigrants are done in a selective and arbitrary way that keeps the sword of intimidation hanging over workers, so they can keep this layer divided from other working people and less combative. He said there were enough resources in countries like New Zealand to go around several times, but the problem is how this distribution is organized. The fight for the defense of immigrant rights has to go hand in hand with the fight for jobs, he added.

That evening, Calero addressed a meeting of 26 people at the Pathfinder Press Bookshop in Auckland. Included in the audience was George Arulanantham, the president of the New Zealand Tamil Society, who has protested new “anti-terrorism” laws that threaten the ability of Tamils in New Zealand to support their struggle for self-determination in Sri Lanka.

Fourteen supporters of the Róger Calero defense campaign came to a meeting hosted by the Militant Labour Forum at the Workers Educational Association premises in Christchurch August 30 to hear Calero draw the lessons of his fight. Immigrant workers are the first targets in attacks on the rights of working people to due process, legal aid, access to evidence, and civilized treatment, he explained. But the aim of the imperialist ruling classes is broader; their target is all working people, and the torture and degradation of detainees at the U.S. base at Guantánamo show what the rulers have in store for the working class. The way to respond is to fight back, turning to workers currently in struggle, and drawing on the accumulated experience of the workers’ movement, he said.

A fund appeal raised \$1,050 (NZ\$=US\$.58) nationally to help defray the costs involved in fighting Calero’s case, which were initially met by the Political Rights Defense Fund. This will also help ensure the fund is replenished and ready for the next fight.



Calero visits Vancouver

BY TONY DIFELICE
AND ANNETTE KOURI

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Róger Calero visited here August 24, the final stop of the Canadian leg of his international “Fight to Win” tour. At a public meeting and during a visit with packinghouse



Militant photos by Malcolm McAllister

Above, Róger Calero (left) on tour to explain victory in antideportation fight, gets traditional Maori *hongi* greeting from Doug Soloman during August 29 break-time meeting with workers at New Zealand meat plant. Left, some of the workers pose with Calero for a picture.



workers, Calero thanked those who backed his fight against deportation by the U.S. government and told some of the lessons of his successful struggle.

“My fight reflects the possibility of turning back the rulers’ attack against immigrant workers and all working people,” Calero told the participants of an August 24 meeting. “In Montreal a partial victory was also won by Algerian refugees against attempts by the Canadian government to deport them back to Algeria,” he continued, even though some are still under threat of deportation.

Joining Calero on the panel were Mike Barker, from the Hospital Employees Union (HEU), Shahdin Farsai of the Free the Cuban 5 Committee, and Joe Yates of the Communist League, the Canadian sister organization of Calero’s party, the Socialist Workers Party. Natalie Stake-Doucet chaired the meeting on behalf of supporters of the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

Barker spoke about the fight by HEU members against hospitals and health centers

where union members are being dismissed and their jobs given to private contractors.

Farsai talked about a tour in October of Aleida Guevara and Irma Fernández, daughter of René González, one of five Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. jails on conspiracy charges. The Cuban Five were in the U.S. gathering information on the activities of ultrarightist groups that operate on U.S. territory with the complicity of Washington and have a record of carrying out violent attacks on Cuba.

After the meeting Calero attended a supper hosted by eight meat packers in Abbotsford, 70 kilometers outside of Vancouver. They discussed the ruling-class offensive and the struggle against low wages, increased line speeds, and high injury rates on both sides of the border. Calero pointed out that his fight joined with others resisting the bosses’ attacks—coal miners, defenders of immigrant rights, and others—many of whom he has met on his international tour.

Immigrants in Canada demand sanctuary

BY RÓGER CALERO

TORONTO—Several cases here and in other provinces across Canada of immigrant families fighting deportation have highlighted the stepped-up attacks against immigrant workers by Ottawa, as well as the resistance the Canadian rulers face.

Milton Daschevi, a construction worker here, and his family decided to go underground rather than abiding by a deportation order by the immigration authorities. He was scheduled to be deported back to his native Brazil August 12. Instead, a public fight has opened up for their right to work and live in Canada that has drawn the support of his union, the Carpenters, Drywall and Allied Workers Union, local clergy, and others.

“We call them undocumented workers,” said Carlos Pimentel, a spokesperson for the Central Ontario Regional Council of Carpenters. “The stigma of being ‘illegal’ conjures up the image these people are out there stealing, maiming, building bombs in their basement, and planning to overthrow the government. Nothing could be further from the truth.”

Universal Workers Local 138, the largest construction workers union in the Toronto area, has called for measures that would allow undocumented workers to apply for temporary work permits with the possibility of becoming permanent residents.

Andy Manaham, a spokesperson for the union, which represents some 30,000 workers in the area, estimates that there are at least 9,000 undocumented workers in the Toronto area in the construction trades.

The *Toronto Star* reported August 10 that 50 members of Local 675 of the drywallers’ union, of which Daschevi is a member, turned up for a meeting organized by the union on two days notice, to discuss how to help them secure immigration status.

Most recently, five families, from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Serbia, and Colombia, have sought sanctuary in churches in an attempt to prevent their deportation. The families fear political or religious persecution if they

are sent back to their countries.

“It shows the extent to which people are willing to go,” to fight for their lives, said Darryl Gray, minister of Union United Church in Montreal, who has offered his church as a sanctuary to an Ethiopian family of four. There are some 20 other churches ready to open their doors to other families, according to Gray. There have been about 30 cases of individuals and families that have sought refuge in churches across Canada, Gray added. The government has given per-

mission to only 19 of them to remain here, and some have decided to stay in the country in spite of rulings against them.

Canadian immigration authorities have deported many of them to the United States, in the cases where that was their first point of arrival. Once there, they are put in detention indefinitely while they wait for a resolution of their case, or ultimately get deported.

A rally is planned for October 9 in Ottawa to win support for the refugee families.

Cheam defend fishing rights

BY RÓGER CALERO

AGISSEZ, British Columbia—“We are exercising our aboriginal right to fish,” Sidney Douglas told this reporter during a visit here August 25. Douglas was referring to the fight by members of the indigenous Cheam Nation to maintain its right to fish salmon on the Fraser River. That right has come under attack by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans, who claim that commercial fishing done by the Cheam poses a threat to “conservation.”

“We were the first commercial fishery in this province,” said Douglas. He explained how the fishing companies tried to make trappers out of them for fur. “But we never did that. We are fishermen,” he said. “We sell them. We eat them.”

In British Columbia, the Cheam have been at the forefront of the fight by indigenous people for their right to fish, against government encroachment of their territory, and for the resolution of land claims.

The Cheam reserve occupies about 1,200 acres along both sides of the Fraser River upstream of the Harrison River confluence. “But all of these lands are ours because we never conceded them,” said Douglas. “We have asked them to show us the receipt.”

The native leader explained that the rights of the Cheam people are placed after those

of some 300,000 sport fishermen licensed in the province. In the meantime, “charges [for fishing out of season] keep accumulating against us,” he said.

After hearing about the attacks by Washington and Ottawa on immigrant rights, and a brief explanation of this reporter’s fight against U.S. government deportation efforts, Douglas noted that it was not until 1960 that the Cheam band obtained the right to have legal representation in cases against the government. “In the last 40 years we have been catching up for the rest of the time lost,” he said. In the 1920s the Canadian rulers prohibited the Cheam people from gathering in groups of more than four people, forcing them to carry out their spiritual rituals and other meetings in hiding.

The day of this interview the native fishermen were active at the main fishing camp and boat launch preparing to go upstream to set and tend their gillnets for a catch. They expected band members to come down from the mountainous area of Kelowna, after they had been forced to leave their houses as the result of forest fires.

Members of the Tl’azt’en First Nation, up in Fort St. James, where the salmon showing up there this year is too mushy to eat, have been allowed to come down to catch their share off the Cheam reserve.

Thirty-five victims of racist frame-up pardoned in Texas

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

HOUSTON—In response to a four-year battle against the arrest and jailing of more than a tenth of the Black population of the western Texas town of Tulia, Governor Richard Perry granted full pardons on August 22 for 35 of the 38 men and women convicted on frame-up drug charges.

“It really takes a lot off your mind,” said Freddie Brookins Jr., 26, the son of a Tulia meat packer who served three-and-a-half years of a 20-year sentence. “What hurt the most was that the people in the courtroom and on the jury knew me and knew I hadn’t done it. All of it had to do with race. It’s a stupid way to get people out of town.”

“This is the day that we’ve been fighting for for the past four years,” stated Vanita Gupta, an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, one of the prominent national groups that had joined in pursuing the case. This fight for justice had attracted national and international media attention with lawyers taking it up pro bono to overturn the convictions.

Forty-six individuals—39 of them Blacks—were arrested in Tulia on July 23, 1999, in pre-dawn raids on their homes. They were accused by undercover cop Ron Coleman of selling him cocaine over an 18-month period. Coleman had been employed by the state to conduct a sting for the federally funded Panhandle Regional Narcotics Task Force. No evidence was produced during any of the trials to corroborate Coleman’s testimony. After the first several of those convicted were given 60 to 90 year sentences, 27 other defendants accepted plea agreements for lesser time. A total of 800 years in prison and 100 years on probation were handed down.

The frame-ups began to unravel in April 2002 when Tonya White, who was about to go on trial, provided bank records proving that she was 300 miles away in Oklahoma City cashing a check at the exact time Coleman claimed she had delivered cocaine to him.

In a court hearing in March Coleman admitted to using racist slurs and to “some

mess-ups” in his efforts to secure convictions. He has now been indicted on perjury charges. The following month a specially appointed state judge reviewing evidence in the Tulia cases found Coleman “simply not a credible witness under oath” and recommended the dismissal of all 38 convictions. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the state’s highest court, is still considering this recommendation. Thirteen of the defendants who remained in prison were released in June after a special act of the Texas legislature allowed them to be freed on bail.

In a news release announcing the pardons, Governor Perry described his action as “appropriate and just,” adding, “Texans demand a justice system that is tough but fair.” Kathy Walt, a spokesperson for the governor, made it clear that the pardons did not include a determination of innocence. According to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, a full pardon does not have the legal effect of expunging a criminal record or of exoneration except in rare cases where a person is also declared to be innocent. This means these Tulia residents will still have the convictions on their records, affecting their ability to get jobs and rent



The last of the 38 victims of racist frame-up in Tulia, Texas, are led to the Swisher County court house June 16 to be released after four years in prison. All were convicted on the fabricated testimony of an undercover cop, who now faces perjury charges.

apartments.

Three of the defendants were not granted pardons because of legal technicalities—one is on deferred probation and two others had convictions on their records on other charges.

“The parties responsible for what happened to the people of Tulia have yet to be brought to the bar of justice,” stated Jeff Blackburn, a lawyer in Amarillo who represents many of those just pardoned. “The government agency that caused the Tulia fiasco was the [Texas Panhandle Regional Narcotics Trafficking] task force.... They were the group that hired Coleman.”

This group “encouraged him to make the largest number of cases using whatever methods he chose. The more productive he appeared to be, the more funding money they could get,” Blackburn added. Coleman was awarded Texas Lawman of the Year for 1999.

The pardons open the way for civil suits by those charged in the cases. While many of the defendants have agreed to a settlement of \$250,000 in exchange for an agreement not to sue local officials, they remain free to sue the task force. “We’re planning on exhausting every single remedy available to our clients,” stated NAACP attorney Gupta.

Auto union demands insurance cover abortions

BY ELLEN BERMAN

DETROIT—Registering the importance of the growing number of women in the industrial workforce, the United Auto Workers union (UAW) is raising the demand in contract negotiations that abortions be covered by employer health-care plans. The current four-year contract covering 307,000 workers and 522,000 retirees, spouses, and dependents of General Motors, Ford, DaimlerChrysler, and two major parts suppliers, expires on September 14.

Women comprise approximately 43 percent of union members in the United States, up from 37 percent in 1990. Almost two-thirds of new union members are women. In the UAW, there are 169,000 women workers,

which is about one-quarter of the total active UAW workforce.

“It’s a very significant move that the UAW is taking up the issue and it reflects thinking that reproductive health care for women is not a luxury, it’s basic health care,” said Kate Michelman, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America.

This demand comes at a time when most employers are seeking ways to cut back on health benefits for their employees. Detroit automakers complain that they paid \$8.7 billion in 2002. General Motors wants to reduce the \$3.62 billion it spent covering its 336,000 UAW workers and retirees.

The outcome of negotiations around this issue is expected to have an impact on

other unions, creating anxiety among abortion opponents. “It could be a dangerous precedent,” said Monica Miller, director of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society who is planning a picket outside of UAW headquarters in Detroit.

It is unclear how hard the UAW will push on this issue or whether this demand will be part of the final contract. According to Ann Wendt, a management professor at Wright State University, “Unions raise issues knowing they may take a few contract negotiations to get...Dental and eye coverage weren’t won the first time.”

Current UAW health-care plans cover abortions only under certain circumstances, as when “medically necessary” or determined by a physician.

The UAW has also raised the proposal that GM should join Ford and Chrysler in covering prescription birth control costs.

Party-Building Fund needs push to make goal

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Supporters of the Socialist Workers \$80,000 Party-Building Fund in cities across the country report they are stepping up efforts to get on schedule in making their goals by the October 15 deadline. Collections as of September 6 remain almost \$34,000 behind schedule. Nearly two-thirds of the way into the drive, \$15,396 has been collected—19 percent of the goal.

With five weeks left in the campaign, supporters of the fund need to focus on the detailed work of both collecting on the pledges already made and winning new contributors to the fund. Central to this effort will be attractive public events in which leaders of the communist movement address world politics today and

working-class resistance to the capitalist offensive against workers’ rights and conditions.

Becky Ellis from Twin Cities, Minnesota, reports that fund supporters in that city held a successful event with Sam Manuel speaking on “The U.S. Conquest of Iraq and the Trade Push into Africa.” “Twenty people attended,” said Ellis, “including a retired railroad worker who lives about 4 hours away—he’s been reading the *Militant* for 34 years. He hasn’t been to an event in many years and he loved it!”

Ellis added that “from the calling we did to build the meeting and the meeting itself we got about \$1,600 more in pledges, bringing us to over \$5,000 pledged, well over our goal of \$4,300.”

Fund organizers are planning events like this in every city with leaders of the SWP. For information on the Party-Building Fund event in your area see the directory on page 8.

Donations should be mailed to the SWP, 152 E. 36th St., Room 401, New York, N.Y. 10018. Checks should be made out to SWP.

\$80,000 Party-Building Fund July 12–October 15: Week 8 of 13			
	Goal	Paid	%
NE Pennsylvania	2,000	750	38%
Twin Cities	4,300	1,595	37%
Miami	1,800	600	33%
Tampa	1,800	550	31%
Newark	3,500	1,015	29%
Utah	1,000	275	28%
San Francisco	8,000	1,800	23%
Detroit	2,500	550	22%
Boston	2,800	575	21%
Los Angeles	7,500	1,470	20%
Birmingham	1,400	240	17%
Houston	3,500	610	17%
New York	10,000	1,635	16%
Atlanta	5,200	660	13%
Chicago	4,200	400	10%
Des Moines	1,450	150	10%
Pittsburgh	3,600	320	9%
Seattle	6,000	525	9%
Washington, D.C.	2,700	215	8%
Cleveland	1,000	55	6%
Omaha	1,300	75	6%
Philadelphia	3,200	150	5%
Western Colorado	2,700	35	1%
Other		1,146	
Total	81,450	15,396	19%
Goal/Should be	80,000	49,600	62%

— CALENDAR OF PARTY-BUILDING FUND EVENTS —		
ILLINOIS Chicago The Reality of the World Capitalist Crisis and Prospects for Revolutionary Struggle Today. Speaker Joe Swanson. Sat., Sept. 20.	Moncada Road! Speaker: Romina Green. Sat., Sept. 20.	Speaker: Laura Garza. Sat. Sept. 21.
IOWA Des Moines Speakers: Ernie Mailhot and Rebecca Williamson. Sun., Sept. 14.	NEBRASKA Omaha Speakers: Ernie Mailhot and Rebecca Williamson. Sat., Sept. 28.	Pittsburgh The Working Class and the Fight for Women’s Rights. Speaker: Laura Garza. Fri. Sept. 20
MICHIGAN Detroit 50th Anniversary of Attack on the Moncada Garrison in Cuba, 30th Anniversary of U.S.-backed Coup in Chile: One Way Forward for the Victory of Humanity—Follow the	NEW JERSEY Newark Latin America: A Smoldering Volcano, Washington Moves to Boost its Military Intervention. Speaker: Martín Koppel. Sat., Sept. 14.	TEXAS Houston 50 Years After the Launch of the Cuban Revolution at Moncada, 30 Years After the Coup in Chile—What Workers and Farmers Can Learn from These Events Today. Speaker: James Harris. Fri. Sept. 13.
PENNSYLVANIA Northeast Pennsylvania The Working Class and the Fight for Women’s Rights.	(For further information on all events see directory on page 8)	

Interview with Joel Britton, SWP candidate for

Joel Britton, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California in the October 7 recall election, granted the following interview September 3. *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel conducted the interview in New York. The first part of the interview appears below. The second part will be published next week.

Question. The leading candidates of the big-business parties for governor of California, Democrat Cruz Bustamante and Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger, are both responding to recent criticisms about things they are accused of having done in their youth. They have replied by saying they committed “youthful follies” but now have changed.

I’d like to ask you some questions about your record, and how it relates to what you are doing today and what your campaign stands for.

I understand you were a member of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) in the early 1960s, and in fact became a member of its National Committee. Is that accurate? If so, can you explain how you got involved in the YSA and how you view that today?

Answer. Yes, I joined the Young Socialist Alliance in the spring of 1962, at the age of 20. It was a few weeks after participating in a large Easter Peace Walk that opposed U.S. nuclear tests. I was among those who walked from Evanston, Illinois, where I was a student at Northwestern University, to downtown Chicago.

If there was a youthful folly I committed in that period, it was carrying out an ultra-left act during that march. I was marching with a friend, and some ultrarightists from the John Birch Society were in a vehicle alongside, flying a red flag with a hammer and sickle while using a bullhorn to bait the demonstration as “communist.” This made me angry. I left the march for a few minutes, walked up behind the vehicle, grabbed the flag, and ran off with it for a few blocks to make sure I wasn’t caught. I made my way back to the demonstration and marched all the way downtown.

By joining the YSA soon thereafter, I developed an understanding of the importance of disciplined participation in protests like this one, rather than individual acts that could bring harm to the demonstration.

At that time we in the YSA were beginning to raise the question of Washington’s growing military intervention in Vietnam. The media was reporting that U.S. military “advisors” were in Vietnam. The liberal and pacifist leaders of this peace walk had let it be known that signs with slogans about anything other than “peace” in the abstract—such as demands that U.S. troops get out of Vietnam—were not welcome. So we had to defend our right to carry whatever

signs we wanted to have.

That was the second demonstration I had been on. The first was a demonstration on the Northwestern University campus a little earlier, where members of the YSA joined other students in protesting the presence on campus of a U.S. Army general who was associated with the John Birch Society, Maj. Gen. Edwin Walker, who was on a national speaking tour. As we were marching through this quad, out of a dormitory window a student supporting this general lowered a giant swastika flag.

At that time I was involved in classes organized by the members of the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party, studying the threat of fascism and how to fight it. Up to this point, I was becoming revolutionary-minded but wasn’t sure there could be a revolution in the United States. We studied various historical experiences of the working-class movement—why you need a revolutionary party, how we can make a workers revolution in this country.

How I joined the YSA

The way I first came in contact with the communist movement was at a series of meetings in the fall of 1961, organized by students at Northwestern in collaboration with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

One of those was on the Bay of Pigs invasion—the U.S.-organized assault on Cuba in April 1961—which featured a Cuban movie on the invasion and how it was defeated by the working people of Cuba organized in militias and the Revolutionary Armed Forces. A dozen or more Cuban exile counterrevolutionaries disrupted this large meeting, but were not able to break it up.

At that meeting I talked to Betsey Stone, who was staffing a Fair Play for Cuba Committee display on the stage, and bought a pamphlet on the Bay of Pigs invasion; she was also a member of the Young Socialist Alliance. I went outside and another YSAer



Visit by Young Socialist Alliance members to Cuba in 1969. Right, YSA delegation meets with Huynh Van Ba (left) and other representatives of Vietnamese National Liberation Front; Britton (partially obscured) is seated at far right end of table. Left, Britton with hoe carries out volunteer labor in Havana’s “Green Belt.”

sold me a copy of the *Young Socialist* newspaper. Shortly thereafter, Jack Barnes, a YSA leader who was also a student at Northwestern, spoke on the agrarian reform in Cuba. I asked a question and he answered it, but suggested that we talk further about it afterward, which we did. I was invited over for dinner to continue the discussions.

From that night on, we had many political discussions on the Cuban Revolution and how working people can make a revolution in this country. We discussed the campaign to defend Robert F. Williams and members of his movement in Monroe, North Carolina, where Black rights fighters had organized armed self-defense of their community to repel attacks by the Ku Klux Klan. Wil-

liams had recently left the country to avoid arrest on frame-up charges by the FBI. There was a shoot-to-kill wanted poster on him in post offices around the country. There was a big defense campaign that we were a leading part of.

In the series of classes, an important turning point in my decision to join the YSA was studying the 1954 events in Guatemala. This was an example of a potentially revolutionary struggle that was blocked by the Stalinist party in that country, which collaborated with what it considered a “progressive” wing of the capitalist class at the expense of the independent mobilization of workers and farmers against the CIA-organized overthrow of the government of Jacobo Arbenz.

I was asked to teach a class that was part of a series on the *Communist Manifesto*. These took place right after the YSA meetings, held at the University of Chicago, which meant I had to come to the YSA meetings and wait outside. So I went down from Northwestern to the University of Chicago. I had to wait till the meeting was over because I wasn’t a member. So I decided that if I could teach a class on the *Communist Manifesto*, I could be in the Young Socialist Alliance. So I signed up.

We organized a socialist summer school that year. Young people came in from around the Midwest. It was part of a process of young people being won to the communist movement, of renewing this proletarian party, and helping to make a transition in the party leadership over a period of years.

None of the way with LBJ

In 1964 I was a Student for DeBerry and Shaw—Clifton DeBerry and Ed Shaw were the Socialist Workers candidates for president and vice president in 1964. I had been elected to the National Committee of the YSA by the delegates at the 1963 YSA convention, and in 1964 I went on a speaking tour for DeBerry and Shaw around the Midwest. We did this in face of all the pressure to, as the middle-class leftists said, go “part of the way with LBJ,” which was the slogan of a wing of the leadership of the Students for a Democratic Society who

advocated voting for Lyndon B. Johnson, the Democratic president.

We went *none* of the way with LBJ, who was carrying out an escalation of U.S. military intervention in Vietnam on behalf of the U.S. rulers. Instead, we campaigned through election day for DeBerry and Shaw.

As early as 1962 we would get together and watch Malcolm X on TV. He would appear periodically on the Kup Show, a late-night talk show hosted by Irv Kupcinet. We were attracted to Malcolm and viewed him as a revolutionary.

Q. I understand you went to Cuba in the early years of the revolution there. There’s a picture in the *Militant* in 1969 (see above) that shows you taking part in voluntary labor as part of a brigade of young people from the United States. Why did you go to Cuba and what did you do there?

A. The Young Socialist Alliance was invited to send a delegation to Cuba to join in the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the victory of the revolution. We made a banner that read “*Norteamericanos con Cuba*”—Americans with Cuba—on a big piece of cloth a hotel worker got for us, and we held it up during the gigantic rally in Plaza de la Revolución (Revolution Square) in Havana on January 2. During our trip we also did voluntary work one afternoon.

We went to Santiago de Cuba. There we visited the museum at the Moncada barracks and deepened our understanding of the trajectory of the young revolutionaries, led by Fidel Castro, who had attacked that garrison of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship on July 26, 1953, and had gone on to lead Cuban working people to power.

I remain proud of the fact that in the course of this trip we met representatives of the National Liberation Front (NLF) of Vietnam, which was leading the struggle in South Vietnam against U.S. intervention.

We had a substantial discussion and celebration in Havana with Huynh Van Ba, the head of the NLF diplomatic mission to Cuba on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Tet offensive carried out by the liberation fighters against the U.S. forces, a turning point in the war against U.S. imperialism.

That encounter included a visit to a National Liberation Front display at a museum in Havana.

Since all of us on this trip, about a dozen YSA members, were active in the anti-Vietnam War movement, it meant a great deal to us to see how these fighters, in many cases with very rudimentary weapons, were prevailing in the struggle against the mightiest and most brutal imperialist power in the world.

Our YSA delegation presented Van Ba with a statement we had drafted there, saluting the heroism and determination of the Vietnamese people in their struggle for national liberation.

“As part of a new generation of revolutionary youth that is arising in the United States, we pledge to redouble our efforts to end U.S. aggression in Vietnam and in other parts of the world. Your struggle is our example,” the statement read.

At a reception for international guests with Fidel Castro and other leaders of

Further Reading From Pathfinder

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by Malcolm X

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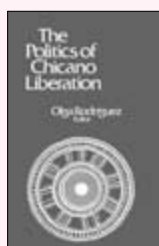


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for California governor

the revolution, we met representatives of the government and armed forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We congratulated them on their successful seizure of the USS *Pueblo*, a U.S. spy ship, a year earlier.

Emulate example of Cuban Revolution

This trip helped solidify our commitment to building the kind of revolutionary leadership necessary in the United States to emulate the example of the Cuban working people in overthrowing capitalism and establishing a workers and farmers government.

In Cuba we visited schools, hospitals, and other sites. In our visits to factories and farms, we met a great many working people who told us about their participation in the revolution, including young working people who had lived in the United States in exile and had moved back. It was a very inspiring trip.

In Santiago we rode by truck into the Sierra Maestra mountains, to the scene of El Uvero, the first victorious battle of the Rebel Army in 1957, where after the revolutionary victory that site had been turned into a boarding school. I was reading what was then the edition available of Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*.

I'm proud to say that out of those on that trip who are still alive, five remain active in the communist movement—Linda Jenness, Robin Maisel, Dave Prince, Stu Singer, and myself.

Q. You said you were active in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Could you say a little more about that?

A. I was active in the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the SMC. And I was the Socialist Workers Party representative to the broader antiwar coalition in Chicago.

As part of leading an orientation toward building the kind of antiwar movement that could appeal to and involve working people, we reached out to men and women in uniform, at the military bases, bus depots, etc. I was at many of the big marches on Washington and San Francisco.

Q. The big-business press has widely reported accusations by some opponents of Bustamante, such as recall candidate

A. I first developed an interest in the Chicano liberation struggle in the mid-1960s during the farm workers' struggles in California. I was in Chicago at that time and I took part in Militant Labor Forums on that movement, including a forum that featured speakers from the United Farm Workers. In 1967—I was 25 years old then—I moved to Los Angeles, where I began to learn more about that. For example, members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance helped organize coverage for the *Militant* of the land-grant movement in New Mexico led by Reies López Tijerina.

In October 1968 I met with two Chicano community activists at the Socialist Workers Party headquarters in Los Angeles. We discussed how, in the context of all the high school walkouts—known as “blowouts”—and other actions by Chicanos at that time, we could build support for the young people in Mexico who were demanding justice in the aftermath of the Massacre of Tlatelolco, in which police and army troops fired on student demonstrators in Mexico City and killed hundreds of youth.

MEChA and Plan de Aztlán

Members of the YSA and Socialist Workers Party took part in the Chicano youth conferences in Denver, organized by the Crusade for Justice that took place in 1969 and 1970. I was responsible for our party's collaboration with our members who participated in these conferences. Our comrades took part in the March 1969 National Chicano Youth Conference in Denver, which adopted the Plan de Aztlán, considered so outrageous by the scandalmongers today. That document was a program for the mass mobilization of Chicanos for community control.

The Plan de Aztlán raised the concept that the liberation of the Chicano people would ultimately require “a nation autonomously free, culturally, socially, economically, and politically.” It projected the creation of an independent Chicano political party because “the two-party system is the same animal with two heads that feeds from the same trough.” Following the second Denver conference in 1970, the Raza Unida Party in Colorado was launched.

At our 1971 national convention, the Socialist Workers Party adopted a resolution on the Chicano liberation struggle, which is the main document in *The Politics of Chicano Liberation*, published by Pathfinder Press. I helped in the drafting of that resolution.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s I was part of the efforts by our movement's leadership to support and promote the development of independent working-class political action that took the form of the Raza Unida Party. That

included a visit to Crystal City, Texas, where one of the families leading the struggle hosted us.

Crystal City is a small town near the border with Mexico that is majority Chicano. But it had been dominated by an all-white city government for decades. The struggle involved fighting against the brutality of the local police and the Texas Rangers, a notoriously racist special state police unit that routinely acted as judge, jury, and executioner against working people, especially Chicanos.

There was a struggle by Chicanos to take over the local government there, which they eventually did. It was one of the first successful examples of independent Chicano



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Joel Britton (left) being interviewed by *Militant* reporter Martín Koppel Sept. 3.

political action. The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance supported this development.

I also attended a public session of the 1972 Raza Unida Party national gathering in El Paso, Texas.

There were different currents within the Chicano movement. There were some elements that were against revolutionary socialism, considering Marxism to be a “European import.” But we were an active part of this movement, and we were welcomed by many of the militants in the Chicano movement who were open to a working-class political trajectory.

MEChA is a Chicano student organization with chapters on campuses throughout the Southwest and other parts of the country. In recent years, MEChA chapters in Southern California helped organize speaking tours for Cubans to tell the truth about the Cuban Revolution. These included Carlos Tablada, the author of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, and Cuban revolutionary youth leaders. This past summer a number of the young people who took part in the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange trip to Cuba were members of MEChA who traveled there to see Cuba

for themselves.

The attacks on MEChA as a “racist” organization are a reactionary slander. MEChA, like other Chicano organizations, supports demands aimed at combating the oppression of the Chicano people. You can't identify the nationalism of the oppressed with the nationalism of the oppressor. I was taught this when I joined the communist movement. At that time we studied the discussions with Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky that were later published by Pathfinder as *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*.

Our movement's collaboration with Malcolm X, and our understanding of the revolutionary dynamic of Malcolm's political evolution, prepared us for the nationalist awakening among the Chicano people and the development of a fighting movement of Chicanos. It was led by young people who wanted not to be ashamed of using Spanish and to learn about the history and traditions of the Chicano people. These are issues that the Plan de Aztlán, for example, centered on. Young people today can find out the truth about these struggles in books such as *The Politics of Chicano Liberation* and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

(In the second part of this interview, Britton describes, among other things, his activity in the communist movement during the rise of the Black liberation struggle in the United States in the 1960s and '70s.)

California socialist campaign

Continued from front page

activities such as recent farm worker-led demonstrations in Salinas and other cities demanding the right of undocumented workers to obtain driver's licenses; a picket line at the Forever 21 garment plant in Los Angeles by workers demanding back pay; and a public meeting calling for the release of five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. prisons. They are also going onto college campuses that have just started the fall session.

Olympia Newton, California state spokesperson of the Young Socialists for Britton, said, “We are welcoming young people from around the country to join our Britton Brigades over the next four weeks. Young socialists are coming in from Miami, New York, and elsewhere. We need reinforcements—right now!—to take advantage of every opportunity that has opened up for us with the October 7 recall election.”

Nicole Sarmiento and Jessica Baity, students at the University of Miami, had tickets to fly to Los Angeles September 10. “We will arrive in LA tomorrow night,”

Sarmiento told the *Militant* September 9. YS member Arrin Hawkins is set to arrive in Los Angeles September 12. Abby Tilsner, a garment worker from Newark currently on lay off, is flying to LA the day before.

“We're looking for youth who are repelled by the imperialist wars, the racism, sexism, and unrelenting brutality of capitalism—all of which are made worse by the policies of the Democrats and Republicans, the twin parties of the bosses,” Newton stated. “We're seeking out those who are attracted to the perspective of fighting imperialism and its drive to war and economic depression and building a revolutionary movement here.”

“Young socialists everywhere are figuring out their plans on how to get time off work or school and find a way—any way—to get to California for a few days, a week, or longer,” she added. “Campaigning has focused on Los Angeles and San Francisco, and we'll be fielding teams to other cities and rural areas across the state as additional volunteers join us.”

Interviewed September 8 by TV Channel

Continued on page 10



Antonio Camejo

Left to right, Mariana Hernandez, Tony Thomas, Paul McKnight, and Britton in Crystal City, Texas, late 1960s. Chicanos won a struggle there to take over the previously all-white local government. Popeye statue in middle symbolizes that city was “spinach capital of world.” During a high-school blowout there, students painted Popeye brown.

and State Senator Thomas McClintock and right-wing columnist Michelle Malkin, that while in college in the 1970s Bustamante was a member of MEChA, which they label a radical, “violent,” and “racist” organization. They cite MEChA literature advocating the defense of “la Raza,” “the liberation of Aztlán,” and the self-determination of the Chicano people. They single out the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán (*Spiritual Plan of Aztlán*), a document adopted by the 1969 National Chicano Youth Conference in Denver that led to the founding of MEChA. McClintock even equated MEChA with the Ku Klux Klan. What was your association with the Chicano rights movement at that time?

Campaign with Young Socialists for Britton

With less than four weeks left in the California governor's race, young socialists from all around the country are coming to California to join in campaigning for the socialist alternative there. If you would like to be one of these campaign volunteers, contact Young Socialists for Britton at 4229 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90011; Tel: (323) 233- 9372; or email: 74642.326@compuserve.com

‘U.S. imperialism is not all-powerful’

The following are excerpts from “The End of the War in Europe,” a speech that appears in James P. Cannon’s *The Struggle for Socialism in the American Century*, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month in September. Delivered in New York on May 1, 1945, to an audience of 500 people, this was the first public address by the Socialist Workers Party national secretary following his release from a jail term imposed on him and other SWP and trade union leaders for their opposition to Washington’s entry into the inter-imperialist slaughter of World War II. Copyright © 1977 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Square brackets indicate excerpts in original.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

As our esteemed chairman reminded you, we have been away for a while. It seems, to me at least, like a long time since I have made a speech, and naturally I am a little nervous in getting started. But I hope to overcome that as I go along because all I really intend to do is to continue what I was saying when I was so rudely interrupted.

In essence, it is what we have been saying throughout our entire conscious lives; and what our predecessors, the great pioneers of socialism, have been saying since 1848.

We are approaching the one-hundredth anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*,

the first great document which proclaimed the coming downfall of capitalism and the inevitable victory of the proletariat. Today, ninety-seven years later, it remains our program and our banner. Nothing is clearer in the world today than this: that the failure of the workers to carry out the historic mission imposed upon them by the decline of capitalism does not and cannot bring any relief or prosperity for them but only a continuation of enslavement and devastating wars which in the present period of the death agony of capitalism grow ever more monstrous in devouring mankind. . .

As the present war in Europe draws to its agonizing close and with the end of the present war in the Orient not very far away, the victors are meeting in San Francisco to prepare the next war.¹ Even before they have been able to arrange the formal declaration of the finish of the five-and-a-half-year war that has cost tens of millions of human lives, they are meeting, and over the meeting of the victors is the shadow of the next war, which they don’t even any longer promise to avoid. They only express hopes that it will not come too soon. The battlefields of Europe and the Orient, the ruined cities, the devastations, the hunger, and the dead, counterposed to the opulent setting of the conference in the San Francisco Opera House seems to me to symbolize the whole present reality. [. . .]

Who are the victors in this terrible devastating war? Who won freedom? The victors, you must understand and never fail to make it clear—the victors in the first place are the Wall Street money sharks. They are the only ones who have won the war, they and their satellite imperialism in Great Britain, which in the course of the war has yielded three-fourths of its position to the Wall Street Moloch and the Stalinist satellites of Moscow.

U.S. imperialism emerges from this war



Cartoon printed on front page of Aug. 18, 1945, issue of *Militant* at end of World War II. “There is no Peace!” proclaimed the lead headline.

as the master of the world, and it seems to those who cannot see clearly that it is all-powerful. Some of the statesmen at Washington and their representatives in Frisco, and their generals and admirals on the battlefields and the high seas, deceive themselves in the effulgence of these great victories that have been produced as a result of the terrific preponderance of the American economy. They deceive themselves.

I do not think that America is all-powerful. Let us not make that mistake. The modern Rome, the master of the world, whose light-minded statesmen dream and even talk of dominating and exploiting and policing the world for one hundred years, has a cancer at its heart. But today they are the victors.

Now, who are the vanquished in the war as it stands today, up to the present moment? The war and its consequences are by no means concluded. After the formal ending of the hostilities comes the aftermath, and the victors and the vanquished may change places then. But the vanquished as of this moment are only incidentally the rivals of American imperialism—the

German imperialists, and the Italian imperialists, and the Japanese. They are only the incidental victims. They will have to sacrifice a great deal. They have to sacrifice some of their apparently all-powerful fascist politicians who have come to such an ignominious end. But fundamentally the vanquished are the people of Europe and of Asia, and, although they don’t know it yet, the people of the United States of America...

Since 1914, and ten times more since this present war, American imperialism in expanding its power and its controls over the whole earth, in becoming the exploiter of the world, thereby extends its economic base away from the sure foundation of the forty-eight states united on one continent. [. . .] And every weakness in the economy of world capitalism at any point runs a tremor throughout the foundations of American imperialism because its founda-

tions are on that economy too. Every revolutionary disturbance—and there have been many and will be ten and one hundred times more, one after another in all parts of this agonizing world—will shake the stability of this deceptive Moloch of American capitalism which appears on the surface to be so sure and so powerful. [. . .]

In addition to all that, the modern imperialist master of the world faces its proletarian nemesis at home. One would think sometimes that the capitalists would curse Marx for this terrible thing called the contradictions of the capitalist system. But Marx didn’t make it; he only explained it.

1. The founding conference of the United Nations opened at the San Francisco Opera House on April 25, 1945. It ended with the signing of the UN Charter on June 26. The UN was conceived at the Teheran meetings in 1944 between Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt to replace the defunct League of Nations. Its form, initially a congress of the victors of World War II, excluded the defeated Axis powers and most of the colonial and semicolonial nations.

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‘In revolution, price of defeat is very high’

Sept. 11, 2003, marks the 30th anniversary of the U.S.-backed military coup in Chile led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet. The coup overthrew the elected government of Socialist Party leader Salvador Allende. Bringing history into the present, the *Militant* reprints below excerpts from *Fidel Castro on Chile*, an Education for Socialists bulletin published by Pathfinder Press. The bulletin contains speeches by Cuban president Fidel Castro during his Nov. 10–Dec. 4, 1971, tour in Chile while Allende was president. Last week we published the first part of the bulletin’s introduction, written by Elizabeth Stone. This week’s installment consists of the second part of this introduction. Copyright © 1982 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

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(Second part)

BY ELIZABETH STONE

The Cubans recognized that one of the reasons for Washington’s fury against Allende was his well-known support for the Cuban revolution. Allende was a friend of Che and Fidel and he frequently spoke in support of Cuba in his speeches. More important, Chile’s extension of diplomatic and trade relations to Cuba was the first big breakthrough against Washington’s policy of isolating Cuba in Latin America. A year later came the invitation to Castro to come as an official guest of the UP government. This was the first time that Castro was able to visit another Latin American country in eleven years. During this three-and-a-half week trip, Castro was greeted by hundreds of thousands of Chileans. He spoke to large rallies of workers, peasants, and students.

The Cubans and Castro identified themselves with the UP government and its anti-imperialist measures. At the same time, however, Castro’s political *line* for Chile, and his projection of what the workers needed to do to carry the struggle forward, was in opposition to the line of the UP leadership. This is shown clearly in the speeches he gave while he was in Chile.

Castro arrived in Chile about a year after Allende was elected, which was at a relatively early stage in the bourgeois challenge to the UP government. Nevertheless, the right-wing attacks were already underway. The first reactionary march of the upper and middle-class women took place while Castro was there, and these actions were directed, in part, against him.

In expressing his opinion on these events, Castro had to take into consideration that he was a visiting head of state and that right-wing forces were attacking the UP by claiming that he was “intervening” in Chilean politics. Despite this, he was able to find ways to present his view that a revolution was needed, and was possible, in Chile. To help explain this, he filled his speeches with lessons from the Cuban revolution, describing how it was that the Cuban masses were able to defeat imperialism, how the Cubans were united precisely because they were defending a system that had ended class exploitation, how the Cubans were organized in mass organizations, and how they had defeated the Batista army and the

imperialist invasion, arms in hand.

Castro was always careful to make it clear that he did not think, as the UP leaders did, that the electoral victory and reforms of the UP government represented a “revolution.” Speaking to students at Concepcion, for example, he described what was taking place in Chile as “a revolutionary process,” and then he went on to say: “This must be clearly understood; a process is not yet a revolution. A process is a road; a process is a stage that is beginning.”

Later in the speech he said, “The experience we had [in Cuba] was different from yours. I don’t believe there’s any easy road to revolution, but I know you Chileans will find a solution to all these problems. Of course, it is a political axiom that there can be no revolution without the total destruction of the old bourgeois state.”...

Castro also explained his view of the election of Allende: “When Popular Unity won, there were many dangers, many obstacles. The electoral victory was like a door slightly ajar. But it was, nevertheless, a breach, an opening, a little slit if you would.”

He saw this “breach” as part of a sharpening class struggle that would end either in revolution or a terrible defeat. This is the way he described the situation at a news conference in Santiago:

“A revolutionary process or a revolutionary crisis is scientifically determined at the moment when the struggle between antagonistic interests becomes acute, when the privileged and the powerful feel that their interests are threatened to such an extent that they resort to every imaginable procedure and weapon in their effort to crush the revolutionary movement. Undoubtedly, this is the struggle that is being waged in this country now. It is obvious, and everybody is aware of it. Now then, this is unequivocal proof of what you’re going through... And I hope that all of you, especially all the revolutionaries, are convinced of this fact. A revolutionary process is a revolutionary process. It’s a serious problem, a very hard struggle.

“The price that has to be paid when a revolutionary process is crushed is a very high one. The price that nations have to pay for defeat is a very high one, and so is the price paid by the people’s movement. This is because when these processes become acute and the privileged classes, driven by hatred, are out to prevent changes in society, they resort to every procedure, even extreme violence and the most horrible crimes. We find proof of this in historic contemporary events. Mankind has been accumulating experience of this sort for almost 100 years.

“Therefore in my opinion, this is a revolutionary process. And it’s imperative that revolutionaries realize this. The reactionaries are aware of it—and how! They have their strategy and plans, a whole series of schemes instigated from the outside. One can see the CIA’s hand behind many of their actions. We are more than familiar with that hand, because it’s been pretty active around our country for many years.”

Castro constantly sought to educate those he spoke to on the rapacious and violent nature of the ruling class and imperialism, preparing them for what was to come. This was in stark contrast to Allende and the UP, who sought to reassure people about the possibility of a “peaceful road.” Several months after he was elected, for example, Allende explained in an interview with Régis Debray that he did not think Chile would see a serious economic attack from the imperialists: “I believe that they will not do anything of this nature; firstly because as I say, we have acted within the laws of Chile, within the Constitution. It is for this reason, Régis, that I have maintained that victory through the polling booths was the way to preempt such a policy, because this way their hands are tied.”

At the end of the tour, after Cas-



Cuban prime minister Fidel Castro and Chilean president Salvador Allende greet supporters during visit to Chile by the Cuban leader in November 1971.

tro had gotten a better first-hand view of what was happening, he became more outspoken about his warnings about the need to mobilize the masses for a revolutionary struggle to defeat imperialism and the reactionaries. His entire farewell speech, given at a mass rally in Santiago, was dedicated to this theme:

“All obsolete social systems and societies have defended themselves when threatened with extinction. They have defended themselves with tremendous violence throughout history. No social system ever resigned itself to disappearing from the face of the earth of its own free will...”

“Because, as I have said on other occasions, the revolutionaries are not the inventors of violence...”

“What do the exploiters do when their own institutions no longer guarantee their rule? How do they react when the mechanisms they historically depend upon to maintain their rule fail? They simply go ahead and destroy them...”

“Every revolutionary process teaches the people in a few months things which, otherwise, would take them dozens of years to learn.

“This involves a question: Who will learn more and sooner? Who will develop more awareness faster? The exploiters or the exploited? Who will learn faster from the lessons of this process? The people or the enemies of the people? (Exclamations of ‘The people!’)”

“Are you absolutely sure—you, the protagonists in this drama being written by your country—are you completely sure that you have learned more than your exploiters have? (Exclamations of ‘yes!’)”

“Then allow me to say that I don’t agree this time with the masses. (Applause)...

“I was amazed when I heard the President [Allende] say that a very important newspaper in Washington or New York had published statements by a high-ranking government official who said that ‘The days of the people’s government in Chile are numbered.’ (Boos)

“I would like to point out—not that government official’s rudeness, intromission, his arrogance, his offensiveness, his insolence—that it’s been many years since some crazy U.S. official said that the days of the Cuban Revolution were numbered. (Shouts and exclamations)...

“We should ask what grounds they have for such optimism, for such assurance. What is the assurance based on? And you are the only ones who can supply the answer.

“Or maybe you’d be interested in hearing the opinion of a visitor who is not a tourist? Do I have your permission to give it? (Exclamations of ‘Yes!’)”

“All those in favor, raise your hands. (All hands go up)

“Well, in view of the permission granted me in this plebiscite (Shouts of ‘Fidel, Fi-

del, Fidel!’) to express my opinion on matters of concept, I say that assurance is based on the weakness of this revolutionary process, on the weakness of the ideological battle, on the weakness of the mass struggle, on weaknesses displayed in the face of the enemy. (Applause) The outside enemy, which supports the inside enemy, is trying to take advantage of the slightest crack, the slightest weakness.

“In fact, I could also say that your efforts to consolidate your forces, to unite them and to increase them, have been weak.

“You’re going through a period which is very special, but not a new one, in the arena of class struggle.

“There are countless examples of this. You’re going through that period in the process in which the fascists—to call them by their right name—are trying to beat you out of the middle strata of the population...”

“There are places where I found the revolutionaries kind of hard-hit, and there are places where they even looked demoralized.

“If I weren’t sincere, if I didn’t believe in the truth, I wouldn’t dare say what I have just said. It might even sound as if I were saying something that the enemy could use to his advantage, to gain ground.

No! The only way in which the enemy can gain ground is by deceit, by confusion, by ignorance, by the lack of awareness about problems! (Applause)

“If you want my opinion, the success or the failure of this unusual process will depend on the ideological battle and the mass struggle. It will also depend on the revolutionaries’ ability to grow in numbers, to unite and to win over the middle strata of the population...”

“The people are the makers of history. The people write their own history. The masses make history. No reactionary, no imperialist enemy can crush the people! (Applause) Our country’s recent history proves it!

“How did we manage to resist and why? Because of the unity of our people. Because of the strength that such unity generates.

“I said that it would take two hours for us to get together 10 times as many people as there are here now. And I also say that we can mobilize 600,000 men in arms within 24 hours! (Applause)

“A close unbreakable unity exists between the people and the armed forces of our country. This is why I say that we have a strong defense.

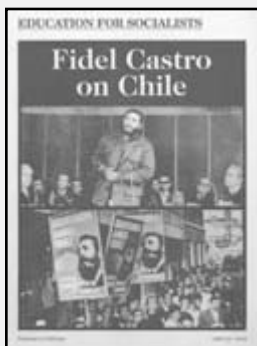
“There’s one thing that the experts in war and history and the professional soldiers know, and that is that man plays a decisive role in battle, that moral factors play a decisive role in battle, that the morale of the combatant plays a decisive role in battle.

“Those familiar with history and great military deeds know that when forces are united, inspired and deeply motivated, they can overcome any obstacle. They can assail and take any position and make the most incredible sacrifices.

“What is it that gives our people this deep motivation in their unity against danger from the outside? The fact that, when it comes to defending our country, that country is not divided between millionaires and paupers, between wealthy landowners with all the privileges in the world and miserable peasants without land or work, living a life of poverty. The fact that our country is not divided between oppressors and the oppressed, between the exploiters and the exploited, between ladies overloaded with jewelry and girls forced to lead a life of prostitution. (Applause) Our country is not divided between the privileged and the dispossessed.”

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U.S. troops out of Korea!

The *Militant* provides its editorial space this week to publish a letter by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes and Olympia Newton, spokesperson for the Young Socialists for Britton, sent to the Workers Party of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea September 8.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists join the Korean people in celebrating the 55th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We reaffirm our solidarity with the struggle of Koreans worldwide for national sovereignty and our commitment to join them in forcing U.S. military forces out of Korea, including from Korea's territorial waters and airspace, and reunifying the country.

The founding of the DPRK in 1948 was the fruit of decades-long struggles by Korean workers and peasants against Japanese colonialism, U.S. imperialism, and local exploiters in the factories, mines, and on the land. Fewer than two years later, Washington—which organized the partition of Korea at the close of World War II—carried out a massive invasion and air assault aimed at destroying the DPRK and reestablishing imperialist domination over the entire peninsula. By their resistance between 1950 and 1953, the Korean people dealt U.S. imperialism its first-ever military defeat, opening the way for the workers and peasants of Vietnam and Cuba to score such triumphs in the decades to come.

For more than half a century, the working people of Korea, arms in hand, have defended their sovereignty and pressed forward toward national reunification. They have held firm in the face of U.S. imperialism's economic embargo, nonstop slanders against the DPRK, and ongoing military threats and provocative "exercises" involving the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in the south. Over that

same period, students and working people in the south have fought bloody battles to win union rights; to defend their ability to engage in politics and to hold, discuss, and proclaim any views, including communist ones; and to mobilize massively in the fight to reunify Korea.

The U.S. government continues to step up harassment against the DPRK on economic, military, "special operations," and diplomatic fronts. Having recently completed the annual Ulji Focus Lens war maneuvers with south Korean forces, Washington—together with Tokyo, Sydney, Paris, and other governments—is beginning new naval exercises in openly declared preparation to carry out piracy on the high seas against ships deemed to be carrying "weapons of mass destruction." U.S. officials repeatedly state that north Korea and Iran are primary targets of such trial runs.

At the same time, Washington used the five-party talks in Beijing last month—without the U.S. government beginning the dismantling of its worldwide offensive nuclear armada, which hangs over the entire world like a sword of terror—to demand that the DPRK unilaterally cease its development of any nuclear defense or even nuclear power development. The U.S. rulers, who have used nuclear weapons against the Korean and Japanese people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, issue the hypocritical call for "a nuclear-free peninsula" while arrogantly maintaining their half-century-long refusal to sign a peace treaty with the DPRK or to offer even a single guarantee against military aggression. At the same time, the imperialist government in Japan has announced plans to build a U.S.-designed "missile-defense shield" over the next several years—another step toward advancing the more and more openly discussed nuclear ambitions of Tokyo's so-called "Self-Defense Forces."


Over the next several weeks, socialist workers and youth in the United States have a special opportunity to explain our opposition to the imperialist war drive and expose Washington's lies before a wider-than-usual audience. Joel Britton, the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California, an election that has become the focus of worldwide interest, is telling the truth about the so-called Korean nuclear crisis—a "crisis" concocted in Washington and Tokyo—and calling on the labor movement, farmers organizations, and all popular movements to extend unqualified and unconditional solidarity to the Korean people.

As part of advocating an action program to defend toilers in the U.S. in the face of the imperialist march to economic depression and more and bloodier wars, Young Socialists for Britton and other supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign are demanding: No to all imperialist military provocations and threats! End the economic embargo! Normalize diplomatic relations with the DPRK! All U.S. troops, air, and naval forces out of Korea!

From Pathfinder

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on page 8.



French capitalism kills 12,000

Continued from front page

such as retirement homes, by both the current conservative government and the previous Socialist Party-led regime. Many small hospitals have been closed. Medical staffs estimate that a 10 percent increase in personnel is needed to provide proper care.

CNN quoted Katia Guiermet, an emergency room nurse at the Avicenne hospital near Paris, describing the lack of basic materials to care for those suffering from the heat. "We really do feel quite desperate," she said August 14. "We don't feel incompetent, but it's really difficult for people suffering from heat stroke when you don't have any ice" or air conditioning.

"We've been saying for quite a while that there aren't enough workers in retirement homes," said Luc Broussy, a spokesperson for the Synerpa union, which organizes workers in these homes.

While patients were crammed into beds in hallways of facilities without air conditioning, such as the Saint-Antoine hospital in Paris, air-conditioned tents were set up to hold the bodies of the dead as the morgues filled to capacity.

'Abandoned old folks'?

As the scope of the deaths began to emerge, big-business politicians and pundits blamed "families for abandoning their old folks as they took off to beaches and campgrounds" for the long vacations, by U.S. standards, that many French workers get in August. The media repeatedly stressed how many retirees in France live alone and depend on younger relatives to help them out. But many of those who died were actually living in retirement homes.

The mayor of the city of Amboise, Bernard Debre, blamed "young generations that don't want to take care of the elders."

Health Minister Mattei put forward the same line, saying the deaths were a "brutal revelation of a social fracture, of the solitude and isolation of the aged." Mattei defended the government's actions as adequate, saying, "I have nothing to hide," and rejected suggestions that he should resign.

Much of the commentary on the issue in the media in Europe and North America has revealed the reality and morality of big-business prejudice against the elderly as people who have lived "too long" and are a burden on the employers' class until they die.

Commenting in the *Financial Times* August 31, for ex-

ample, Dominique Moisi, a senior adviser at the French Institute for International Relations, stated that the death toll "has provoked an unprecedented bout of national soul-searching." Today, Moisi wrote, the elderly are "a burden and an obstacle to the cult of individual freedom that dominates our lifestyle," showing a loss of "the spiritual guidance of established religion and simple respect for family life." The author went on to brag that, by contrast, "I have had the privilege of caring for my parents in their slow departure from life, well into their nineties."

Mattei and others quipped that about 400 bodies of those who died in Paris that weren't immediately claimed by relatives was evidence that the problem was poor "family values." By early September, however, all but 57 bodies—less than half of 1 percent of the total—had been claimed. French president Jacques Chirac attended a funeral for these 57 people September 3. An aide cynically said that the president wanted "to show the solidarity of the entire nation with the isolated people."

Cut holiday for 'solidarity'

Chirac's brand of "solidarity" is revealed by the plans he has asked the government to prepare to supposedly improve services for the elderly. What has been dubbed the "Aging and Solidarity" plan won't be officially proposed until October. But on August 27 the government floated the idea that a key component would be eliminating an as-yet-unspecified national holiday.

Hamlaoui Mekachera, secretary of state for war veterans, asserted that taxes on the extra day's work would go to finance care for the elderly. But most important, he said, was the symbolic importance of common "sacrifice" that this would register. "The gesture of solidarity is more important than the financial gesture," he stated.

The secretary of state for the elderly, Hubert Falco, pointed to the precedent of a similar take-back of a holiday in Germany in 1995. "It would be, as is the case in Germany, a holiday that would be worked to the advantage of national solidarity," he said.

While union officials said they would not accept eliminating a holiday, Ernest-Antoine Seilliere, president of the bosses association MEDEF, called the proposal "fantastic." He expressed his enthusiasm to Europe-1 radio, saying, "The idea that we can solve problems by working more is a big first for our country."

SWP campaign

Continued from Page 7

7, a local ABC affiliate, at the socialist campaign headquarters, Britton responded to President Bush's speech of the previous day. Bush had reassured Washington's determination to maintain its occupation of Iraq and strengthen its domination of the Middle East and South Asia.

"Our campaign demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Africa, and elsewhere," Britton said.

The TV reporter and cameraman then accompanied Britton to the city's garment district, where they covered him and an entourage of campaign volunteers speaking with a number of workers and high school students.

During his interview with California Channel in Sacramento, Britton lent his support to the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride and other efforts to win equal legal protections for workers born abroad.

On his way back from Sacramento Britton made a stop in San Francisco to join some young volunteers at a sign-making party to prepare for a busy weekend of campaigning. One of the volunteers, Vicente Ramírez, a freshman at Napa Community College, was painting signs that read "Jobs for all!" in English and Spanish and "Young Socialists for Britton." He had come up from the Napa Valley—an area with many farm workers—to spend the weekend campaigning in the Bay Area. A few months ago he had been drawn to a Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists literature table by a Fidel Castro pamphlet, he told Britton.

On Saturday, September 6, Ramírez and four other Young Socialists for Britton joined fellow campaigners on Mission Street in a working-class district in San Francisco. They soapboxed, passed out flyers, signed up people who want to help campaign, and sold 10 copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

That night campaigners attended a public slide show and discussion on "Women and the Cuban Revolution" led by Elizabeth Stone, editor of the Pathfinder book with the same title. Emily Paul, a Young Socialist for Britton who attends San Francisco State, and Ryan Scott, northern California organizer of the Young Socialists for Britton, described in the discussion what they had learned from their recent trip to Cuba as part of the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. The discussion continued the next morning with a class by Stone on "Communism and the Fight for Women's Liberation."

Campaigning in workers districts

Campaigning in the Los Angeles garment district, Britton, a retired meat packer, exchanged views with a number of workers who stopped to hear the SWP candidate and other socialist soapboxers. Obdulia Cruz, a sewing-machine operator who was carrying home a bag of fabric, told Britton she worked 13 hours a day, seven days a week, plus homework in order to supplement her piece-rate wages. She was interested in Britton's proposals to unite working people in a fight to raise the minimum wage, guarantee jobs for all, cancel the Third World debt, and other demands.

Ulysses Edwards, a nonunion truck driver, engaged Britton in a discussion about the need to build unions that can be effective vehicles for struggles against the employers.

Several garment workers in this heavily Mexican district told the campaigners they were glad that the California state legislature appeared to be close to implementing a new law allowing undocumented workers to get a driver's license without having to show a Social Security card. "It's hard to get a job without a driver's license," one of them said.

Britton's supporters explained that whatever the final text of the law, the very fact that capitalist politicians in California are discussing this question is not due to a stroke of goodwill on their part but rather is the by-product of protests and mobilizations by thousands of working people to demand an end to restrictions on obtaining driver's licenses.

Not everyone agreed. A woman who works at the Department of Motor Vehicles told Britton she was adamantly opposed to undocumented workers having driver's licenses.

Class questions, not 'California' issues

Commentators in the capitalist media and the big-business candidates running for governor often pose the political questions in terms of "California issues." In an August 27 interview on a Bakersfield, California, radio program, Britton responded, "There is no such thing as a single set of interests for the 'state of California.' California is part of a class-divided society, made up fundamentally of workers and bosses.

"As someone who has worked on the kill floor of a big slaughterhouse and in oil refineries as a process operator, and who has been active in my unions, I've experienced firsthand the continuing speedup, increased injuries on the job, and chipping away at the benefits we as working people have won over decades," Britton stated. He said that his campaign pointed to the need to replace the bosses' government with a workers and farmers government.

Britton spoke to supporters at the campaign headquarters here on the evening of September 6, just before a Militant Labor Forum featuring Olympia Newton speaking on Washington's threats and pressures against north Korea. His remarks were covered by a San Francisco TV station on channel 32. The same station also did a 30-minute interview with Britton for a youth program called "The Purple Cow," which has been profiling recall candidates.

The socialist candidate began his remarks by expressing his unconditional support for north Korea in its decades-long fight against imperialist aggression.

Britton commented on the controversy in the big-business press about Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante's

Continued on Page 11

Beijing joins Washington in six-party talks to press N. Korea to drop nuclear defense

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

During three days of talks with representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), U.S. government officials reinforced pressure on Pyongyang to halt its nuclear weapons program. The representatives of the governments of China, Russia, south Korea, and Japan also leaned on the workers state.

Held August 27–29 in the Chinese capital of Beijing, the six-party negotiations coincided with Washington's preparations for war games practicing the interception and boarding of ships from north Korea or other countries alleged to be carrying "weapons of mass destruction."

"We need the complete, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of North Korea nuclear weapons programs," said White House spokeswoman Claire Buchan August 28. She added, "We believe there's been excellent cooperation...between the United States and China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia."

Immediately after the talks ended, the Japanese Ministry of Defense proposed spending \$1 billion annually through 2007 to build a U.S.-designed "missile-defense shield." "Given recent behavior, we cannot discount the possibility that North Korea's nuclear weapons program is already quite advanced," said the ministry.

At the Beijing talks, Pyongyang advocated a "package of solutions," stated the official north Korean news agency, the KCNA. They included a U.S.-DPRK non-aggression treaty and the establishment of diplomatic relations, in return for a halt to nuclear weapons development by the DPRK entry for weapons inspectors, and "an end to testing and exporting missiles."

The DPRK also demanded that Washington cease obstructing regional "economic cooperation." The U.S. government imposed an economic embargo on the north in 1950, the year in which U.S. armed forces led a massive imperialist invasion of the peninsula. After suffering its first-ever military defeat in the 1950–53 Korean War, U.S. imperialism embarked on a course to try to hold back the struggle for reunification and eventually overthrow the gains of the Korean revolution. Some 37,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the south to this day.

While expressing its willingness to return for more talks, the DPRK government protested Washington's high-handed approach in the round just concluded. "The United States said that the next round of talks can continue if we express our willingness to give up our nuclear plans at this time," the KCNA noted. "The United States insists that we take off our clothes until we get stark naked, while it refuses to move even one step," said a later statement.

"If our reasonable proposal is turned aside," said the KCNA on August 29, "we will judge that the U.S. does not intend to give up its attempt to stifle the DPRK by force at an appropriate time.

"In this case," it continued, "the DPRK cannot dismantle its nuclear deterrent force but will have no option but to increase it."

All parties had "reiterated that denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is the common goal of all sides," said the Chinese foreign ministry on August 28.

The Chinese government has kept its distance from some of Washington's stands, including President Bush's call for the UN Security Council to condemn the DPRK, and usually takes a neutral position in public

statements. At the same time, Beijing has made clear its opposition to Pyongyang's nuclear development programs. "There will be twists and turns in the negotiations," said Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who is leading Beijing's team in the talks. However, he added, "the differences between North Korea and China are comprehensive and involve lots of different areas." Beijing is in a position to bring substantial economic pressure to bear on north Korea. The July 4 *Korea Times* reported that China "supplies

70 percent of North Korea's energy and 40 percent of its food."

As the talks ended, Washington announced that U.S. and Australian warships will conduct exercises in mid-December to train the two navies in the interdiction and boarding of ships allegedly carrying "weapons of mass destruction."

"Officials from the U.S. and other countries... have acknowledged that the likeliest targets would be North Korea or, possibly, Iran," said the August 29 *Chicago Tribune*.

SWP campaign for governor

Continued from Page 10

membership in the Chicano student organization MEChA during his college days in the 1970s, and the Democratic candidate's efforts to downplay the issue by saying he had committed "the follies of youth."

The charges by right-wing commentators that MEChA is "racist" and akin to the Ku Klux Klan are "slanders," Britton said. "Racist outfits like the KKK represent the complete opposite of what MEChA stands for—opposition to racist discrimination that Chicanos and Blacks face in this country."

He went on to say, "I don't view my youthful revolutionary activity as a folly of youth." Britton showed some photos portraying his political activity as a member of the Socialist Workers Party and, earlier, the Young Socialist Alliance. He said some of those photos would accompany an interview he recently gave to the *Militant* (see pages 6-7). One photo depicted his 1969 trip to Cuba as part of a YSA delegation, which met with a representative of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front during its successful fight

against Washington's war in Indochina. Another photo showed Britton together with other YSA members in Crystal City, Texas, where they were hosted by leaders of the Raza Unida Party, a Chicano party independent of the Democrats and Republicans active in the 1970s. "I'm proud of having been part of these activities," he said.

Young Socialists for Britton

The socialist candidate then reiterated his appeal to young people to join in campaigning with Young Socialists for Britton. Among those who may want to take up this invitation, he noted, are "a number of youth who recently returned from a visit to Cuba. Besides learning about the example of the Cuban Revolution, the question is posed—what about getting involved in the fight to build a revolutionary movement that can lead working people to take power.

"That's what our campaign is about, and joining with Young Socialists for Britton is the best way to get involved," he said.

Elizabeth Stone contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Cuban flutist denied visa

In another act of hostility by the U.S. government against Cuba, Cuban flutist Niurka González was denied an entry visa to attend the National Flute Association (NFA) Convention held August 7-10 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Ms. González is a professor at the *Instituto Superior de Arte*, and a soloist at the *Centro Nacional de Música de Concierto* in Havana. She had been scheduled to perform at the convention.

By denying Ms. González a visa, the ruling class prevented a free exchange of ideas from taking place at the convention.

I am sure that Niurka González would have contributed immensely to the convention had she been allowed to attend.

Sylvia Hansen

Organizing Wal-Mart

In a report published in the August 25 *Militant* on a Chicago meeting of socialist meat packers, a participant from Canada reported that the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Canada had succeeded in organizing a Wal-Mart store in Thompson, Manitoba.

The report on the UFCW success was premature. An article in the August 20 *Globe and Mail* and the UFCW Canada website report that the unionizing drive was defeated by a close vote of 61-54 of the store employees. Of the 144 registered voters 117 voted and two ballots were spoiled.

The vote was held on June 27 after a lengthy door-to-door drive of UFCW Local 832. The local represents about 15,000 workers, including those at Maple Leaf Foods, Safeway, and Westfair foods.

The ballots had been sealed until the August 19 count because of a dispute between Wal-Mart and the UFCW over who should be included in the bargaining unit.

UFCW officials called the re-

sults a "setback" but announced their intention to continue the drive to organize Wal-Mart workers. Up to now no Wal-Mart store has been organized in Canada or the United States. Wal-Mart operates 213 department stores in Canada and plans to open some grocery retail operations this fall.

*John Steele
Toronto, Ontario*

First Nations and labor

A First Nations elder, a First Nations wing chief, and two members of Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 298 support picket line were arrested and charged with obstructing a police officer today in a successful attempt to stop the removal for auction of equipment key to the operation of an idled sawmill. Very strong ties are being created between the union movement and the First Nations in a usually redneck right-wing area of the province.

*Jack McCamy
British Columbia, Canada*

1973 coup in Chile

Ever since the 9/11 coup in Chile in 1973 I have worked with many of the exiles who fled Chile in order to save their lives and those of their families. Many of these working people were very active in the MIR [Left Revolutionary Movement].

Many times over I heard from the mouths of these working people that Salvador Allende was a good President but he failed to mobilize the masses of working people within Chile to defend the revolution. Even when all the evidence was clear the CIA was plotting with Pinochet.

The coup was handled like clockwork. Very much like the Palmer raids in the U.S. with an additional added feature of mass murder and graves.

We all lost comrades in Chile and I recently heard to watch for

the General Strike being called on Aug. 14, 2003. It happened! Also the working people in Chile have been reorganizing themselves before Pinochet left in 1990.

I thank the *Militant* for keeping not only the working people here in the U.S. informed but the workers of the world. The official ruling class media is so far saying very little of the recent events because they know American workers are taking notice of what our sisters and brothers are doing not only in Chile but all of Latin America.

*Tom Siblo
Saugerties, New York*

Baballah wins asylum

On July 11, Ibrahim Baballah won political asylum in the United States after suffering systematic persecution by Israeli naval forces in the Mediterranean town of Akko. Son of an Arab father and a Jewish mother, a federal appeals court panel unanimously ruled that Baballah's "life and livelihood were threatened because of his ethnicity and religion" in Israel. Baballah, his wife, and oldest son are the first Israeli citizens to be granted political asylum. They now live in San Jose, California.

Trained as an accountant, then a lifeguard and diver, employers refused to hire Baballah, calling him "goy," which means "non-Jew." Israeli naval crews also taunted him throughout the years he worked as a fisherman. They damaged his fishing nets with their propellers, circled his boat at high speeds, sprayed the boat with water cannons, and shot bullets over his head. After one such occasion, they had his brother arrested and imprisoned for over a year. In a purported rescue, a naval crew destroyed the boat and wrecked his livelihood.

An immigration judge ruled that, while she believed Baballah's ac-

count, his experiences were merely a result of "serious tension" between Arabs and Jews. The Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco rejected that argument, noting that when many members of a group are targeted for persecution, an individual such as Baballah is required to prove even less.

In the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman noted that political asylum for an Israeli citizen is "a troubling precedent."

*Kathleen Denny
Oakland, California*

Deaths on the job

Socialist Workers Party candidate for Allegheny County Executive Chris Remple is to be commended for calling on District Attorney Stephen Zappalla to investigate the asphyxiation death of Charles A. Dixon in an encounter with police ("Socialist Workers candidates run in 9 US States" September 8 *Militant*). Allegheny County Coroner Dr. Cyril Wecht recommended that homicide charges be filed in this case and denounced the police procedure that led to Mr. Dixon's death. At the recommendation of Dr. Wecht, District Attorney Zappalla needs to investigate this case and report his findings to the community.

In this same spirit, candidate Remple should call upon the DA to report to the community the results of the investigation into the death of Paul Corsi at the convention center truss collapse in February 2002. Almost a year has gone by since Allegheny County Coroner Cyril Wecht investigated this death and found "failures so blatant and overwhelming that a person could only conclude that the actions, errors and omissions more than rise to a level of recklessness and grossly negligent conduct" and recommended that the Dick Corporation be held criminally liable. DA Zappalla was to investigate

this death at the recommendation of Dr. Wecht.

In appalling contrast, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found no evidence of criminal violations. The Dick Corporation was able to "negotiate" with OSHA to have two of the citations issued reclassified as "other than serious" and one dropped completely, which resulted in a reduction of fines to a paltry \$12,000.

Families of victims killed on the job, whose tax dollars fund OSHA, have no such access to "negotiate" with OSHA and no method of re-addressing negligence that indeed may be criminal. As my brother, Gary Puleio, was killed in an industrial accident, I have experienced this firsthand. OSHA patronizingly dismisses the concerns of families as due to inexperience or emotional distress. Delays in obtaining information from OSHA prevents families from having cases reinvestigated and having additional charges filed, because under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, all penalties must be issued within six months of the "alleged violations" as workers' deaths are euphemistically phrased. Certainly Dr. Wecht's concerns cannot be written off by OSHA in the condescending manner that family members' concerns are. Reporting the facts of this investigation, will be a step in balancing the scales of justice for Paul Corsi, my brother Gary, and the approximately 6,000 workers killed yearly on the job.

*Donna Puleio Spadaro
Franklin, Pennsylvania*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

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.

London steps up attack on immigrants

BY JACKIE FORD
AND ROSE KNIGHT

LONDON—Fifty police and immigration agents raided the Cookie Man factory in Esher, Surrey, August 11, arresting 101 of the 175 workers. Seventy-eight have already been deported, while one has been released from custody without charges. The raid was one of a number of recent incidents and exposés illustrating stepped up victimization by the government and bosses against immigrant workers—part of their broader push against workers’ rights.

The directors of the cookie company, Beverly and Carl Scheib, protested that they had thoroughly screened job applicants. “We have carried out all the checks we could do,” said Carl Scheib to the local *Esher News and Mail*. The raid was “an excellent example of the work the immigration service does every day to tackle illegal working, and demonstrates the government commitment to dealing with the issue,” said Home Office minister Fiona MacTaggart. The immigration cops brought along newspaper and BBC television reporters to cover it. Shots of workers being taken away have been repeatedly used on national television to illustrate immigration stories.

Attacks on rights of asylum seekers

At the same time, two immigrant workers—convicted and sentenced to four years in prison for their role in a rebellion at a jail for immigrants awaiting deportation—are appealing their convictions. Henry Momodou and Behar Limani are two asylum seekers who were convicted of “violent disorder” for allegedly leading a rebellion last year at the Yarl’s Wood detention center in Bedfordshire. They argue that their sentences should be ruled invalid because two members of their trial jury expressed hostility toward immigrants during the trial.

Three national newspapers—the *Observer*, *Guardian*, and *Times*—have applied for the lifting of a court order banning the reporting of the incident, in which a member of the jury informed the judge that fellow-jurors said that asylum-seekers come to this country to take state benefits and “our” jobs.

The two defendants cite this jury bias in appealing their convictions. Momodou, who has a wife in this country, arrived in the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s. Immigration officials seized him on his return from a funeral in his native Nigeria.

The trial of the men exposed the abysmal treatment of immigrants held in the so-called detention centers. Agron Kastrioti, one of nine defendants acquitted in the case, said that he had been in five young offenders institutions since his arrival. As he left the courtroom, immigration officers pounced, putting him in a police cell for five days. From there he was sent to a high security prison in Milton Keynes. After being finally granted bail, Kastrioti said that he would continue his legal fight to stay.

Potential witnesses are ‘lost’

A number of potential witnesses were deported or “lost” in the system during the trial. One called by Limani’s defense team was deported back to the Ukraine. Despite the judge’s protests, he was denied entry back into Britain to take the stand.

The Yarl’s Wood rebellion in February of last year, three months after its opening, highlighted the draconian immigration policies of the Labour Party government of Prime Minister Anthony Blair. Built to hold 900 refugees, it was the largest immigration jail in Europe. Fire reduced half the facility to ruin during the outbreak. A Channel 4 news investigation reported that the center had neither safety procedures nor working fire protection.

The 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act provided the rulers with new legal weapons in the drive to criminalize asylum seekers and other immigrants. For example, a section of the law states that



British cops haul workers to jail in August 11 raid at Cookie Man plant, in Surrey.

applicants will be denied help if they do not immediately file their claim for asylum. Although most do so within a few days of arrival, a significant number hold off through ignorance of the procedures or fear of the consequences of reporting to immigration officials.

Since they cannot legally work while their claim is being considered, these immigrants are dependent on the meager government aid and face destitution if it is refused. Benefits for the average recipient, including the elderly and disabled, total £36.54 a week (£1=US\$1.58). Pregnant women get a maternity grant that is £200 less than a UK resident.

The impact of the new law’s restrictions was underlined August 8 when 28 refugees from Africa, who had been refused benefits, set up a makeshift refugee camp on the streets of Brixton, South London. Charities and local residents offered them food, water, blankets, and cash. Four were hospitalized with dehydration. The camp was erected outside the offices of the Refugee Council, the main organization

dealing with refugees. Officials said they were powerless to help under the new law. A spokesperson for the government’s Home Office told the local paper, “We believe denying state support to asylum applicants who do not claim asylum as soon as possible is a valuable part of a package of measures which has already helped us to reduce asylum applications.”

Conditions in immigration jail

A deportation in Scotland highlighted another aspect of the law, which states that families with children can be imprisoned indefinitely. Kurdish immigrant Yurdugal Ay and her four children were shipped to Germany after losing a four-year legal battle for asylum. The eldest child, Berivan, told reporters that she was terrified German officials would send them on to Turkey where their father Salih had disappeared after being deported last year. None of the children have lived in Turkey or speak Turkish.

The five had been incarcerated for more than a year at the notorious Dungavel de-

tention center in Lanarkshire. The chief inspector of prisons, Anne Owers reported August 15 that this immigration jail held 18 children at the time of her inspection. They were locked into a 62-bed family unit with limited access to outdoor play areas and education.

The jail is run on behalf of the Home Office by Premier Detention Services, a private company. A spokesperson complained that the media had portrayed the place as “some sort of Guantánamo Bay or concentration camp.” Aamer Anwar, the Ay family’s lawyer, commented, “The government has known for the last two years that they are in breach of international law. Their treatment of children is barbaric.”

At present some 790 asylum seekers are locked up in the United Kingdom. Last year 13,335 were forcibly removed from the country, the highest total on record. Of the 85,865 asylum applications, only 10 percent were granted, while 66 percent were refused outright. The government has announced plans for three new large-scale jails for immigrants. They will be built in rural areas and will hold 750 beds each.

Under a blueprint drawn up by European Union officials, failed asylum seekers in Europe can be deported from the continent by bus, train, plane, or unmarked police car. The “escort” proposal “reflects an increasing determination among EU governments to step up the pace of deportations,” reported the August 8 *Guardian*. The officials also plan to set up an EU-wide annual quota for the number of successful applications for asylum.

Meanwhile, *Militant* reporters who went to the Cookie Man factory gate to talk to workers about the August 11 raid encountered interest in a September 7 meeting in London featuring Róger Calero, who recently defeated the U.S. immigration authorities’ attempt to deport him from the United States (see report of the event on page 4). While we were there, factory director Carl Scheib came out and stated that the raid a week earlier was “dead news.” He didn’t say if he was claiming to speak for the 100 workers who have suffered, or face, deportation.

Chilean bosses, government try to put brakes on workers’ resistance after general strike

BY ROMINA GREEN

CLEVELAND—Following a national work stoppage in Chile on August 13—called by the main trade union federation, the Central Workers Union (CUT), which includes over 400 unions—the Chilean capitalist class is trying to put the brakes on workers’ resistance to the bosses attacks.

On the day of the general strike, the Chilean bourgeoisie showed their fear when they sent the police to attack the contingents of workers gathered in front of *La Moneda*, the presidential palace, and the main headquarters of the CUT, which is across the street in downtown Santiago.

“The cops tried to bring the city back to normal, which wasn’t going to happen,” said David Tudela in an August 29 telephone interview. “They were trying to get transportation running and attacked workers with tear gas, water cannons, and clubs.”

Tudela, a member of the Taxi Drivers Union, was among the more than 200 workers arrested during the one-day stoppage. He said workers organized feeder marches from different parts of the city and were joined by supporters, including university students. While the media reported that about 3,000 gathered on Alameda Street in front of the presidential palace, Tudela said he estimated that the crowd exceeded 20,000.

The general strike was called to protest government attempts to pass a more “flexible” labor law, which would allow the

bosses to extend the work week beyond the 48 hours allowed under current legislation without paying overtime. This is happening at a time when unemployment is rising. CUT also called the strike to protest the effects on working people of the erosion of social benefits such as health care and pensions that were gutted during the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet and in the aftermath of his rule, which ended in 1990.

In response to the strike, the Chilean Congress announced it will not allow any protest marches on September 11. That day marks the 30th anniversary of the 1973 coup, which overthrew the elected government of Socialist Party president Salvador Allende. During the subsequent military dictatorship, thousands of revolutionaries and other working-class fighters were killed, tortured, or “disappeared.” The government claims it banned the anniversary protests to avoid a repeat of the “violence” during the August 13 stoppage. When asked whether there will be marches and other events commemorating the coup on September 11, Tudela replied, “Yes, we are already distributing fliers. We are presently organizing a main event in front of *La Moneda*... which is sponsored by the CUT, Federation of Students, and other left groups.”

The government attempts to intimidate the labor movement continued as Judge María Magdalena Pavia opened the case against 38 bus drivers for their participation in the Aug. 12–13, 2002, strike. During that

strike some 700 buses were strategically placed on major roads of Santiago and the drivers, members of National Confederation and Union of Transportation Workers (CONATRACH), walked off in protest. The police arrested more than 675 drivers the next day and confiscated 663 buses. The workers were demanding a set wage instead of the current system in which the driver’s pay is based on the amount of passengers transported per day. Bosses keep track of this by counting the number of tickets sold, which is randomly checked by government inspectors.

On August 13, 2002, the House of Deputies voted to grant bus drivers a set wage.

The government, however, pressed charges against 38 drivers for violating the State of Security Law. The government is also considering filing charges against another 100 drivers accused of “disrupting public peace.” The drivers face sentences of 61 to 269 days.

Chilean president Ricardo Lagos, of the Socialist Party, said in relation to the bus drivers’ strike, “As president of Chile, I am in debt to the 15 million people [who weren’t able to use bus system] and I will not accept the blackmail of a few.”

In a recent CUT congress, attended by 400 delegates from various unions, the federation’s president Arturo Martínez said, “If there is no response to our demands, and if there is a flexible labor law passed in the parliament, you can be sure that there will be another national work stoppage.”